Code of Practice for the Operation of

Breeding and Rearing Businesses (2014)

Guide to developing emergency procedures

# Introduction

The proprietor of the business has the ultimate duty of care to plan ahead for the safety and welfare of animals and staff well before an emergency occurs. It is a mandatory requirement of the revised code for the proprietor to develop and maintain an emergency management plan.The following checklist provides useful information and suggestions to include in the emergency plan.

Emergencies come in all forms. Some are personal emergencies leaving businesses short-staffed; or for smaller businesses, with no available staff to care for animals. Others are large scale natural disasters such as fire or flood. Your business must be fully prepared to deal with any type of emergency to ensure the welfare of the animals and staff.

# Personal emergencies

Preparation for personal emergencies includes:

maintaining at least 5 days’ worth of food for all animals at your business

maintaining pen cards with appropriate information about the animals contained within so appropriate food, medication, handling and exercise can be given in your absence

maintaining food, water, cleaning, disinfection, exercise, socialisation, handling and enrichment standard operating procedures (SOP)/protocols in a prominent place for someone to be able to properly care for your animals in your absence

maintaining animal health records

creating and maintaining a list of emergency contacts that can aid you with managing the business in your absence; including business veterinary practitioner details, feed suppliers, groomers, plumber, electrician, local council and essential services etc.

Remember: All emergency evacuation procedures must be located in a prominent place within the business, so that anyone can find them, and act upon them during a time of emergency.

# Small scale emergencies

Small scale emergencies are those that affect your business/property on a short-term basis, such as power outages, water delivery failures, food shortages, etc.

Review your business records and determine the most likely short-term emergencies your business may face.

In each situation you will need to determine what steps will be taken to rectify the situation (including all contact details of individuals/companies you may need to contact), and what steps you will need to take to reduce the consequences on the functioning of your business and welfare of your animals.

# Larger scale emergencies

Larger scale emergencies such as natural disasters require a significant level of thought and planning. In particular, you need to decide whether your business has the means to evacuate all animals, and if not, which animals may be evacuated and which may not.

If you are planning to evacuate your animals you must make preparations now — before the emergency — to avoid chaos and confusion later. The following information is designed to help you think about what you need to put into your emergency plans.

# Planning checklist

Ensure you have an emergency plan that covers major disasters with the potential to affect your area and type of business. This plan needs to include all of your animals and staff and include prevention measures to minimise the effect of the emergency.

Ensure you have a complete list of emergency contacts including business veterinary practitioner details, feed suppliers, groomers, plumber, electrician, local animal shelters/kennels/catteries, etc.

 Determine which animals, if any, you are going to evacuate should the emergency require evacuation:

* + determine possible evacuation locations and confirm with those locations that evacuation is possible
	+ record evacuation locations and several alternative routes to get there, including travel time
	+ list equipment required for evacuation
	+ develop an evacuation kit and leave it in an accessible place that all staff have access to and are familiar with
	+ ensure animals being evacuated can be easily placed in travel carriers and are accustomed to travel
	+ run several emergency evacuation drills to ensure you know exactly how much time you will need in an emergency
	+ clearly document under what conditions and at what stage of threat evacuation is to occur
	+ always maintain transport vehicles for emergency use.

For animals left behind when staff evacuate, establish a set of procedures for ensuring their welfare as best you can. The procedures should include:

* + establishing a water supply for each animal that can last up to 10 days; water bowls should be non-spillable
	+ providing enough food to last 5 days
	+ ensuring areas around animal housing areas are free from toxic, dangerous or flammable materials as much as possible
	+ creating elevated areas in the event of possible flooding
	+ ensuring your animals have access to proper shelter during the emergency
	+ running several drills to determine the time it will take to set up your animals to leave them and record this time.

Ensure you evacuation procedure is familiar to all staff.

Ensure regular emergency drills are run.

Ensure you have evacuation procedures for all areas of the business e.g. every shed, each area, the whole business.

For more detailed information on preparing and acting during an emergency visit <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/emergencies/pets-in-emergencies>