**RECOMMENDED GUIDELINE FOR PET SHELTER TRIAGE**

These recommended guidelines have been developed by the Virginia State Animal Response Team (VA SART) Board of Directors in consultation with several veterinarians.

These guidelines are applicable to co-located Pet Friendly Disaster Shelters operated by local jurisdictions. The intention is to provide guidance to lay persons when licensed veterinary personnel are not available.

The final decision to not accept an animal is to be made by the pet shelter supervisor using the best health assessment available, the capabilities within the shelter, and the safety of the owners if outside conditions are hazardous.

It is recommended that alternative arrangements be planned for animals that cannot be accepted in the disaster shelter for reason of infectious disease, non infectious illness or aggression. It is advisable for the local jurisdiction to have MOU's with facilities that could accept animals, that cannot be admitted to the shelter, i.e. private veterinary facilities.

Grounds for rejection for entry into shelter or for referral for medical care within 24 hours (all species), unless otherwise indicated):

I. Potential Infectious Diseases signs and symptoms:
   - Bloody or water diarrhea
   - Diarrhea in a puppy under 16 wks of age or in any dog of unknown DHPP (Distemper/Parvo) vaccine status
   - Coughing in young dogs or unexplained cough in older dog not due to treated heart, nor straining against leash (possible kennel cough).
   - Severely runny nose &/or eyes in cats
   - Severe sneezing in cats (more than 3 sneezes in 1 hour)
   - Persistent vomiting (more than 5 times a day or for longer than 2 days)

   If the emergency conditions warrant accepting these animals for the safety of the owners then they must be housed in an isolation area. The animal in take form must be annotated with the signs and symptoms and be sure the Waiver form is signed.

II. Non Infectious Health Condition
   A. Medical Emergencies: These animals need immediate veterinary care.
      - Difficulty breathing
      - Newly developed neurologic signs, especially seizures, in-coordination, paralysis or partial paralysis, coma
      - Distended abdomen or nonproductive wrenching in large and medium breed dogs
      - Serious eye injuries (severe squinting, constant rubbing at eye, cloudy eye, protruding eye)
      - Severe bleeding (soaks though bandages, spurting)
      - Severe lameness with obvious recent trauma
      - Crouched stance, hunched over
Pale gums - sign of anemia (especially if accompanied by weakness)

B. Non Emergency Conditions: These animals require continuous treatment and monitoring that is beyond the capability of the shelter. If these animals are accepted for owner safety reasons stated above then their conditions must be documented on the intake forms and waivers signed.

Skin ulcers

Not eating at all 2-3 days
Severe dehydration - skin does not return to normal position when picked up (Tenting)
Yellow tinge to skin, gums or whites of eyes (Jaundice)
   Infected wounds that need medical attention or medications.
Any wound that extends into underlying tissue or is extensive in nature.
Any condition in which the triage person believes would need blood work, X-rays, sedation or anesthsia.
Late term pregnancy or newborns less than 4 weeks old
Animals under treatment by a veterinarian but require regular monitoring, such as but not limited to anemia, unregulated diabetes, daily bandage changes, poorly controlled seizures.
Any of above accompanied by significant weakness or depressed attitude or with evident of recent trauma
Aggressive dogs that cannot be safely handled

Consider isolation, but not refusal of entry:
   Patchy hair loss or scabs in cats
   Large areas of hair loss accompanied by severe itchiness in dogs
   Diarrhea (if not referred, as above)
   Vomiting (if not referred as above)
   Animal aggressive
   Animals being treated for heart disease, respiratory disease, diabetes, eye disease, moderate to severe trauma or seizures (monitoring isolation/observation)