



PLANNING FOR SUMMER EMERGENCIES

A Best Practice Guide for Animal Holding Facilities



Prepared and Issued by Hanrob Pet Hotels
for the members of
Pet Industry Association Australia (PIAA)



Document Overview

Storms, fires, loss of power, extremes in temperature and other high-risk events can happen at any time, sometimes with very little warning. And, as animal holding facilities, it's our responsibility to ensure the safety of both animals and staff during these events.

With a 36 year history in the Australian pet boarding industry, Hanrob Pet Hotels has both a wealth of experience and a first-hand understanding of the risks posed by extreme weather events and other emergencies. As an organisation, they are committed to sharing their expertise to ensure the highest standards are maintained across the pet boarding industry, helping to safeguard pets and other animals during their time in holding facilities.

Hanrob Pet Hotels and the PIAA hope this document will provide you with an up-to-date guide to minimum standards for disaster preparedness over the summer months, helping to minimise the impact of high-risk events, whilst also serving as a reminder of the importance of developing and managing your Emergency Response Plans.

For more detailed information on emergency management planning, [click here](#).

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1. WHAT DOES DISASTER LOOK LIKE?



Throughout this document we will refer to “disaster preparedness”. But what exactly is a disaster?

Defending your animal holding facility against extreme events such as bushfires and flooding are scenarios that may impact your organisation once every five to 10 years, and you should have a plan in place for when they do. However, animal holding facilities are also exposed to seemingly much less dramatic risks, much more frequently – especially during the summer months when animal capacity may be higher and the impact of disaster therefore heightened.

Power loss, extremes in temperature – even the early on-set of flea and tick season – for example, can affect pet boarding facilities daily throughout the Australian summer and, without a thorough understanding of the impacts and risk mitigation, what you may previously have considered a low-impact event can have very serious consequences.

When we speak about disaster preparedness, therefore, we are not referring only to extreme disasters, but *any event* that can pose a risk to the safety of your facility, staff and animals within.

Ultimately, emergencies come in many forms and having a response plan for any emergency – be it fire, flood, storm or heatwave – can mitigate against the loss of life and help prevent injury, property damage and costly disruption. Planning ahead also allows you time to form relationships with the emergency authorities you’ll co-ordinate with during emergency response.

2. PLANNING FOR EMERGENCIES



a. Do you have an Emergency Management or Response Plan?

As an animal holding facility, you should have an **'Emergency Management' or 'Response Plan'** to help protect your staff, animals and property during emergency situations. If you have not yet developed a plan, it is imperative you do so, working in consultation with your local emergency service agencies. You can [click here for more information on developing your plan](#).

Creating a Response Plan - What you will need to do

1. Conduct a risk assessment of your animal holding facility
2. Analyse incidents and threats and their impact and intensity
3. Review a 10 year history of local incidents and threats to establish patterns and trends
4. Look at the frequency and impact of incidents and threats
5. Categorise and prioritise the threats, including internal incidents and threats
6. Take immediate steps to reduce the incidents identified as high risk with greatest impact
7. Form an emergency management committee

During the creation of your response plan, you will have identified each of the risks associated with your facility, and the likelihood of those risks occurring.

Common risks include fire (bushfires and building fires), storms, floods, disease outbreaks, high temperatures and loss of services such as power.

The impact of each of the identified risks on your animal holding facility will vary depending on many factors, such as your location, level of vegetation, proximity to emergency services and defence equipment, number of animals housed in your facility and level of emergency training.

Consequences of Risk

Classification	Consequence
1. Severe	The consequences may threaten the survival of your facility
2. Major	Would produce a threat to the survival or effective performance of your facility
3. Moderate	Functions of the facility could be subject to significant review or changes to operations
4. Minor	A threat to the efficiency or effectiveness of some aspects of the facility's operations but at a level that can be dealt with internally
5. Insignificant	The consequences can be dealt with by routine operations

Likelihood of Risks

Risk Level	Likelihood
1. Almost Certain	Very high – may occur several times over a short period
2. Likely	High – may occur monthly to several times a year
3. Possible	Might occur once in a period of one to three years
4. Unlikely	Could occur over time (e.g. every five to 10 years)
5. Rare	May occur only in exceptional circumstances

Your response plan will outline your organisation's response to emergencies so that, when they do impact you, you are able to act quickly and decisively and have everything you need in place. A plan for evacuation, for example, will be different to a defensive strategy, so it's important these decisions are made during the planning process, allowing you time to prepare for rolling out your plan.

During the summer, the most common threats to animal holding facilities are **high temperatures, fire threats** and **storm and tempest**, and we will now focus on how animal holding facilities can prepare for and minimise the impact of these events.

3. PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES



a. Monitoring the risks

It is important to monitor the risks posed to your facility year round, and particularly during periods of heightened risk, such as the summer.

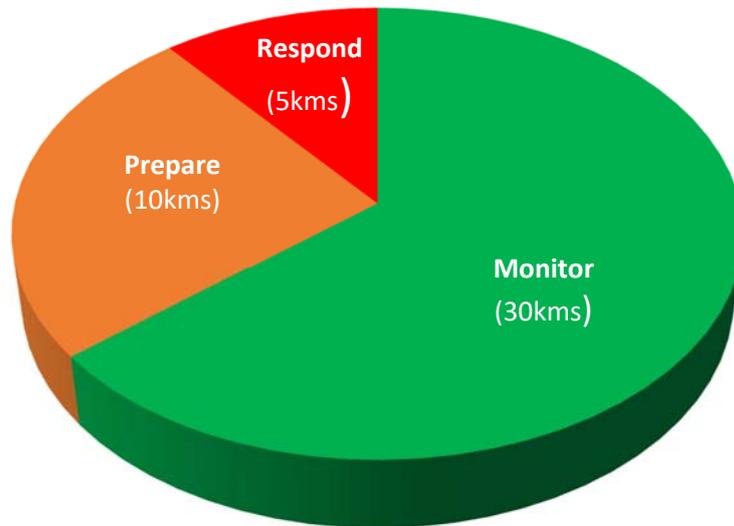
During periods of high temperatures, increased fire risk and storm warning periods, you can monitor your region using the following tools.

- **Fires Near Me** – Available for [IOS](#) and [Android](#)
- **Bureau of Meterology 'BOM'** – Available for [IOS](#) and [Android](#)

Storm warnings and severe weather alerts are equally important to the operational safety of animal holding facilities, their staff, buildings and animals. We recommend year-round, daily monitoring of weather warnings via the above apps or the [Bureau of Meterology](#) and [StormSafe](#) websites.

As well as weather warnings, it is important to monitor incidents within your local area.

We recommend you actively **monitor** all incidents within a **30km radius** of your facility, allowing you ample time to **prepare** for incidents within a 10km radius and **respond** to incidents within a 5km radius of your facility.



For all incidents within a 20km radius, we recommend you contact your local emergency authorities to gather as much information as possible about the risk posed to your animal holding facility.

b. Preparation throughout the year

There are many things you can do throughout the year to ensure any risk posed to your property, staff and animals is minimised when an emergency does occur and that your response plan can be actioned quickly and efficiently. Your staff should be trained and briefed, your facility equipped and your lines of communication – both internally and with external emergency authorities – established.

- Ensure all roofs and gutters are in good working order – that they are repaired, fixed, cleaned and cleared of debris.
- Ensure flammable materials are stored away from buildings and that an electrician has inspected power points, cables and leads
- Conduct a quarterly briefing with staff to ensure all staff – including new recruits – are aware of procedures prior to any event, as well as regular emergency drills. Gather feedback from each session and update your procedures accordingly.
- Ensure all your staff are trained in pet first aid
- Test your response plan to ensure its effectiveness and identify any gaps in training. Review and update regularly.
- Ensure that a comprehensive human and animal emergency kit is available in an easily accessible location, clearly marked and fully stocked with essential items. Staff should be made aware of the location of all emergency equipment and trained in its use. An emergency kit should contain:
 - Two-way radios and spare batteries
 - Torches and spare batteries

- Portable lighting
- Back-up power (generators or access to hire a generator)
- First-aid kit
- Candles and waterproof matches
- Emergency contact numbers for Police, SES, Fire Brigades, Ambulance Service
- Wet weather gear and non-flammable protective clothing for staff
- Comprehensive Pet first aid kit
- Spare portable cages and leads
- Bottled water and food in the event staff are unable to leave a facility
- Power tools and equipment to remove, reduce or rectify damage, post event
- Portable commercial radio to monitor warnings and event progress
- Mobile broadband contingency for monitoring events and post event communications and information

3. WHEN HIGH RISK SITUATIONS OCCUR



Your response to a threat will depend very much on the threat and the impact it may have on your property, staff and animals. With planning and training in place, you will be well positioned to make decisions early and minimise the risk any incident may have on your animal holding facility.

a. Extreme Temperatures

You should be monitoring weather conditions daily and will therefore have ample warning if high temperatures are predicted. In these scenarios, all staff should be sent a timely alert, prior to the incident, reminding them of actions to be taken.

