



# University of West Florida Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Disaster Plan

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## **Purpose:**

The University of West Florida is committed to ensuring that vertebrate animals used in research are treated in a humane, ethical manner, with the highest standard of care according to applied federal, state, and institutional regulations and policies. This disaster plan is intended to provide UWF's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), faculty, staff and students, a general plan of action in the event of an emergency or disaster with potential impact to the animals housed on campus and satellite facilities.

The intent of this disaster plan is to protect and manage the animals on campus in the event of an emergency; however, under no circumstances should any employee put themselves at risk or personal danger at any time.

This disaster plan will be used to supplement the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) for the University of West Florida. All personnel should follow the procedures in the CEMP and their Departmental CEMP and use this as an appendix addressing vertebrate animal needs in the event of an emergency. The CEMP for campus can be found at [Emergency Operations and Procedures | University of West Florida](#). Departmental CEMP plans can be obtained from the Department Chair or University Police Department Emergency Manager.

## I. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In the event that a weather related natural disaster is expected, primary investigators are required to report to the [Research Compliance Officer](#) their plan for the animals assigned to their active project.

In the event that a principal investigator has animals which are especially valuable or virtually irreplaceable from a research standpoint, the investigator must arrange for evacuation housing for those animals in consultation with the Research Compliance Officer and [IACUC Chair](#).

The Director of Environmental Health and Safety, in coordination with UWF Emergency Manager, will make determination as to when it is safe for personnel to enter an animal facility after a disaster. The Research Compliance Officer will be notified by the Emergency Manager and/or EH&S Director about the status of all buildings housing animals. Signs will be posted on building doors and personnel will be notified.

### **Continuity of Protocols & IACUC function**

If time permits, the Research Compliance Officer will notify all researchers who have active protocols during the anticipated disaster down-time. Animals on active protocols will be placed on general maintenance for the duration of the disaster with no experimental interventions permitted during that time.

In the case of mandatory evacuation, back-up copies of IACUC records and protocols will be removed from the campus and taken by an RAE staff member to a safe location.

Paper records concerning care of animals will be placed inside plastic bags in the animal rooms and moved with the animals in the event that they are relocated

Following any disaster or disturbance to animal housing or conditions, Primary Investigators are responsible for reporting to the Research Compliance Officer any information about distress, incidents, or variations in temperatures to animals under their care.

## II. OVERVIEW OF ANIMAL CARE & SUPPORT NEEDS

### **A. Animal health checks and health maintenance:**

Animals must be checked daily to confirm they are healthy. These observations may be performed by qualified animal program personnel or other qualified personnel. The Attending Veterinarian or other qualified personnel will triage sick or injured animals and determine a treatment plan. Animals that cannot be relocated or protected from the consequences of the disaster must be humanely euthanized. When appropriate, animals will be euthanized at the discretion of the Attending Veterinarian or other qualified personnel using [American Veterinary Medical Association \(AVMA\) approved methods of euthanasia](#).

**B. Animal Care: Food and water supplies:**

Food and water are critical to maintaining animal health. The animal facility will keep on hand enough food and water to provide proper care for animals in the event of a disaster for a minimum of 7 days. The appropriate food for the species and research needs, in adequate quantities, in unadulterated form, is the goal of this plan. If the usual food is not available, professional judgment must be applied to identify acceptable substitutes which are available. Potable water is especially important, as many animals can survive for several days with little food, but may succumb within 1-2 days without water. Some species are especially sensitive to food or water deprivation (e.g., newborn rats or mice) and should be given special attention.

**C. Animal Housing / Cage Change:**

For purposes of animal health, animal welfare and support of research, adequate sanitation must be provided. Cages of some species must be changed often while others may go several days without inducing health or environmental problems. The goal of this plan is to approximate normal sanitation schedules with available resources. Increasing cage change intervals, spot cleaning instead of whole-cage changes, changing bedding instead of cage changes, hand washing of some equipment, or deferring activities such as floor mopping may be required. The Leadership team (Research Compliance Officer, Attending Veterinarian, and Animal Facilities Managers) will decide which sanitation activities are performed in order to provide the greatest benefit to the animals if it is not possible to perform all normal activities due to unusual conditions.

**D. Environmental support (ventilation, temperature control, utilities):**

Maintenance of an appropriate environment is essential to the well-being of animals and for many research projects. Ventilation problems may include loss of or diminished air supply or exhaust, loss of pressure differentials in critical areas, unacceptable temperature variations, contamination with agents such as chemicals or smoke, or loss of utilities such as electricity needed for lights or powered equipment (e.g., hoods, autoclaves, ventilated racks). Ventilation problems should be addressed by the Leadership team (Research Compliance Officer, Attending Veterinarian, and Animal Facilities Managers), with goals of maintaining at least some air movement in animal housing spaces, sustaining air pressure differentials in all rooms including the barrier area, and keeping temperatures as close to the acceptable range as is possible. The minimal standard is to prevent animal deaths or contamination of the environment.

