

Creating Safer Communities for Older Adults and Companion Animals



A Joint Effort of
The Humane Society of the United States, Washington, DC
and
The Department of Health and Family Services, Division of Disability and Elder Services
Bureau of Aging and Long Term Care Resources, Madison, WI

*The Department of Health and Family Services
Division of Disability and Elder Services
Bureau of Aging and Long Term Care Resources
Madison, WI*



*The Humane Society of the United States
Washington, DC*

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OF THE UNITED STATES**

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*A Joint Effort of The Humane Society of the United
States, Washington, DC*

and

the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

Foreword

Too often we hear about elderly animal hoarders whose pets suffer and die from malnourishment and disease while the hoarders themselves live in dangerously filthy homes, isolated from the community and social service agencies. We hear accounts of older victims of domestic violence who feel that they cannot leave their abusers because they would have to abandon their pet. Abusers use violence towards the companion animal of a victim of domestic violence as a method of power and control. These patterns establish the need to provide older people and their pets with more options and for resources that give protection specialists a greater understanding of the roots of these problems.

This manual is intended for professionals in the adult protective services, elder abuse and animal protection fields to expand their working knowledge of the role of companion animals in patterns of abuse, exploitation and self-neglect. Furthermore, this manual is intended to foster collaboration among these agencies. Communication can lead to a commitment to sharing resources and expertise, cross training, cross referrals, and cooperative efforts during investigations of abuse and neglect.

The content and organization of this manual is intentionally comprehensive. Insightful, informative articles introduce the complexity and seriousness of issues of animal hoarding and animal cruelty as an indicator of family violence, and provide options for older victims of domestic violence. Legal information provides potential civil and criminal remedies currently available. Outlines of both the elder abuse/neglect response system and the animal abuse/neglect response system in Wisconsin are provided so that both elder abuse and animal protection professionals are able to recognize and understand the philosophies, procedures, goals and limitations under which each type of agency is operating.

Several practical and important suggestions for cooperation are described in detail. A section highlights programs that have used the positive connection between an elder and pet as a foundation for success.

Finally, a comprehensive list of the county elder abuse and animal protection agencies in each county and the agencies' phone numbers is provided because initiating communication is the first, and essential step in the process of adopting cooperative strategies to help older and vulnerable people, and their pets.

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A Cautionary Note

These materials were prepared with the understanding that in doing so no legal service has been rendered. Due to the rapidly changing nature of the law, information contained in these materials may become outdated. In addition, no person should ever apply or interpret any law without the aid of an expert trained in the law who also knows the facts, because the facts may change the law’s application. The materials included are to inform; they are not a substitute for getting advice from a lawyer on a specific fact situation.

Contents	Page
Foreword	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Section One - Outline of Wisconsin’s Elder Abuse/Neglect Response System	1
Introduction.....	1
Intervention principles in elder abuse	2
Possible indicators of abuse	3
Indicators from the family/caregivers.....	3
Physical indicators	3
The Wisconsin elder abuse law.....	3
History of Wisconsin Law	3
Defining Elder Abuse	4
Reporting Elder Abuse.....	4
What happens when a report is received?.....	5
Section Two - Outline of a Typical Wisconsin Animal Abuse/Neglect Response System	7
Introduction.....	7
Intervention principles in animal abuse	8
Possible indicators of abuse	8
The Wisconsin animal cruelty law.....	9
Reporting animal abuse.....	9
What happens when a report is received?.....	9
Section Three - Animal Abuse: Application of Relevant Statutes, Codes and Ordinances	11
State abuse/ neglect laws	11
Confidentiality issues.....	11
Powers of a humane officer	11
Order of abatement	12
Taking custody of an animal.....	12
Pet ownership issues for victims of domestic abuse.....	13
Married victims of domestic abuse	13
Unmarried victims of domestic abuse.....	14
Steps to establish ownership and/or management and control	14
Intervention into suspected cases of animal abuse and neglect concerning health and sanitation	15
Issues of human health hazards.....	15
Local sanitation ordinances.....	16
Examples of health hazards and diseases.....	17
High ammonia levels	17
Toxoplasmosis	17
Rabies.....	17
Wisconsin statutes and ordinances.....	17
Wisconsin statutes.....	17

Contents	Page
Local regulations.....	18
County ordinances	18
City ordinances	19
Other states' statutes	23
Section Four - Animal Hoarding and Self-Neglect	25
<i>Killing with Kindness?</i> (reprint).....	27
Mental illness	28
Other psychological factors	29
Good intentions gone bad	29
Greed or criminal intent	29
<i>Handling Animal Collectors, Part 1: Interventions That Work</i> (reprint).....	32
Unique challenges.....	32
The prosecution dilemma.....	33
Intervention vs. prosecution.....	34
Linking solutions with causes.....	35
Working with collectors.....	35
The court order.....	36
Collaborative interventions.....	37
An ounce of prevention.....	38
<i>Handling Animal Collectors, Part 2: Managing a Large-Scale Rescue Operation</i> (reprint).....	40
Managing the crisis	40
Be prepared	41
The team approach.....	42
Documenting cruelty.....	43
Who pays the costs?.....	44
Putting the burden where it belongs.....	44
Other strategies	45
Handling adoptions	46
Educating the media.....	47
Ending the suffering.....	47
Equipment and supplies list for animal rescue operations.....	48
Removing animals from collectors	49
<i>Animal Hoarding: Intervention and Management Suggestions for Agencies</i> (reprint)	51
Treatment	52
<i>Animal Hoarding: Recommendations for Intervention by Family and Friends</i> (reprint).....	54
General information about animal hoarding behavior	54
Attitudes and communication style.....	55
Education about the human-animal bond	55
Listening skills.....	56
Recruiting help of others.....	56
Keeping a record.....	57
Optimizing the animal hoarder's response	57
Expressing your concerns	57
Creating a comfortable setting for discussion.....	57
Developing a positive alliance.....	58
Waiting for acknowledgement of problems before offering help.....	58

Contents	Page
Offering specific assistance	58
Providing help and setting limits	59
Community resources	59
The role of authorities.....	61
Recommended additional literature and resources on animal hoarding	62
Animal hoarding basics.....	62
Research.....	63
Prevention and intervention	63
Media coverage.....	64
Other resources	64
Application of knowledge.....	65
Section Five - Animal Cruelty as an Indicator of Family Violence/Abuse	67
Perception of the problem.....	67
Solutions	68
<i>Cruelty to Animals and Family Violence Training Key</i> (reprint).....	70
Application of knowledge.....	75
Section Six - Options for Abused Elders with Pets	77
<i>Saving Battered Women - One Pet at a Time</i> (reprint)	79
Nasty research results	79
A new partnership.....	80
The movement grows.....	80
<i>Domestic Violence Report</i> (reprints)	
<i>From Safety to Healing: Representing Women with Companion Animals</i>	82
<i>What Advocates Can Do for Battered Women with Companion Animals</i>	88
Application of knowledge.....	94
Section Seven - An Interdisciplinary Response:	95
Sample Memorandum of Understanding	96
Acknowledgement	96
Objective	96
Elder abuse definitions.....	97
Animal abuse definitions	97
Elder abuse and Wisconsin’s criminal code	97
Animal Cruelty and Wisconsin’s Criminal Code	98
Reporting.....	98
Investigations	99
Services	100
Training.....	101
Collaboration.....	101
Review	102
Period of agreement	102
Suspected animal abuse/neglect reporting form	103
Suspected elder abuse/neglect reporting form	104

<i>Guidelines for Safe Haven for Pets (SHP) Program</i> (reprint)	105
Developing a SHP program	105
Operating a SHP program	107
Pet sheltering sites	109
Screening potential fosterers	109
Training potential fosterers	110
Women’s own resources for placing their pets in safe settings	110
SHP services mentioned by domestic violence advocates	110
Hours of operation and transportation of pets	110
Transportation of pets	111
Duration of pet sheltering and dealing with failures to retrieve pets	111
Limits on women’s stays at domestic violence agency shelters	112
Policy for dealing with cases where pets are not retrieved	112
Confidentiality and safety issues	112
Pet-related issues in safety planning with women	114
Serving women who have completed their stays at the domestic violence shelter	115
Post-shelter transitional and other housing options for women	116
Services other than sheltering offered to women with SHP program pets	116
Funding SHP programs	117
Local initiative: The Domestic Violence Project in LaCrosse, WI	119
County-based elder abuse interdisciplinary teams	120
Sample interdisciplinary team member description	122
Section Eight - Positive Relationships for Elders and Pets	123
Section Nine - References and Additional Resources	125
References	125
Websites	127
Section Ten - Resources	129
Animal protection agencies	129
WI animal protection agency directory by county	132
State-wide advocacy and protection systems for WI vulnerable adults and elders	134
Lead elder abuse agency directory by county	139

Section One - Outline of Wisconsin's Elder Abuse/Neglect Response System¹

I. INTRODUCTION

This section should help animal protection agents understand:

- Some of the basic dynamics of elder abuse;
- The prevalence of elder abuse in Wisconsin;
- The philosophy and principles underpinning interventions in elder abuse;
- How Wisconsin's Elder Abuse Law operates;
- What constitutes elder abuse in Wisconsin and who it concerns;
- Indicators of elder abuse that workers should be observant of while investigating cases of animal cruelty;
- Wisconsin's Elder Abuse reporting law; and
- What happens when an elder abuse report is received.