Should temperatures exceed 30 degrees, the following steps should be taken:

- Notify all staff of expected temperatures
- Limit animal exercise to the coolest part of the day
- Use roof sprinklers to provide respite from the heat if needed
- Restrict feeding of animals to once per day during early morning unless special dietary needs
- Keep animal play time to a low level to minimise risk of heat stroke and suspend all activities during hottest part of the day (e.g. 12.30-4.30 depending on forecast)
- Ensure staff and pets are well hydrated

- Ensure animals have access to shade and water during any external play time
- Ensure staff wear hats and apply sunscreen when outdoors, staying in shaded areas and advising team members if they feel unwell
- Activate air conditioning early in the day and use fans to assist with air movement and cooling
- Pay special attention to all animals for exhaustion and dehydration and especially long coated and aged animals
- Increase internal monitoring of fire risk
- Ensure air conditioning is used in pet transport

Do It Yourself!



Sprinklers being tested on maintenance building

Keeping cool in the summer doesn't have to be difficult or costly. There are a few simple steps you can take now for a safer – cooler – summer. Remember, keeping dogs cool minimises the risk of heat stress-related health issues and ensures they are comfortable and happy.

Install roof top garden sprinklers along your roof line, plugged in to a garden tap. These can be activated in hot weather conditions to cool your buildings and animals within

Install industrial pedestal fans within your buildings to assist with the movement of airflow and in cooling pets. You can easily position these where you need them most.

b. Storm Events

Where severe weather is likely to, or is already impacting the region where a facility is located, the following steps should be undertaken

- Advise all staff (and animal transport vehicles if applicable) of the severe weather warning via phone, email and public address system where applicable.
- All pets are to be housed indoors at least 2 hours prior to the event's predicted impact time and remain secured until directed otherwise.
- Obtain a complete list of all persons on premises at least 1 hour prior to predicted impact time.
- Approximately 1 hour prior to the event's predicted impact time, make a decision to suspend all normal business operations or not
- Approximately 45 minutes prior, known storm-phobia animals should be moved into cages and placed in an inside room within the facility to reduce the risk of self-harm/escape. The selected area should provide the best possible insulation from the noise of severe weather and be monitored regularly. Do not leave bedding, water or food with pets housed as described during a severe weather event. Monitor closely until the event passes.

4. YOUR SUMMER CHECKLIST



This summer, we hope you'll spend some time working through this checklist, ensuring your facility and operations are fully prepared.

	Action
1.	Identification of all potential threats and performance of risk assessment
2.	Identification of all hazards within the facility
3.	Fit and test roof sprinklers for animal holding areas
4.	Access to sufficient and dedicated water supply for kennel cooling and fire suppression
5.	Fit and test Large industrial fans for air movement
6.	Access to portable generators for power loss
7.	Detailed Emergency Management / Response Plan outlining whether facility will evacuate or defend against bush fires, floods and other severe emergencies
8.	Contact numbers for local emergency services, Fire Police, Ambulance and SES

9.	Removal of rubbish, leaf litter and native shrubs located close to building(s) for hazard mitigation
10.	Form a wide firebreak around your buildings (e.g. cut grass, trimmed branches clear of buildings, cleared gutters)
11.	Fit wire screens to doors, windows and vents, and enclosed all gaps
12.	Store flammable materials such as wood, gas, petrol and paint well clear of buildings
13.	Keep ladders accessible for roof access (inside and out)
14.	Fit hoses to reach all parts of the building and gardens (If mains pressure water is not connected, obtain a high-pressure pump.)
15.	<p>Sufficient and appropriate Emergency Kit for both humans and animals, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-way radios (& spare batteries) • Torches (& spare batteries) • Portable lighting (if appropriate, hire generators – contact number list) • First-aid kit • Candles and waterproof matches • Emergency contact numbers for Police, SES, Fire Brigades, Ambulance Service • Wet weather gear for staff • Pet first aid kit • Spare portable cages and leads • Bottled water and food in the event staff are unable to leave a facility • Ensure maintenance staff have sufficient power tools and equipment to remove, reduce or rectify damage, post event • Portable commercial radio to monitor warnings and event progress • Mobile broadband contingency for monitoring events and post event communications and information • Sufficient pet food to last a minimum of 2weeks
16.	Actively monitor all incidents within a 30-Km radius of the facility
17.	<p>Daily monitoring of weather conditions and, during periods of high risk, regular monitoring of local bushfires and other extreme events using the following tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Android & Apple APP - “Fires Near Me” • Android & Apple APP - Bureau of Meteorology “BOM”
18.	Scheduled weekly testing of pumps and generators
19.	Ensure vehicles used for transport of pets are serviced and have air-conditioning checked prior to the summer months and at least once during the summer period
20.	Identify specific tasks and roles for staff
21.	Ensure all business data is backed up offsite
22.	Develop recovery plan for post-event

23.	Debrief each and every event for improvement
24.	Constantly review plans

Contact

Hanrob Pet Hotels welcome your feedback, questions and suggestions and would love to hear from you. Please don't hesitate to get in touch.

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