**1. HVAC Loss**

Essential animal facility HVAC systems have backup that will automatically transfer on. However, any major utility failure should be reported by calling x 6000 (850-857-6000) for the building where the facility is located. If the animal room environment cannot be maintained within [Guide](#) parameters, the animals may need to be relocated. Please note, Building 58 generator picks up the HVAC load for the entire building. However, the generator would not pick up chilled water to cool the

building, but the fans would run. The Exercise Physiology Laboratory in Building 72 would not have AC on generator power.

Overheating:

1. Move animals to rooms that are not overheating or to the hallway if it is cooler.
2. If the whole animal facility is overheating, mobile cooling stations can be utilized to reduce the heat load.
3. If animal rooms cannot be cooled, the Attending Veterinary (or designee) will make the decision to relocate or euthanize the animals if they are in distress.

Loss of Heat:

1. Move animals to rooms that have heat or to the hallways if it is warmer.
2. Use auxiliary heaters in animal rooms that have no heat.
3. If animal rooms cannot be warmed or we cannot find a warm place within the animal facility, the Attending Veterinary will make the decision to relocate or humanely euthanize the animals if they are in distress or danger.

**Personnel to provide animal care:**

Personnel with adequate training are essential to maintaining animal colonies. They may be unable to work in facilities due to damage or dangerous conditions, physical obstructions (flooding, or chemical spill nearby), or interruption of work (bomb threat, picketing, etc.). The PI or designee will deploy available personnel to maintain optimal health and well-being under the direction of the Attending Veterinarian or designee. Personnel may be asked to perform duties outside the scope of their normal responsibilities in order to protect animal health or well-being. The Leadership team (Research Compliance Officer, Attending Veterinarian, and Animal Facilities Managers) and animal facility administrative personnel make this decision. As soon as possible after a disaster, or prior to the incident when possible, a list of current/essential personnel that may need to access campus and the animal facilities will be provided to the UWF Police Department dispatch so they may further distribute it to local, state or federal authorities that may control access including road closures.

### III. EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

The animal facility will keep on hand enough food and water to provide proper care for animals in the event of a disaster for a minimum of 7 days. The animal facility maintains an adequate feed supply to meet the needs of a temporary disaster predicted for our region. Drinking water and food for staff is available at The Commons.

Additional supplies that should be kept on hand include:

- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Work gloves
- Sanitation needs (such as tissue paper, bleach, plastic bags, plastic bucket)
- Alcohol wipes

- Duct tape and/or barrier tape
- Personal first aid kit should be present at every lab

A full list of facilities where animals are housed and a full list of animal facility and key personnel contact information will be maintained by the Research Compliance Officer, UWF Police Dispatch and updated as needed.

#### IV. RELOCATION & EVACUATION OF ANIMALS:

Disaster preparedness can mean the difference between undue loss and suffering of animals, which adds additional trauma to human victims, and successful evacuation and care for both people and animals. Safe evacuation of all people from the designated area is the common goal for all responding agencies.

UWF does not have a back-up facility prepared to evacuate all animals in the event of an emergency. However, evacuation will be considered based on the details of the disaster, type of animal, and feasibility of evacuation or relocation. The decision to evacuate animals will be made in consultation with the Attending Veterinarian or designee, Research Administration and Engagement and the Institutional Official.

PI's are responsible for overseeing the relocation of their animals if needed in the event of a disaster. The Department Chair and Building manager, in consultation with the Emergency Manager, will be a point of contact for advising on what safe spaces are available.

Scenarios where evacuation of an animal may be appropriate include:

- Evacuation following an emergency that resulted in damage to the animal facility rendering it not suitable for continued housing of animals.
- Pre-evacuation in the event of a foreseeable disaster (i.e. Major Hurricane).
  - Building 84 animals will need to be relocated in the event of a major hurricane

If there is an immediate threat to human health or safety - DO NOT ATTEMPT TO EVACUATE THE ANIMALS! Concern for animals is secondary to human life. Do not place yourself in danger to remove animals from the building.

- If you are working with animals near the cages and time permits, put the animal(s) back in their cage(s).
- If you are in the middle of surgery, euthanize the animal if there is time.