A. Key Facts About Elder Abuse

1. Abuse and neglect of the elderly is a problem that has recently been acknowledged as a national issue.
2. National statistics indicate at least 5% of the over 60 population will be abused or neglected sometime during their later years.
3. While originally researchers believed that the majority of elder abuse was caused by "caregiver stress," more recent studies conclude that most elder abuse is a result of the same "power and control" factors as in other domestic violence situations.
4. In fact, research indicates that elders with frailties are no more likely to be abused than elders without frailties.
5. Additionally, while originally researchers believed that victims were dependent on their abusers, more recent research indicates that in fact the ABUSERS are dependent on their victims, whether for emotional or financial support for reasons such as abuser psychopathology, substance abuse, mental illness, etc.
6. Other, less research-supported causes of elder abuse may include: caregiver stress and transgenerational violence (violence in previous generations observed or experienced by abuser thus making violence appear to be a "normal" response and/or violence as learned behavior).

¹ Adapted from Appendices L, P, Q & R of the "Elder Abuse Interdisciplinary Team Manual", prepared by Attorney Betsy Abramson for the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services in cooperation with the Waushara County Department of Human Services (February 2002). To view an electronic version of the manual, go to: <http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/aps/index.htm> and scroll down left-hand column for manual.

B. Prevalence of Elder Abuse in Wisconsin

1. Statistics on the prevalence of elder abuse have been gathered throughout the state of Wisconsin since 1985. There has been a steady increase in the number of reports over the years.
2. In 2001, 3,223 reports were received, nearly a 90% increase over 1989. Of cases reported in 2001, 15 were fatal and another 278 were considered life threatening. Over 1 in 12 (8.6%) involved either a fatal or life-threatening situation.
3. There have been nearly 30,000 cases reported since 1989.
4. Research indicates that an estimated 85-95% of cases are never reported. People may be ashamed or afraid to report or may simply not know how to get help.

II. INTERVENTION PRINCIPLES IN ELDER ABUSE

Elder abuse agency goals are to provide services, information and options that allow the victim of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation to exercise self-determination to the greatest extent while providing access to a safe environment.

The concept of self-determination adopted by the Wisconsin Bureau on Aging and Long Term Care Resources includes a number of civil rights to which competent adults are entitled. These rights do not change by virtue of aging. Competent elders have the right to:

- Decide where and how to live;
- Choose whether to accept social services or other community assistance;
- Make decisions different from those that society would make, including bad decisions, unless they hurt others.

Elder abuse interventions are in support of a competent older person's right to self-determination. When the older person is unable to decide or act on his or her own behalf, safety is also the foremost concern. An elder abuse worker will:

- Involve the older person in the development of the intervention/care plan. Take the time to explain the range of legal, medical and social service options to the older person, beginning with the least restrictive alternatives in treatment and placement so that the older person can exercise his or her maximum decision-making ability for his or her competence.
- Recommend community based services rather than institutional placement, whenever possible.
- Respect the older person's right to confidentiality (e.g., see sec. 46.215, Wis. Stats., regarding exchange of information between relevant county agencies providing services).
- Recognize that inadequate or inappropriate intervention may be worse than no intervention at all.

For example, elder abuse workers may find situations of animal hoarding difficult to remedy because the hoarding may be viewed as a lifestyle choice that is protected by the principle of self-determination. However, elder abuse workers need to appraise the situation with the recognition that hoarding may reflect a problem with the client's mental health, the beginning of a problem pathology and/or self-neglect. Moreover, the elder abuse worker must recognize that the harm suffered by the animals may necessitate intervention.

III. POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF ABUSE

If you are an animal protection specialist called upon to investigate a case of animal cruelty, and there is also an older person (or vulnerable adult, e.g., someone with a developmental disability) living in the household, look for signs of abuse because pets and family members are often tangled in the same web of violence.

A. Indicators from the Family/Caregiver(s)

1. The elder person may not be allowed to speak for him or herself or to others without the presence of the suspected abuser (e.g. family member or caretaker);
2. Obvious absence of assistance, attitudes of indifference or anger toward the older person;
3. Family member or caregiver "blames" the elder person (e.g., accusation that incontinence is a deliberate act);
4. Aggressive behavior (threats, insults, harassment);
5. Flirtation, coyness, touching, etc., reflecting possible inappropriate sexual relationship;
6. Social isolation of family or isolation or restriction of activity of the older adult within the family unit;
7. Conflicting accounts of incidents by the family, supporters, and/or victim;
8. Problems with alcohol or drugs.

B Physical Indicators

1. Injury that has not been cared for properly;
2. The lack of necessary equipment such as walker(s), cane(s), bedside commode;
3. Lack of necessities such as heat, food, water and unsafe conditions in the home;
4. Poor skin hygiene;
5. Soiled clothing or bedding;
6. Bruises, welts, discolorations;
7. Cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds, burns;
8. Dehydration and/or malnourishment; and/or
9. Household pets appear to be neglected and/or abused.

IV. THE WISCONSIN ELDER ABUSE LAW - 1983 WIS. ACT. 398, WIS. STAT. § 46.90

A. History of Wisconsin Law

1. Wisconsin-mandated development of a statewide system for reporting elder abuse to begin in 1985.

2. The bill requires each of Wisconsin's 72 counties to participate in the system and to provide an Elder Abuse Helpline telephone number.
3. The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services was assigned: (1) coordination of system design and implementation; (2) provision of on-going consultation when required; and (3) monitoring of progress and needs.

B. Defining Elder Abuse: Key Terms, Wis. Stat. § 46.90(1)

1. Wisconsin law states that **ELDER ABUSE** has occurred when a person "60 years of age or older or who is suffering from the infirmities of aging" has been subjected to any of the following four categories of abuse:
 - a. **PHYSICAL ABUSE:** the willful infliction on an elder of physical pain or injury or unreasonable confinement. It includes, but is not limited to, direct beatings, choking, sexual assault, unreasonable physical constraint or pain with no physical marks.
 - b. **MATERIAL ABUSE:** the misuse of an elder's property or financial resources. Material abuse includes financial deception, diverting income, mismanagement of funds, and taking money against a person's will.
 - c. **NEGLECT:** significant danger to an elder's physical or mental health when the person responsible for the elder is unable or fails to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing or medical/dental care.
 - d. **SELF-NEGLECT:** significant danger to an elder's physical or mental health when the elder is responsible for his or her own care and is unable to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing or medical/dental care

C. Reporting Elder Abuse, Wis. Stat. § 46.90(4)

1. **Any** person **may** report possible abuse, material abuse or neglect, if aware of facts or **circumstances** that would lead a **reasonable person** to suspect. (Not necessary to produce evidence that would hold up in court, rather, circumstantial evidence is accepted, that is a "reasonable person" standard, rather than a "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard.) Wis. Stat. § 46.90(4)(a)1.
2. Any person who believes self-neglect has occurred may report that belief, and the facts and circumstances, to the county lead elder abuse agency. Wis. Stat. § 46.90(4)(a)2.
3. There are protections against discharge and other discrimination for employees who report abuse in good faith. Wis. Stat. § 46.90(4)(b).
4. There are protections against civil or criminal liability, or charges of unprofessional conduct for reporting in good faith. Wis. Stat. § 46.90(4)(c).

5. **VOLUNTARY REPORTING**, Wis. Stat. § 46.90(4)(a). Unlike many other state elder abuse laws, Wisconsin's Elder Abuse Reporting law does not list any "mandatory reporters". In other words, certain individuals (e.g. physicians, social workers, etc.) are not required to report all evidence of abuse that they observe under § 46.90. There are other Wisconsin laws, however, that mandate certain professionals (e.g., emergency room physicians) to report certain specific injuries (e.g. second and/or third degree burns, gunshot wounds) to some officials (e.g., law enforcement).

D. What Happens When a Report is Received?

1. When a report of abuse, neglect or self-neglect is received, the county's lead elder abuse agency must begin an investigation within 24 hours (excluding weekends and holidays), although for material abuse investigations (financial abuse), the agency must begin within five working days.
2. Initial client contact is made by the elder abuse worker, who then completes a thorough assessment of the circumstances. The purpose of the initial assessment is to substantiate whether abuse has occurred and to gather information in order to develop a case plan. All elder abuse workers should prepare a report on each case they respond to.
3. Based on the findings, the lead agency or other appropriate social service or health agency may contact the individual to offer their services.
4. The client has the right to **privacy** and **confidentiality** concerning anything discussed with the worker. The worker may request permission from the client to proceed; it may be necessary to ask the client to sign a consent form.
5. Development of a case plan is attempted with each client. If the elder wants to change his or her situation, the worker assists in making the desired changes. The goal is to utilize the least disruptive action to maintain a client in the least restrictive environment.

