
Ames Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines

Book: 3 – Emergency Operations

Section: VIII – Rescue Operations

Chapter: 2 – **Animal Rescue**

Date Approved: 10-29-2008 Revision No.: New Approved by: 

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide members of the Ames Fire Department with guidance in handling pets and other animals that are encountered as a result of an EMS, fire, or other response.

POLICY:

Pets encountered are often considered a part of the family by their owners. While the Fire Department's primary mission is for the protection and care of people, good customer service dictates that attempts to provide some level of care to animals in distress should be made when feasible and safe to do so.

PROCEDURES:

Safety Considerations

Caution should always be used in approaching any animal, especially one that is injured.

- At no time is the safety of our members or that of the public to be compromised by attempting to capture, retrieve, or rescue an animal.
 - If safety is in doubt, contact Ames Police Department's (APD) Animal Control and request that they respond.
- When dealing with pet or animal rescues, they should be handled similar to "property" when evaluating the potential risk/gain benefit of the incident.

Rescue Efforts (fires, trapped, or injured pets)

- Rescuing pets or animals during an incident should take the same priority as other loss control activities.
- An evaluation should be made in terms of the risk or exposure that our personnel would face, versus the likelihood of a positive outcome.
- Firefighters should only attempt animal rescue efforts when such time as undue risk to firefighters or civilians is not unduly incurred and other higher priority tasks will not be postponed or ignored.

Treatment of Injuries

Animal injuries can be treated in a similar manner as BLS injuries to a human, i.e.:


- Bleeding can be controlled by direct pressure, elevation, and bandaging.
- Burns can be covered with sterile dressings.
- Oxygen may be administered for breathing difficulties.
- Broken limbs can be stabilized using splints.

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Caring Attitude/Empathy

- It is important to recognize that to many people, an animal or pet is considered a family member.
- Firefighters should display an open, empathetic, and caring concern for pets and animals when dealing with the public in these types of situations.
- If an incident has resulted in the death of an animal, members of the Fire Department should attempt to assist pet owners in the disposal of the animal by contacting the proper agency, such as the Humane Society, APD Animal Control, or ISU Veterinary Medicine for guidance.