If evacuation of the animals (which may not be practical) is being considered to avoid the hazard, evacuation procedures, places and routes should be followed. In the event relocation is required, the animals will be moved to another on-campus location temporarily or an off campus site if necessary.

Since many animals may not be able to be evacuated, researchers should decide, ahead of time, which are the most critical to save, if possible. PI should be prepared to communicate priority to Animal Facility Staff in an emergency.

In the event of a catastrophic emergency, injured or affected animals will be triaged by trained animal care personnel (veterinarians, research investigators and/or research staff). Treatment will occur on site if possible or after evacuation to a predetermined area/site. Those animals with injuries too severe to recover will be humanely euthanized.

NOTE: Any animal cage evacuated from the animal facility should have cage card information taped onto the cage with clear tape and/or cage card information written directly onto the cage with permanent marker as soon as possible.

After an evacuation of personnel, the responsible person should report to the UWF Chief of Police or UWF Emergency Manager aware of the situation, and then work together to determine when it is safe to return to the area with the animals. For more information about communication and procedures regarding the safe return to buildings, please see the [Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan](#). The Emergency Access List is maintained by the UWF Police.

## V. SHELTERING-IN PLACE

The term “shelter-in-place” means to seek immediate shelter and remain there during an imminent event instead of evacuating. Notifications for Sheltering In Place may be announced via the [Emergency Notification System](#). There are occasions when the option to evacuate the area cannot be considered. Unless otherwise instructed to evacuate, sheltering in a pre-determined safe location is the preferred method of safely waiting out events. Personnel should proceed, along with cellular phones, and proceed calmly to the location designated in the CEMP for the building you are located in. Windows, doors and HVAC systems in the designated area should be closed.

Generally, the amount of feed kept in house (including food in cages, food in room feed supply bins and food in feed storage room) is projected to be an adequate supply to allow for any potential delays in feed shipment. Loss of power will be managed with redundancy. In the event that such a situation is likely during the workday, the building manager for the animal facility or designee will closely monitor the e-mail weather bulletins. The principal investigator (PI) will reassign work tasks to assure that all critical tasks are completed (feed, water, security of animals) and then nonessential personnel will be sent home (timing to be consistent with recommendations from weather bulletin sources). For after-hours emergencies, Animal Care staff should call the UWF police.

Prior to a hurricane/tropical storm, where possible, cages are topped off with food and fresh water. Rodent cage hoppers may be filled to the maximum and full water bottles provided the

day before the expected storm even if it is not a normal water change out day. Treated water may be held in clean containers in the facility.

When serious inclement weather is forecast, some of the animal facility staff members who live close to the facility or who can take public transportation will be assigned to come to work. Animal facility staff may also stay at close by hotels or in an on-campus shelter, if available. Please coordinate with the Emergency Manager via UWF housing using the contact information at the end of this document. When staff are required to remain on campus to facilitate care of animals while the institute is closed, they may eat at the UWF dining facilities that remain open for on campus students.

## VI. NATURAL DISASTERS - FLOODS, EARTHQUAKES, TORNADOS, HURRICANE, or FIRE

Surgical procedures should not be conducted if there is advance notice of a potential disaster. In addition to the CEMP, the below should be considered for animals.

Animal handling during or after a flood, earthquake, tornado, hurricane or fire:

- If possible, leave rooms where hazardous materials and anesthetic agents are located (eg: prep room, necropsy room).
- Secure radiation sources and other hazardous materials.
- If possible, turn off all gas lines and cylinders.
- If you are working with animals near the cages and time permits, put the animal(s) back in their cage(s).
- If you are in the middle of surgery and required to evacuate, euthanize the animal if there is time.
- Someone shall confirm that the emergency is legitimate prior to euthanizing the animal.
- After the area has been deemed safe by UWFPD, animal care staff will be permitted inside the building to assess the need for evacuation of animals, relocation or if humane euthanasia is required.

### A. Hurricane/Tropical Storm Planning:

Upon Hurricane Watch: First warning that a hurricane is a definite threat to a portion of the coast of Florida; normally given 72 hours before the storm is expected to hit the coast, landfall is uncertain and broad geographic areas are alerted. This is a time for preliminary storm preparation.

#### **PI Responsibilities:**

Ensure cage cards are updated and in place

Ensure food, water and additional supplies are present

Update Research Compliance Officer with current plans for relocation if any

Relocate or arrange for re-location with personnel on the Emergency Access List

Upon the announcement by the National Weather Service that HURRICANE/TROPICAL STORM WARNING status has been declared, the University President will issue the appropriate directive regarding closing the university. This directive will be relayed by the vice presidents to their areas of responsibility.