Section Two – Outline of a Typical Wisconsin Animal Abuse/Neglect Response System

I. INTRODUCTION

This section should help elder abuse workers understand:

- Some of the basic dynamics of animal abuse;
- The prevalence of animal abuse in Wisconsin;
- The philosophy and principles underpinning interventions in animal abuse;
- How Wisconsin's animal abuse law operates;
- What constitutes animal abuse in Wisconsin and who it concerns;
- Indicators of animal abuse that workers should be observant of while investigating cases of elder abuse;
- Wisconsin's animal abuse reporting laws; and
- What happens when an animal abuse report is received.

A. Key Facts

1. Abuse and neglect of animals is a problem that has long been acknowledged as an issue.
2. Although no national statistics on animal abuse are kept by law enforcement agencies, media reports of serious cases have increased. In addition, enforcement agencies such as the National Association of District Attorneys and the International Association of Chiefs of Police have incorporated into their regular training materials information on the need to respond to animal cruelty.
3. While some animal abuse is caused by ignorance and "caregiver stress," many studies conclude that much animal abuse is a result of the same "power and control" factors found in elder abuse and other domestic violence situations.
4. As with elder abuse, another cause of animal abuse may be transgenerational violence (violence in previous generations observed or experienced by abuser thus making violence appear to be a "normal" response and/or violence as learned behavior).

B. Prevalence of Animal Abuse in Wisconsin

1. Although there is no official database of animal abuse statistics kept in Wisconsin, it is safe to say that there has been a steady increase in the number of incident reports over the years.
2. From 1989-1998 there were over 19,000 complaints of animal cruelty/neglect in the Milwaukee Metropolitan area and close to 4,000 in Dane County.

3. In Massachusetts, there were approximately 80,000 complaints investigated by the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals between 1975 and 1996.
4. Many serious cases of animal abuse or neglect go unreported to the appropriate agencies. People may be unaware of the existence of strong laws that protect animals in Wisconsin, may be afraid to report, may not know how to get help or may feel that “it’s just an animal.”

II. Intervention Principles in Animal Abuse

The goals of animal cruelty agencies are to provide protection, services, and information for animals and their caregivers. An animal should be free from physical neglect and abuse, deprivation of socialization, and should have access to a safe environment.

In protecting/providing for an animal, an animal protection agency worker may:

- If minor neglect, involve the animal’s caregiver in the development of an intervention/care plan. Take the time to explain the proper physical, nutritional, and medical care for the animal.
- Recommend community-based sources of local assistance for the animal (e.g., humane society, animal care and control, veterinarians, etc.).
- Respect the person’s right to confidentiality where appropriate.
- If a serious/life threatening case of abuse, seek law enforcement assistance to make an arrest, and seize or have animals signed-over for care.
- Recognize that no intervention at all may result in the severe suffering or death of the animal.

For example, animal protection agency workers may find situations of animal hoarding difficult to remedy because the hoarding may be viewed by the courts as a lifestyle choice that is protected by the principle of self-determination. However, if the condition of the animals warrant, animal protection agency workers must take action. At the same time, with the assistance of elder abuse professionals, animal protection agency workers need to appraise the situation with the recognition that hoarding may reflect a problem with the client’s mental health, the beginning of a problem pathology, and/or self-neglect. Moreover, the animal protection agency worker must recognize that the harm suffered by the animals may necessitate intervention.

III. POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF ANIMAL ABUSE

If you are called upon to investigate a case of animal cruelty, and there is also an older person (or vulnerable adult, e.g., someone with a developmental disability) living in the household, look for signs of abuse because pets and family members are often tangled in the same web of violence.

- Injured/disabled
- Bleeding
- Coughing/breathing problem
- Hair loss/skin problem (e.g., matted, covered in feces, or has fleas)
- Sick

- Underweight
- Intimidated/Cowering
- Inadequate shelter (e.g. left outdoors for length of time in either extreme cold or heat)
- Unsanitary food/water containers
- Indifference to animal's condition (e.g., allowed to bark incessantly for hours)
- Hazardous conditions
- Multiple animals with multiple pregnancies and/or litters

IV. REPORTING OF ANIMAL CRUELTY

A. The Wisconsin Animal Cruelty Law – 1990 Wis. Stat. Chapter 951

1. § 951.02 Mistreating animals: No person may treat any animal, whether belonging to the person or another, in a cruel manner. This section does not prohibit bona fide experiments carried on for scientific research or normal and accepted veterinary practices.
(Conviction under this section does not require proof of intent or negligence)
2. § 951.01 (2) "Cruel" means causing unnecessary and excessive pain or suffering or unjustifiable injury or death.

A more detailed discussion of this and other laws protecting animals in Wisconsin is provided in Section III.

B. Reporting Animal Abuse

Any person may report possible animal abuse/neglect, if aware of facts or circumstances that would lead a reasonable person to suspect animal abuse/neglect. (Not necessary to produce evidence that would hold up in court, rather, circumstantial evidence is accepted, that is a "reasonable person" standard, rather than a "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard.)

C. What Happens When a Report is Received?

1. When a report of animal abuse or neglect is received, the county's lead animal protection agency (e.g., animal care and control, sheriff's department, police department, humane society) should begin an investigation immediately.
2. Initial contact is made by the investigator, who then completes a thorough assessment of the circumstances. The purpose of the initial assessment is to substantiate whether abuse has occurred and to gather information in order to develop a case plan. All investigators should prepare a report on each investigation.
3. Based on the animal protection specialist's investigative findings, a report may be made by the local animal protection agency to the lead elder abuse agency so that an offer of services may be made based on the individual's needs. Alternatively,

the referral may need to be made to another appropriate social service or health agency (e.g. situations involving a hoarder who may require assessment).

4. The accused may have the right to **privacy** and **confidentiality** concerning anything discussed with the worker. The worker may request permission from the accused to proceed; it may be necessary to ask the accused to sign a consent form.
5. Development of a case plan should be attempted with each case. The goal is to protect the animal(s); but, when appropriate, utilize the least disruptive action.
6. Intervention should not be delayed until conditions have deteriorated to the point where criminal charges of animal abuse or neglect are warranted, but it is often the case that the situation may not be brought to the attention of appropriate agencies until the situation has become severe. Whenever possible, animal care and control agencies will try to keep animals with owners who have the willingness and ability to maintain them in a safe and humane way. If this is not possible, efforts will be made to rehabilitate animals and find suitable placement for them. Unfortunately, in some cases, animals may be so severely ill, injured or behaviorally unsound that euthanasia is the most humane disposition.

Section Three – Animal Abuse: Application of Relevant Statutes, Codes and Ordinances

Animal cruelty is a crime that is punishable by law. At the time of this manual's printing, forty-one states and the District of Columbia have made the most egregious acts of cruelty and violence towards animals a felony. The complexity of the issue and its connection to domestic violence, elder abuse and child abuse necessitates an appropriate response from law enforcement and the court system. The following section provides a brief summary of current state laws and local ordinances addressing animal welfare. In addition, ideas for alternate means of intervention and prosecutions are presented.

Are there Wisconsin Laws Against Animal Abuse/Neglect?

Wisconsin's laws against animal abuse and neglect are primarily located in ch. 951 of the Wisconsin Statutes. These laws prohibit cruel treatment of any animal, including all warm-blooded creatures (except humans), reptiles, birds and amphibians. An individual found guilty of mistreating an animal is generally subject to forfeiture. However, particularly reprehensible crimes such as mistreating an animal for purposes of sexual gratification, (s. 944.17(2), Wis. Stats.), or possessing or training an animal for purposes of engaging the animal in exhibition of fighting, (s. 951.08(2), Wis. Stats.), carry more severe penalties. Wisconsin recognizes as felonious the intentional cruel treatment of an animal that results in permanent harm to the animal. An individual who intentionally violates the prohibition resulting in the mutilation, death or disfigurement of an animal is guilty of a Class E felony. § 951.18(1), Wis. Stats.

There are also general standards of care that owners are required to meet. Individuals who own animals have a statutorily mandated responsibility to provide proper food, water and shelter to their animals. (§§ 951.13, 951.14, Wis. Stats.)

Confidentiality Issues – Are There Any Statutory Prohibitions for Reporting Suspected Animal Abuse?

Any person who suspects that an animal is being abused may make a report to the local animal protection agency or to law enforcement. There is no statutory provision that classifies these reports as confidential.

What is a Humane Officer and What Powers Does She/He Have?

Humane officers are appointed by local governments (city or county) to enforce state and local laws prohibiting animal abuse. Humane officers have the authority to conduct investigations which includes the right to enter any building, vehicle or place where animals may be present for the purposes of inspection, examination of animals or the gathering of evidence. If consent to enter is not given by the person in charge, the humane officer may execute an inspection warrant under s. 66.0119, Wis. Stats., or request a search warrant under s. 968.12, Stats. Humane officers may also seek subpoenas from the district attorney, issue citations for ordinance violations relating to animals and request prosecutions.

