



Charles County Department of Emergency Services

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Section 401 - General Emergency Operations

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S.O.P. # 401.10	Handling of Pets and Domestic Animals	
EFFECTIVE: 10/01/2017	Authorized: John Filer, Chief	
REVISED:	Authorized: William Stephens, Director	

401.10.01 Purpose

The purpose of this SOP is to establish policy for the delivery of emergency medical care, handling and transport of pets and domestic animals, excluding service animals which is addressed in Standard Operating Procedure 401.11.

401.10.02 Cited References

1. Maryland Annotated Code: Agriculture Title 2, Subtitle 2-313 through 2-314
2. Charles County DES Emergency Medical Services Standard Operating Procedure 401.11

401.10.03 Care and Handling of Pets and Domestic Animals

1. **Providing Medical Care for Injured Pets and Domestic Animals** - During emergency calls for service such as motor vehicle collisions or fire incidents and if safe to do so, staff may provide medical treatment for pets and domestic animals only after all human patients have been appropriately triaged, treated and transported as necessary.
 - a. Medical care may include but is not limited to bleeding control, splinting of extremities, providing supplemental oxygen, and performing CPR.
 - b. Due to concerns regarding allergens, cleanliness and hygiene, medical care to pets and domestic animals must be performed outside or in a building / dwelling and not in an ambulance or other transport unit.
2. **Maryland State Law: Rendering Veterinarian Aid, Care or Assistance** - As per Maryland House Bill 216 Chapter 412 approved by the Governor on May, 4, 2017 and effective as law on October 1, 2017, an individual who is licensed by the State of Maryland to provide medical care or a member of a volunteer fire department or ambulance and rescue squad is not liable for civil damages as the result of any professional act or omission by the person not amounting to gross negligence by providing veterinarian medical aid, care or assistance at the scene of an emergency.



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401.10.04 Continuing Care and Transportation of Pets and Domestic Animals

1. In the event that a pet or domestic animal needs immediate shelter and ongoing care *and* the owner is unable to provide such shelter and care due to the nature of the emergency call,
 - a. Crew members should attempt to find a family member or friend who is able to shelter and continue care for the pet or domestic animal OR
 - b. Crew members should contact the 911 Communications Center and request Animal Control for transportation to the Tri-County Animal Shelter or a veterinarian. Additionally, the pet may qualify for the county's Safe Pet Program.
2. Due to concerns regarding allergens, cleanliness and hygiene, transportation of pets and domestic animals must be provided by family and friends of the owner or Animal Control. Pets and domestic animals may **not** be transported in an ambulance. Service animals are exempt from this policy (refer to DES SOP 401.11).

401.10.05 Safe Pet Program

1. **Overview** - The Tri-County Animal Shelter provides temporary shelter and continuing care for animals that are unable to be cared for by their owners due to domestic violence, house fires or other qualifying emergencies.
2. **Intake Requirements** - The Tri-County Animal Shelter requires that the owners provide documentation and make contact by phone with the Program Administrators at the Tri-County Animal Shelter within forty-eight (48) hours upon intake to discuss options. If no contact is made within seventy-two (72) hours, the animal will become the property of the Tri-County Animal Shelter.
3. **Care and Shelter** - Animals in the program will receive vaccinations, be de-wormed and kept at the Tri-County Animal Shelter for a period of thirty (30) days free of charge. Medical attention will be given if the animal requires treatment.