## VII. ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVIST: PROTESTS/PICKETING

In the event of protests or picketing (by animal rights groups, for example), animal facility personnel are to report to work as usual. In doing so, they are to avoid confrontations if they pass through picket lines or protest marchers. UWF Institutional Communications will handle the dissemination of information and address questions about research activities. UWF Police will handle all security related issues, and will increase security measures for all animal housing and support facilities while helping keep all facilities secure.

- 1) Animal health checks: If the number of employees on site is decreased, priority is given to activities which directly affect animal health and welfare: health checks and treatments, feeding, watering, and maintaining minimal sanitation requirements.
- 2) Food and water supplies: Food and water supplies on-site should not be affected. Closing the receiving dock and deferring delivery locations may be considered if the primary location is unusable. Similarly, if the normal waste pick-up procedure is disrupted, waste may be taken out through a different exit location, or kept in cold-storage temporarily.
- 3) Sanitation: Sanitation should proceed normally, assuming sufficient personnel are present. If staff shortages occur, sanitation will be prioritized as described in Animal Health Checks above.
- 4) Environmental support: Environmental systems are not expected to be affected. If the environment is altered, as by sabotage, for example, the specific problem will be addressed as described in the section for that emergency (see: HVAC, Bomb Threat, Electrical power outage).
- 5) Personnel: UWF personnel are expected to report to work. UWF personnel may be required to perform duties outside their usual responsibilities in order to preserve animal health. The Attending Veterinarian or designee will adjust duties as needed.



## VIII. DISASTER PLAN TRAINING

Research Administration & Engagement will coordinate with UWFPD/Emergency Management for training exercises including the Attending Veterinarian, Animal Facility Manager and animal program staff. The frequency of training will be determined by UWFPD/Emergency Manager who is responsible for the overall emergency response program at UWF.

## IX. EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Life Threatening Emergency:** 911, 2911 from campus red phone, 850-474-2911 from a cell phone
- **Attending Veterinarian (AV);**  
Dr. J M McDaniel  
805 E Gadsden St.  
Pensacola, FL 32501  
(850) 437-9932
- **Research Compliance Officer/IACUC Coordinator**  
Natalie Mead  
Building 11, Room 101  
850.474.3484 Office  
407.342.3923 Cell  
nmead@uwf.edu
- **Building 58 and 84 Lab Manager**  
James Hammond  
(850) 857-6339 *Office*  
(850) 748-3531 *Cell*
- **Building 72 Office Administrator**  
Susan George  
Building 72, Room 241  
850.474.2593 Office  
sgeorge@uwf.edu
- **UWF Police**  
Office: 850.474.2415  
uwfpolice@uwf.edu

- **UWF Emergency Manager**  
 Captain David Faircloth  
 850-474-2415  
[dfaircloth@uwf.edu](mailto:dfaircloth@uwf.edu)
  
- **Facilities Operations and Maintenance**  
 Ext. 6000
  
- **Institutional Communications**  
 Emergency Messaging  
 Phone 850.474.2212
  
- **Office of Environmental, Health & Safety**  
 Information on various safety topics, including hazard evaluations and training  
 Information on radioactive materials and lasers  
 Phone: 850.474.2435  
[envhs@uwf.edu](mailto:envhs@uwf.edu)
  
- **Student Health Services**  
 Assistance with various topics including psychiatric services, student medical and dental evaluations/treatment.  
 Building 960, Suite 106  
 850.474.2172  
 Fax: 850.857.6100  
[healthservices@uwf.edu](mailto:healthservices@uwf.edu)
  
- **Local Health Contacts for Faculty/Staff**  
 HCA Florida West Hospital  
 8383 N Davis Hwy, Pensacola, FL 32514  
 850.494.3212  
[hcafloridahealthcare.com](http://hcafloridahealthcare.com)
  
- **Workers Compensation**  
 850.474.2694  
[hr@uwf.edu](mailto:hr@uwf.edu)

**AM-FM Radio Dial Numbers:**

Official information about emergency information to the University Community including closings, re-openings and resumption of classes will be available from the campus radio station, **WUWF 88.1 FM**, or via the UWF Web site (UWF.edu). and Mobile Alert.

**Web Resources:**

- Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan:  
<https://uwf.edu/finance-and-administration/departments/police/emergency-plans-procedures/emergency-operations-and-procedures/>
- IACUC Webpage:  
<https://uwf.edu/academic-affairs/departments/research-administration-engagement/research-integrity-compliance/institutional-animal-care-use-committee/>
- Workers' Compensation  
<https://uwf.edu/offices/human-resources/i-am-a/employee/workers-compensation/>