Although humane officers are charged with enforcing s. 95.21, Wis. Stats., (Rabies Control Program) and chs. 174 (Dogs) and 951 (Crimes Against Animals), they are not authorized to arrest individuals for violations of these laws. Only law enforcement officers (as defined

in s.165.85(2)(c), Stats.), have the authority to make arrests. Humane officers also lack statutory authority to execute search warrants, carry firearms, stop individuals, stop, search or detain vehicles, enter any place or vehicle by force or without consent of the owner (except in emergencies where it is necessary to save an animal from imminent death) or to remove any animal from the custody of another by force. They do, however, possess a powerful and effective tool – the right to issue abatement orders.

What is an Order of Abatement?

An order of abatement is a directive issued to an individual that requires him or her to take specific steps to rectify an animal care problem. Humane officers are statutorily authorized to issue these orders under s. 173.11, Wis. Stats. Abatement orders are potentially valuable to humane officers in many of the situations with which they are faced. They allow the officer to educate an owner when education is all that is needed to correct a problem. Without this tool, the officer's choices are: 1) trying to talk the owner into correcting the problem; or 2) pursuing criminal prosecution. If the owner does not comply with the abatement order however, the officer may seek criminal prosecution. If this is the case, the penalty for the offender is enhanced due to the fact that an abatement order was previously issued. If the owner is convicted of cruelty to animals under s. 173.11, Wis. Stats., without an abatement order ever being issued, the offender is subject to a forfeiture of up to \$500. If, however, an abatement order was issued within the past three years, the forfeiture amount goes up to \$10,000. § 951.18, Wis. Stats.

Unfortunately, abatement orders are greatly underutilized. This is due to the fact that in some cities and counties, there is no procedure in place for offenders to contest the orders. Wisconsin Statutes provide that any political subdivision (e.g., county, city, village) appointing a humane officer must also enact an ordinance designating one or more officials with the authority to modify or withdraw the abatement orders. § 173.03 (2), Wis. Stats.

To ensure that all humane officers are able to issue abatement orders, it is important that every jurisdiction designate an official to consider appeals of such orders. For information on whether your particular political subdivision has such a provision in place, contact your county corporation counsel or city attorney.

Who Can Take Custody of an Animal and Under What Circumstances?

Pursuant to s. 173.13, Wis. Stats., a humane officer (or law enforcement officer) has the authority to take custody of an animal if the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the animal is:

1. An abandoned or stray animal.
2. An unwanted animal delivered to the humane officer.
3. A dog not tagged as required by ch. 174.
4. An animal not licensed in compliance with any ordinance.
5. An animal not confined as required by a quarantine order under any statute, rule or ordinance relating to the control of any animal disease.
6. An animal that has caused damage to persons or property.
7. A participant in an animal fight intentionally instigated by any person.
8. An animal mistreated in violation of ch. 951 (Crimes Against Animals).
9. An animal delivered by a veterinarian under s. 173.13(2).

Individuals other than humane officers or law enforcement officers (e.g., Adult Protective Service [APS] workers) do not have the authority to take custody of an animal unless the animal is abandoned or is a stray. Taking the dog or cat of another individual without the owner's consent is considered to be "dognapping" or "catnapping" under s. 951.03, Wis. Stats., and is punishable by forfeiture. If an APS worker comes across an animal that he or she believes is being abused or neglected by its owner, the APS worker must contact a humane officer or law enforcement officer to take custody of the animal.

Why is Pet Ownership an Issue for Victims of Domestic Abuse?

Under the law, pets are considered to be property. Therefore, if a victim of domestic abuse plans to leave with a pet, questions regarding who actually owns the pet may arise. The abuser may challenge the victim's right to take the pet or to give it to a trusted friend or relative. Sheltering programs for the pets of domestic abuse victims (sometimes called the "Safe Havens for Pets" program – see Section VII for further details) may request information as to whether the victim has the right to place the pet into the program. To help ensure a pet's safety, victims of domestic violence should be encouraged to take steps that would assist in either establishing ownership of a pet, or, in the alternative, the right to manage and control the pet.

1. Married Victims of Domestic Abuse

If a victim of domestic abuse is married to the abuser, it is likely that the abuser will have an ownership interest in the pet. Wisconsin, as a community property state, presumes that all property owned by spouses is marital property. This means that each spouse has a present, undivided one-half interest in each item of property acquired during the marriage. What happens, then, when a victim wants to leave an abusive spouse and take the family pet with him or her? Does the abuser have the right to prevent him or her from taking the pet?

Under Wisconsin law, the question becomes: "Who has the authority to manage and control the pet?" (It is important to note that the question is not: "Who owns the pet?" As mentioned above, if there is no formal agreement as to whom the pet belongs, it is likely that each spouse already has a one-half ownership in the pet.) In making the determination as to who has the authority to manage and control, it should first be discussed what is meant (and what is not meant) by this term. Sec. 766.01(11), Wis. Stats., defines "management and control" as "the right to buy, sell, use, transfer, exchange, abandon, lease, consume, expend, assign, create a security interest in, mortgage, encumber, dispose of, institute or defend a civil action regarding or otherwise deal with property as if it were property of an unmarried person." A spouse who has the authority to manage and control a pet has the right to leave with it, sell it or give it to a third party as a gift. However, the fact an individual has the right to manage and control the pet does not mean that he or she may abuse the animal. It is a crime for anyone to mistreat an animal in a cruel manner, abandon it or fail to provide it with proper food, water or shelter. §§ 951.13, 951.14, 951.15, Wis. Stats.

How is the right to "manage and control" determined? **Wis. Stat. § 766.51 Management and control of property of spouses** states that a spouse, acting alone, may manage and control the following: 1) his or her property that is not marital property; 2) marital property held in that spouse's name alone or not held in the name of the other spouse; and 3) marital

property held in the names of both spouses in the alternative. For example, “Fido is owned by John Smith OR Jane Smith.” Specific steps that can be taken to establish the right to manage and control the pet are listed under subheading 3 below. Steps to Establish Ownership and/or Management and Control.

The greatest challenge under this statute is when a pet is held in both of the spouses’ names or solely in the abuser’s name. Under the **Management and control of property of spouses statute**, “Spouses may manage and control marital property held in the names of both spouses other than in the alternative only if they act together.” Although this would seem to limit what a victim of abuse could do with a pet that was in both spouses’ names, the law also requires each spouse to act in good faith with respect to the other spouse in matters involving marital property. § 766.15, Wis. Stats. A victim could argue then, that the abuser’s mistreatment of the pet constituted a breach of that duty and request that the court grant the victim management and control rights of the pet or provide for a change in the classification of the pet as marital property.

A Safe Haven for Pets (SHP) program (or a program similar to it) will generally ask the victim to sign a statement indicating that he or she has the authority to place the pet into such a program. In cases in which a pet is held in both spouses’ names or solely in the abuser’s name, some agencies will require victims to sign a disclaimer stating, “I am not the owner of this pet but I am concerned about its welfare.” Additionally, the program will usually have the victim sign an indemnification agreement protecting it from any legal claims that may be brought by the abuser.

2. Unmarried Victims of Domestic Abuse

For victims of abuse who are not married to the abuser, the ownership of a pet will generally be determined by who purchased or adopted the animal. Likewise, the right to manage or control the pet will be that of the owner. Therefore, if the pet was purchased or adopted by the victim, it should be fairly clear that he or she has an ownership interest and the right to manage and control the pet. If the pet was purchased or adopted by the abuser (unless subsequently given to the victim as a gift), a victim may have a difficult time attempting to establish any ownership interest in or right to manage and control the pet. However, since pets are rarely held in “title,” a victim living with an abuser may be able to demonstrate that he or she jointly owns the pet with the abuser, thereby establishing an ownership interest.

3. Steps to Establish Ownership and/or Management and Control

The steps below may be used by any domestic abuse victim, whether married or unmarried, to attempt to establish ownership and/or the right to manage and control a pet.

- If the pet is not licensed (which is often), the victim should contact the local licensing agency and license the pet immediately in his or her sole name. If the victim plans to leave the abuser, he or she may wish to use a post office box as an address so that his or her whereabouts remain confidential.
- If the pet is already licensed in the abuser’s name, the victim should contact the local licensing agency to inquire about whether his or her name can be added to the license or if the license can be transferred to the victim’s sole name.
- Take the pet for veterinary care (e.g., vaccinations/shots, annual check-up, medical/dental care) and obtain a “paid statement” in the victim’s name.

- Pay for pet food/supplies/grooming services and obtain a “paid statement” in the victim’s name.
- Request the transfer of all veterinary records to the victim’s sole name or inquire about adding the victim’s name to veterinary records that are held in the name of the abuser.
- Take out a pet insurance policy with the victim listed as the sole owner of the pet.
- Obtain a dog park permit listed in the victim’s sole name, or inquire with the Department of Parks about having the victim’s name added to a park permit that has already been issued.
- If the pet is able to be registered, the victim should contact the registering agency to inquire about registering the pet in his or her sole name or adding his or her name jointly to any papers if the pet is already registered.
- Register a pet for obedience classes in the victim’s sole name.

With respect to litigation regarding pet ownership, in a survey conducted by Safe Havens for Pets (SHP), 95.2% of domestic violence agency respondents reported that they had not become involved in legal disputes related to ownership of pets sheltered in SHP programs. Of the animal welfare agency respondents, 85% reported they had not been in legal disputes over ownership of SHP program pets.

Finally, although public policy considerations weigh heavily against the prosecution of a domestic abuse victim who is attempting to save a pet, victims should be aware they could potentially be subject to a Class C forfeiture for taking the dog or cat of another without the owner’s consent. However, as mentioned previously, it is also a crime to mistreat an animal. Therefore, if the victim is concerned about the treatment of an animal at the hands of the abuser, he or she may also contact the local police department, animal control agency or police department to report the abuse.

What are the Possible Means of Intervention into Suspected Cases of Animal Abuse and Neglect Concerning Health and Sanitation?

A. Issues of Human Health Hazards

A “human health hazard” is a substance, activity or condition that is known to have the potential to cause acute or chronic illness or death if exposure to the substance, activity or condition is not abated. § 254.01(2), Wis. Stats. Examples of human health hazards include proliferation of pet waste, rotting food or garbage, high ammonia levels from cat urine and rat infestation.

1. What can local officials do if they suspect a human health hazard exists on a property?

If consent for entry onto a property is denied, a peace officer (which includes law enforcement officers, state and local health department officers, agents and employees) or humane officer may apply for, obtain and execute a special inspection warrant issued under sec. 66.0119, Wis. Stats. Special inspection warrants are issued for “inspection purposes” which include building, housing, electrical, plumbing, heating, gas, fire, health, safety, environmental pollution and others. § 66.0119(1)(a), Wis. Stats.

If a local health officer finds a human health hazard, he or she shall order the abatement or removal of the human health hazard on private premises, within a reasonable time period, and if the owner or occupant fails to comply, the local health officer may enter upon the premises and abate or remove the human health hazard. § 254.59(1), Wis. Stats. If a violation of an ordinance relating to animals is discovered, the humane officer may issue a citation.

Different from a special inspection warrant is a “search warrant.” Any individual may apply for a search warrant under s. 968.12 if there is reason to believe that a violation of ch. 951 has taken place or is taking place. If the court is satisfied that probable cause exists, it shall issue a search warrant directing a law enforcement officer in the county to proceed immediately to the location of the alleged violation with a doctor of veterinary medicine, if the court determines that a veterinarian is necessary for purposes of the search, and directing the law enforcement officer to search the place designated in the warrant, retaining in his or her custody subject to the order of the court such property or things as are specified in the warrant, including any animal. If the person applying for the search warrant is a humane officer, the humane officer shall accompany the law enforcement officer who is directed to perform the search.

2. Local Sanitation Ordinances – What Can County and City Officers and Health Departments Do in Cases of Suspected Animal Abuse?

County health departments work under both state statute and their respective county ordinances. The governing bodies of cities, towns and villages may choose to rely on these ordinances or they may create more detailed ordinances for their particular jurisdictions. Ordinance-enforcing agencies require direct knowledge of situations before they will start an investigation process. Combinations of these state and local ordinances are used to investigate and prosecute cases of animal abuse and neglect.

A local board of health may adopt regulations and recommend enactment of ordinances that set forth requirements for animal-borne and vector-borne disease control to assure a safe level of sanitation, human health hazard control or health protection for the community, including the following:

- (a) The control of rats, stray animals, noise and rabies and other diseases.
- (b) The control of wildlife, including the keeping of dangerous wild animals, disease transmission and human health hazard control and eradication.
- (c) Pest control, including community sanitation, rodent and vector control, resident responsibilities and the health impact of pesticide use. § 254.51(5), Stats.

3. What are Examples of Health Hazards and Diseases?

- (a) High Ammonia Levels

In situations where an owner has failed to properly clean up and dispose of pet waste, specifically cat urine, high ammonia levels may exist. Exposure to high levels of ammonia can be extremely dangerous to humans. Ammonia, which is present in cat urine, is a colorless gas with a penetrating, pungent, suffocating odor. Both of the U.S. government agencies concerned with workplace safety (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health [NIOSH] and Occupational Safety and Health Administration [OSHA]) have identified ammonia as a health hazard. The adverse health effects include acute lung damage/edema, eye, nose, throat, bronchi and skin irritation.

(b) Toxoplasmosis

Toxoplasmosis is a parasitic infection that can cause severe brain and eye damage to people with compromised immune systems. Humans can become infected with toxoplasmosis through various means, including accidental ingestion of contaminated cat feces. This can occur if you inadvertently touch your hands to your mouth after touching anything that has come into contact with cat feces. Although most individuals can prevent infection by washing their hands after cleaning the litter box, owners who neglect to properly dispose of pet waste are at higher risk of infection.

(c) Rabies

Rabies is a disease caused by the rabies virus. Although rabies rarely occurs in pets that are kept indoors, stray animals or those that are brought into the home from the wild may be unvaccinated and could be infected by the disease. Humans usually contract rabies from the bite of an infected animal. Early signs of rabies in humans can include headache or fever, with more advanced cases evidenced by serious adverse affects to the nervous system, such as confusion or agitation. A rabies infection that reaches the advanced stage is fatal.

What are Potentially Applicable Wisconsin Statutes and Ordinances?

1. Wisconsin Statutes

A. Impoundment Fees and Costs

§ 173.23(3)(a), Wis. Stats.

A political subdivision may petition the circuit court for an order doing any of the following with respect to an animal taken into custody by a law enforcement officer or a humane officer withheld under s. 173.21(1), Wis. Stats.:

1. *Providing for payment for the custody, care or treatment of the animal.*
2. *Requiring the owner of the animal to post bond for the costs of custody, care or treatment of the animal pending the outcome of any other proceeding.*

3. *Authorizing the sale, destruction or other disposal of the animal.*
§ 173.24, Wis. Stats.

An individual found guilty of violating ch.951 (Crimes Against Animals) shall be assessed the costs of any investigation, expenses of taking any animal into custody and expenses incident thereto, keeping the animal in custody and if necessary, disposal of the animal. If an individual is found not guilty of violating ch. 951, the county treasurer shall pay the expenses from the general fund of the county.

B. License Requirement for Kennels (**NOTE:** This section is created effective February 4, 2004, by 2001 Wis. Act 16).

§173.40(2)(a), Wis. Stats.

- (a) *Except as provided in par. (c), no person may operate an animal shelter or kennel without a license from the department. A person shall obtain a license under this paragraph for each separate location at which the person operates an animal shelter or kennel.*
- (b) ...
- (c) *The department may issue an interim permit that authorizes a person to operate an animal shelter or kennel or to act as a pet dealer or pet breeder until the department makes the initial inspection required under sub. (4)(a).*

2. Local Regulations

In addition to state laws, most counties and municipalities have ordinances that relate directly (and indirectly) to pet ownership. These regulations cover a wide variety of areas including general standards of animal care, sanitation requirements, fire codes, noise ordinances, etc. Often more specific than state statutes, these ordinances provide additional protections and potential means of intervention in cases of suspected abuse. A sampling of ordinances follows.

A. County Ordinances

Sanitation

Dane County, s. 46.22

Nuisances

- (1) *A nuisance under this section is any condition of lands or buildings which:*
 - (a) *has resulted in or has the potential to result in harm to any individual, whether by accident,*

disease or sickness occurring as a result of contact with such conditions; and

- (b) ...*
- (2) Every owner, tenant or other user of property within Dane County shall maintain his or her lands and buildings in such a condition that they shall not become a nuisance.*
- (3) The department shall notify the owner, occupant or other user of lands or buildings where a nuisance is located to abate or remove such nuisance within thirty (30) days of receipt of said notice. Said notice shall either be hand delivered or be deemed given as of the second attempted delivery date as to those letters not actually delivered.*
- (4) Whenever after investigation a sanitarian determines that a nuisance poses imminent danger to the health of persons unless ameliorated promptly, the department may order remedial action by the owner or occupant of the premises within 48 hours...*

46.225 Human Health Hazards

- (1) The department may declare housing that is dilapidated, unsafe or unsanitary to be a human health hazard.*
 - (a) For purposes of this section, human health hazard has the definition set forth in s. 254.01(2), Wis. Stats.*
- (2) If the local health officer finds a human health hazard, he or she shall follow the procedures set forth in s. 254.59, Wis. Stats., and the procedures set forth in said section of the statutes, and acts amendatory thereto, are adopted by reference as though fully set forth herein.*

Security Bond Provisions/Impoundment Fees

Dane County, s. 47.35

Impoundment Fee

- (1) There is hereby established an impoundment fee of \$10.00 for each stray animal placed in the pound [shelter facilities of the Dane County Humane Society].*

- (2) *The impoundment fee shall be in addition to the daily boarding fee of \$5.00 for the first day and \$4.00 per day thereafter or such higher amounts as may reflect actual expenses of the [Dane County Humane Society].*
- (3) *The impoundment fee and daily boarding fee shall be paid by the owner of the animal except in cases where the owner is unknown, the [Dane County Humane Society] shall be reimbursed for the daily boarding fee by the county. Where the owner is known, the society shall collect the impoundment fee and forward the same to the county for deposit into the county treasury.*
- (4) *The owner of an animal which has been impounded under this ordinance and who has not paid either the impoundment or boarding fees may be proceeded against in the name of the county and in the manner provided for in a civil action, for the amount of the fees plus any direct collection costs incurred by the county.*

B. City Ordinances

General Property Requirements

City of Madison, s. 27.07

Fixing the Responsibility of Owners, Operators, and Occupants

- (1) ...
- (2) *The responsibility of owners, operators and occupants of residential buildings is as follows:*
 - (a) ...
 - (b) *Every occupant of a residential building shall keep in a clean, proper, and sanitary condition that part of the residential building and premises thereof which s/he occupies and controls except the operator of every lodging house shall be responsible for the sanitary maintenance of all walls, floors, ceilings and every other part of the lodging house. Every occupant of a residential building shall dispose of all her/his refuse and garbage in the containers required by the Madison General Ordinances.*

Fire Code

City of Madison, s. 34.01(7)

Fire Prevention Code – General Ordinances

(7) *Issuance of Orders*

(a) *Order to Eliminate Dangerous or Hazardous Conditions. Whenever the Chief [City of Madison Fire Chief or his/her Designee] shall find in any building or upon any premises dangerous or hazardous conditions or materials as follows, S/he shall order such dangerous conditions or materials to be removed or remedied:*

(1) *Dangerous or unlawful amounts of flammable, combustible or explosive or otherwise hazardous materials;*

(2) *...*

(3) *Dangerous accumulations of rubbish, waste material, boxes, shavings, vegetation or other highly combustible materials;*

(4) *...*

(5) *Obstructions to or on fire escapes, designated access openings in exterior walls for Fire Department use, stairs, passageways, doors or windows, liable to interfere with the operations of the Fire Department or egress of occupants in case of fire...*

(15) *Penalties*

(a) *Any person violating any of the provisions of this Code for which a penalty is not otherwise specified shall upon conviction be subject to a forfeiture of not less than ten dollars (\$10) nor more than two hundred dollars (\$200). Every day or fraction thereof during which any person fails or neglects to observe and comply with any provisions of this chapter shall constitute a separate violation.*

(b) *Any person who does not comply with a lawful order of the Chief issued pursuant to the provisions of this Code shall be in violation of this Code, and every day or fraction thereof during which such person*

fails or neglects to comply with such order shall constitute a separate offense.

Pest Control/Rat Infestation

City of Madison, s. 7.07

Rateradication

- (1) *Purpose. This ordinance is designed to and is enacted as a police and sanitary regulation for the protection of the public health and particularly to prevent the propagation and spread of bubonic plague through the medium of rats...*

- (8) *No person, firm or corporation shall have or permit upon any premises owned, occupied or controlled by him or it, any nuisance detrimental to health, or any accumulation of filth, rubbish, garbage, decaying animal or vegetable matter, or any animal or human excrement; and it shall be the duty of the Director of Public Health of the City of Madison to cause any such person, firm or corporation to be notified to abolish, abate and remove such nuisance and in case such person, firm or corporation shall fail, neglect or refuse to remove the same within one day after receiving such notice, such nuisance may be removed and abated under and by order of the Director of Public Health, and the person, firm or corporation whose duty it was to abate or remove such nuisance in addition to incurring penalties provided in this chapter shall be indebted to the City of Madison for the costs and charges incurred by the City of Madison by reason of the existence and removal of such nuisance.*

Seizure and Impoundment

City of Madison, s. 23.33

Animal Control Officer to be Appointed to Seize and Impound Animals

...

- (3) *It shall be the duty of an animal control officer to ascertain, if possible, the owners of all dogs and cats seized by the officers and to notify such owners of the fact that their dogs or cats have been seized and*

where they may be found, and that the owners may retrieve their dogs or cats upon payment of an animal impoundment fee of thirty-five dollars (\$35) to the City of Madison and any and all fees for the board of the animals during the time they are impounded..

Noise

City of Milwaukee, s. 78 - 29

Animals; Disturbing the Peace

1. *Complaints. No person may own, keep, have in his or her possession or harbor any bird or animal which by frequent and habitual howling, yelping, barking or otherwise shall cause serious annoyance or disturbance to persons in the neighborhood. No prosecution may be commenced except upon the request of the [City of Milwaukee Commissioner of Health] following written complaint signed by one or more affected adult persons. No persons may be convicted under the provisions of this section except upon testimony of one or more adult persons.*
2. *Citations. Notwithstanding sub. 1, enforcement personnel from the [Milwaukee Department of Health] and the police department may utilize a citation to help obtain relief from animal annoyances. In such instances, a notice shall be issued to the owner or caretaker of the animal producing the alleged nuisance specified by the complainant. Following issuance of such notice and where subsequent complaints are received of an alleged continued nuisance, the designated enforcement agencies may attempt to verify the reported animal nuisance. Where such verification is accomplished, these enforcement personnel may issue or cause to be issued a citation in accordance with other provisions of this chapter on the owner or caretaker of the animal causing the disturbance.*

Limit Law

City of Milwaukee, s. 78 -5

Keeping of Animals Within City.

3. *Number Permitted. No person may keep, harbor, shelter or possess at any time more than 3 dogs or cats or any combination thereof which are over the age of 5 months unless the person holds a valid*

animal fancier permit, kennel permit, pet shop permit or grooming establishment permit. The keeping of more than 3 dogs or cats over the age of 5 months per dwelling unit in a multiple dwelling is declared to be a nuisance. No person in a multiple dwelling shall be granted an animal fancier permit. There shall be no more than one animal fancier permit issued to any qualified dwelling unit.

Note: “Animal fancier” means any person in a residential dwelling unit who keeps, harbors, raises or possesses any combination of dogs or cats numbering not less than 4 nor more than 5 animals over the age of 5 months. City of Milwaukee Ordinance, s. 78 – 1.

How Do Other States Statutorily Address Animal Abuse?

Although Wisconsin has numerous laws (at both the state and local level) that are effective in preventing and prosecuting animal abuse, other states (and their municipalities) have enacted statutes that target the problem through different means. Some examples follow.

1. Mandated Counseling for Offenders

Recognizing that violence towards animals is often an indicator of anger management issues and psychological problems, several states require those individuals charged with or convicted of animal cruelty to undergo psychological evaluation and counseling. Virginia, Maine and Colorado, for example, have passed laws that require any person convicted of an animal cruelty violation to attend an anger management program or to obtain psychiatric or psychological counseling. The costs of such a program or counseling are the responsibility of the person convicted. California, Rhode Island, Colorado and Arkansas have enacted similar laws that allow for courts to mandate psychological evaluations and/or counseling of individuals convicted of animal cruelty.

Illinois requires counseling for companion animal hoarders and other states (including Michigan, New Jersey and Oregon) allow courts to order delinquent juveniles to undergo psychological/psychiatric evaluations and/or undergo counseling.

2. Security Bond Requirements

Under the law, a bond is defined as a written obligation, made by the owner of real property, to repay a loan under specific terms, usually accompanied by a mortgage placed on the property as security. Some states have passed laws for animal abuse cases that require the animals’ owners to guarantee payment (often in 30-day

increments) for impoundment. The money is used to pay for the food, shelter, veterinary care and socialization costs for the animal. If the owner fails to make the required payment, the animal protection agency can either adopt out or euthanize the animals. In one cat-hoarding case in Petaluma, California, the city placed a nuisance/abatement lien on the animal owner's house to obtain the money necessary to care for the sick and injured animals. States that have enacted security bond laws include New Hampshire, Virginia, Maine, Louisiana, Vermont, Nebraska, Arkansas, Colorado and New York.

Colorado and New York also have additional penalties for owners of animals that are involved in animal fighting. The owners of animals impounded because of such charges can be held responsible for the costs of the animals' care and treatment while the case is being adjudicated.

3. Protections for Assistance Animals

All states have laws prohibiting abuse of animals; however, a number of states have enacted legislation specifically relating to the protection of assistance animals/service dogs. Recognizing the special relationship between an individual and his or her service animal as well as the importance of the assistance animal's functions, these states have specific language that prohibits a person from chasing, harassing, or otherwise causing injury to an assistance animal. In addition to being subject to misdemeanor and felony-level penalties, a person found guilty of injuring or killing an assistance animal is liable for restitution to the owner. States that have enacted such laws include Arkansas, North Carolina, Utah and Washington.

4. Unfit Owner/Relinquishment of Animal

A number of states prohibit individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning other companion animals. Virginia's Unfit Owner Statute allows a court to prohibit possession or ownership of any companion animal by an owner found to have abandoned, cruelly treated, or deprived an animal of adequate care. In making its determination, the court may consider the owner's past record of animal abuse-related convictions as well as the owner's mental and physical condition.

Other states that allow courts to limit or prohibit owners convicted of animal cruelty from possessing animals include South Carolina, Arkansas, Colorado, Maine and Oregon.

Section Four - Animal Hoarding and Self-Neglect

A 2001 survey of adult protective services (APS) professionals conducted by The Humane Society of the United States and the National Center on Elder Abuse identified that 92.4 percent of workers had encountered animal neglect coexisting with a client's inability to care for him or herself. APS workers report that this is the typical scenario in the majority of reports received that involve animal maltreatment. Some characteristics of such scenarios are:

- The animal neglect may be the result of the pet owner's mental illness, dementia and/or physical challenges;
- The pet is often reported to be dirty and in need of veterinary care and exercise;
- The elder owner is too frail to perform his or her own personal care;
- Contrastingly, in some situations, the client may neglect his or her own personal care and devote limited resources to caring for pets.

Such instances of animal neglect coexisting with a client's inability to care for him or herself may be valuable clues as to the client's need for services. Such instances may also predict an escalation of the situation into animal hoarding.

The hoarding epidemic among older populations has drawn increased public attention from media and researchers in recent years. Hoarding is a debilitating disorder characterized by a large amount of possessions that clutter the home to such an extent that the living space cannot be used for its intended function (Steketee et al 2001). This chapter seeks to illuminate, specifically, the problem of animal hoarding in older populations.

Although the exact nature of this problem is still not fully understood, a working definition will be useful. An animal hoarder:

- accumulates a large number of animals;
- fails to provide minimal standards of nutrition, sanitation, and veterinary care;
- fails to act on the deteriorating condition of the animals (including disease, starvation, and even death), or the environment (severely overcrowded and unsanitary conditions);
- fails to act on or recognize the negative impact of the collection on their own health and well-being. (Nathanson 2002)

A recent study of animal hoarders showed that the majority (76%) of hoarders were female and 46% were sixty years of age or older. The most frequently involved animals were cats (65%), dogs (60%), farm animals (11%), and birds (11%). There was a median of 39 animals per case, but four (7%) exceeded 100 animals. In 80% of cases, there were animals that were dead or in poor condition, and in 58% of these, the hoarder would not acknowledge the problems that existed. Results of prosecution included the hoarder being prohibited from owning animals for a period of time (17%) and court ordered ongoing

monitoring (10 %) or psychiatric evaluation (13%). In 26% of cases, the hoarder was eventually institutionalized or placed under guardianship, and in 11%, the hoarder's premises were condemned. (Patronek 1999)

It is essential to define clear strategies for addressing this problem. The challenge will be responding to an older person who is potentially suffering from a mental illness and is in need of services, while maintaining the animals' safety and welfare as a priority. This challenge requires cooperation between adult protective services and animal control agencies. The following articles should prove beneficial in providing a broader understanding of animal hoarders. "Killing with Kindness" by Randall Lockwood and Barbara Cassidy discusses some of the psychological factors that contribute to animal hoarding, the good intentions that complicate the situation, and strategies for alleviating the suffering of everyone involved. The articles on "Handling Animal Collectors", from The HSUS's *Shelter Sense* (now *Animal Sheltering*) describe many aspects of successful collaboration and response to serious animal hoarding situations. The Tufts University Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium's "Intervention and Management Suggestions for Agencies" provides communication tips, psychological findings and recommendations for treatment. Jane Nathanson's article "Animal Hoarding: Recommendations for Intervention by Family and Friends" provides valuable communication strategies for the unique animal hoarding situation and will be helpful to the worker who counsels the hoarder's family, friends and/or neighbors. Also included is a resource list adapted from: "Animal Hoarding: A Review of the Literature," *Adult Abuse Review* 1(3), December 2002, which provides a detailed review of additional materials on hoarding that are not made available in this manual. Finally, this section concludes with case histories that may be used to test the reader's application of knowledge.

Profile of an animal hoarder



- 76 percent are female
- 46 percent are 60 years of age or older
- Most are unmarried, and more than half live alone
- In 69 percent of the cases, animal feces and urine accumulated in living areas; in more than 25 percent of the cases, the hoarder's bed was soiled with feces or urine
- Dead or sick animals were discovered in 80 percent of reported cases, yet in 60 percent of the cases, hoarders did not acknowledge the problem

Patronek G. Hoarding of animals: an under-recognized public health problem in a difficult-to-study population. *Public Health Rep* 1999;114:81-87.

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The Humane Society of the United States*

Killing with Kindness?

By Randall Lockwood, Ph.D. and Barbara Cassidy

In November of 1987, investigators from the HSUS, the Ulster County SPCA, and the New York State Humane Association raided the Animals Farm Home, a so-called refuge for unwanted dogs, cats, horses, and other livestock. Investigators found almost 1,000 animals, including hundreds of starving mange-infested dogs crowded together behind locked doors in dark, airless barns. The skeletal dogs had been fed a diet of moldy bread and water and were so hungry that they were cannibalizing each other. More than 175 animals had to be euthanatized on the scene, and treatment was immediately begun for more than 200 others.

Criminal charges of cruelty to animals have been filed against farm operator Justin McCarthy. On a civil level, New York State District Attorney Robert Abrams has filed a motion in New York Supreme Court for dissolution of the farm, charging that it was operated in a fraudulent and illegal manner, “failing for years to care for the animals entrusted to them.” The HSUS strongly supports these efforts to remove Mr. McCarthy and dissolve the corporation. Plans are already underway to find new homes for the surviving animals.

In February of this year, The HSUS and local investigators discovered emaciated and injured dogs at a Nebraska kennel run by a woman who was “taking the dogs off the hands” of a local animal-control facility to prevent them from being destroyed. At the request of The HSUS, the local municipalities agreed to stop their practice of giving dogs to the woman.

Cases like these, involving people accumulating large numbers of animals, many of which are sick or injured and crowded together under filthy conditions, are, unfortunately, all too familiar. Virtually every organization that investigates animal cruelty has had to deal with such situations.

These incidents often present local and state humane organization with special problems:

- Sometimes, the people accused of keeping many animals in inhumane ways are suffering from mental illness. Often, cruelty investigators are not experienced in dealing with such people or with the mental-health professionals who will become involved in the case.
- In many cases, the number of animals that must be treated, euthanatized, or held as evidence is enormous, taxing the staff and resources of local animal-welfare groups to the limit.

- Frequently, the individual involved is acting as a local one-person shelter and becomes known as the “cat person” or “dog person” of the neighborhood. Such people often collect animals off the streets in addition to accepting dogs or cats from anyone who drops them off. These “collectors” often mistrust the local humane society or animal-control agency and go to great lengths to hide the animals they are harboring. They are unable to care for the animals, which become trapped in a hidden hell.
- If not handled properly, such situations can produce a public relations nightmare for humane groups if they take action against people who may be portrayed by the media as well-meaning saviors of animals or kindly eccentrics. The cruelty investigators might be depicted as the ones who are heartless and insensitive to the suffering of others.

How do these situations get started? Why do many people begin harboring far more animals than can ever be kept in a humane way? When such problems are discovered, how can they be resolved in ways that consider the needs of the people and animals involved? These are tough questions that *every* animal organization is likely to face.

We have a growing understanding of the intentionally cruel, violent animal abuser. However, very little information is available on the psychology of those who seem to try to care for many animals but are eventually responsible for suffering through gross neglect. These two forms of animal cruelty are quite different, yet, in many ways, neglect cases are more disturbing than isolated incidents of violence against animals. Often, they involve large numbers of animals kept for months—even years—under conditions of horrendous deprivation and suffering.

Psychologists and other scientists have devoted little attention to the phenomenon of multiple-animal ownership that leads to animal cruelty. One attempt to understand the problem was undertaken by Dooley Worth and Alan Beck in 1981. They studied thirty-one cases of complaints filed against owners of 10 or more dogs or cats by New York’s ASPCA or the health department’s Bureau of Animal Affairs. They were particularly interested in examining the popular stereotype of what they termed “animals crazies” as “a white woman, past middle age, who had the animals because she was lonely.”

This popular view had a ring of truth. Of thirty-four people involved in these cases, more than two-thirds were women and 70 percent of them were unmarried. However, few of these people had started accumulating animals as a result of the isolation of old age. Most had started large collections of animals after leaving their parents’ home, most commonly in their teens and later twenties. In general, these people specialized in either dogs or cats, owning many of one species and one or two of the other. The average number was 34 cats or 23 dogs per owner.

What causes people who seem to start out with affection for animals to begin to sink into a pattern of abuse or neglect? Several different factors or combinations of reasons might be involved.

Mental Illness

Surprisingly few cases involve severe mental illness. Worth and Beck reported that few of the people in their study could be characterized as overly psychotic and most had managed to maintain themselves and their animals with some success, at least in the beginning. Although most of the multiple owners were somewhat removed from mainstream society, their isolation was a *result* of their accumulation of animals and not a cause. As they allowed animals to take over their homes and lives completely, friends and relatives were less likely to visit, so they found themselves increasingly isolated and psychologically dependent upon their animals.

Other Psychological Factors

Many of the people who take in large numbers of animals have a deep mistrust of other groups or individuals that are helping animals or see themselves as the *only* people who can help. For example, Worth and Beck reported a fight between two “cat ladies” in Manhattan, both of whom claimed responsibility for caring for the strays in several abandoned buildings.

One of the most common traits seen among people involved in neglect cases is a powerful fear of death and unwillingness to accept its inevitability. In some instances, they took bizarre forms. One woman, unable to bear separation from her dead cats, eviscerated them and dried them on her fire escape. The dried remains were kept in cupboards throughout her apartment. At least two cases involved people who also hid human cadavers on the premises. People who have accumulated many dogs and cats may have become completely blind to the animals’ injuries and illness. All they see is that the animals are alive and that seems to be what matters to them.

Good Intentions Gone Bad

Many cases of neglect start off with someone’s sincere desire to rescue all unwanted animals, without the realization of the enormity of the task. Most people involved in these instances are unable to tolerate the thought of euthanasia and feel that they must take in every animal. They soon become identified by people in the area as *the* person who takes in strays, and the collection starts to grow. Usually, such people cannot provide for spaying or neutering or even basic veterinary care. The animals they have gathered begin to produce offspring and the colony grows until it comes to the attention of health, sanitation, or humane officials.

Jean Goldenberg, executive director of the Washington, D.C., Humane Society, sees several cases involving ownership of 50 or more animals each year. She observes, “There are those who profess great love for animals but who no longer see the individual needs of animals.” Phyllis Wright, HSUS vice president for companion animals, adds, “The worst animal suffering I have seen has been the result of people caring for too many animals without enough resources. The very least these animals deserve is comfortable living quarters, adequate food, water, and exercise, and human companionship.”

In some cases, it is the harmful effect of the animals on the owner's health that alerts officials to the humane problems. Several cases have been investigated following reports of severe anemia in the owners from multiple fleabites. One "cat lady" in the Worth and Beck study had died from complications of a bacterial infection caused by an organism found in feline saliva. Often, complaints to health department about odors or other sanitation problems lead to the discovery of large collections of poorly cared for animals.

Greed or Criminal Intent

We should not overlook the fact that some cases of multiple ownership are also linked to deliberate attempts to solicit money from a concerned public, with little concern for the welfare of the animals that are collected. In such cases, the public may never see how the animals are housed or they may see one well-maintained area, while many other animals are hidden away enduring squalid living conditions.

What steps need to be taken in dealing with such cases? Private individuals concerned about specific instances of animal neglect should report the situation to their local humane society, animal control, health department, sanitation department, or police. Most humane investigators are experienced in gathering the kind of evidence needed to document neglect. Cases of multiple ownership may require some extra care, particularly if the owner is ill, elderly, or mentally disturbed.

Local humane groups investigating such cases will need thorough visual documentation of the health of the animals and their living conditions, which will usually require a search warrant. Such warrants are often obtained based on reports of offensive odors or other indications of crowding, filth, and disease. Evidence should include many high-quality color photographs and/or clear, well-lighted videos. Veterinary evidence should include descriptions of any health problems that take a long time to develop. This can be used to distinguish between ailments that are the result of temporary setbacks in care and those that are due to chronic neglect. Be sure to document the animals' diet as well. Find out what is being fed, sources of the food, and any other information that will help describe that aspect of care. These facts will help you make your case to the courts, the media, and the general public.

It is often helpful to work with the health, fire, sanitation, and housing or zoning departments. Such groups may be the first to learn of problems. Always try to bring these agencies along when executing the search warrant. A housing or fire official can declare a property unfit for habitation, which can facilitate removing the animals to healthier quarters.

Those investigating large-scale neglect must give careful consideration to how they will involve the press. Helen Mitternacht, HSUS director of public relations, says, "Nobody thinks about the media in these cases until it's too late to tell your side of the story." Poor planning might jeopardize the legal case against a negligent owner or result in public sentiment against humane investigators. Be sure that one member of your organization is designated as *the* spokesperson in the case and handle all inquiries through that person. If you have properly documented the problems, you can share your photos with the media.

The most difficult question in such cases is what to do with all the animals. Some may have highly infectious diseases and be beyond help; others may be nursed back to health through foster care; still others may be surprisingly healthy. If many animals are involved, one option is to obtain a court order to impound the animals on the premises, after carefully identifying each one and making provisions for its care. This can be useful if the living conditions can be cleaned up well enough to allow the animals to be cared for humanely.

In many cases, it is advisable to leave a small number of healthy animals with the owner if he or she is competent to care for them. This often reduces public opposition to intervention by humane groups and helps to make the owner more cooperative. At the same time, this approach recognizes the vital role these animals might play in the lives of their owners. One way to prevent repetitions of such incidents is to require a permit for multiple-animal ownership. The District of Columbia, for example, requires a “hobby permit” for ownership of more than five animals. Such permits are usually relatively easy to obtain if basic, humane standards of care are met.

In some cases, the people who have become involved with such large collections of animals have actually welcomed the local humane society intervention that rescued them from an impossible situation. One woman in New York City who had harbored more than 100 cats said that the city had “really done her a favor in the long run” by removing all but four of them.

What should be done with the *people* in these situations? Cases that involve criminal or fraudulent intent clearly need to be prosecuted as any other form of animal cruelty. In some instances, however, humane groups have felt that summonses and other legal actions were not in the best interests of the people or animals involved. Assistance programs that combine personal counseling, veterinary and spay/neuter assistance, and instruction in proper animal care may provide the best way to prevent recurrences.

Education and counseling are often *not* enough if there are deep-seated problems that have led a person to become a multiple owner. Tim Greyhavens of the Humane Society of the Willamette Valley (Oregon) notes that “many times, they [multiple-animal owners] see nothing wrong with what they are doing. They feel they know what is best for the animals and that you are just interfering with their lives.” For this reason, it is important for a humane organization to get the authority to check periodically on conditions for animals remaining in the owner’s home. If local ordinances do not limit the number of animals that can be kept, it may be possible to gain a court order restricting the number of animals the person may own in lieu of other legal action.

It is ironic that some of the most severe suffering encountered in animal-welfare work can have its origins in caring about animals. The problems created by some people who have many animals point out the important distinction between *having* pets and *caring* for them. These often tragic incidents point out the continuing need to educate children and adults that companion animals are not objects, but living creatures whose physical and emotional needs must be recognized and met.

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The Humane Society of the United States*

This article is the first in a two-part series on handling animal collector cases. It first appeared in the May-June 1994 issue of *Shelter Sense*, published by The Humane Society of the United States.

Handling Animal Collectors, Part 1: Interventions That Work

By Geoffrey L. Handy

The scene is a familiar one to virtually every humane agency in the country: A dilapidated house, or perhaps a trailer or even an old school bus, with the smell of urine noticeable from outside...a dark interior, with animals scurrying about, and an overpowering stench that immediately makes the eyes sting and the lungs lock up...tens or even hundreds of animals, usually cats and dogs but sometimes other animals, some in cages or makeshift pens, others given free reign of the place...animals in various stages of neglect, often diseased and emaciated, with afflictions ranging from fleas and ear mites to mange and respiratory infections...feces everywhere, competing for space with open food cans and other trash strewn across urine-soaked floors...almost always, some horrifying characteristic that sets it apart from other cases, such as maggots crawling in animal corpses or dead cats used as bedding...and, finally, the animals' "keeper," an individual who has lost control of the situation, lives in constant denial, and is clearly "addicted to animals," but who doesn't seem to fit any single psychological profile.

Animal collectors crop up anywhere and everywhere, it seems. Collectors have been the subject of increasing numbers of news reports and articles, with coverage in publications as diverse as the *Chippewa Falls* (Wisconsin) *Herald Telegram* and *Cat Fancy*. Humane agencies from Maine to California have struggled to resolve these cases, with mixed success.

"Collectors are not a new phenomenon," says Samantha Mullen, public affairs and programs administrator for the New York State Humane Association (NYSHA, P.O. Box 284, New Paltz, NY 12561) and an expert on multiple-animal cruelty cases. "What's new is that they have been *recognized* as a phenomenon, and humane agencies are just beginning to learn how to handle these cases somewhat consistently and effectively."

Unique Challenges

For investigators and their humane agencies, a collector case is one of the toughest to resolve. Four characteristics in particular set collector cases apart from other cruelty and neglect cases:

- ***Collector cases involve large numbers of animals.*** Collectors usually accumulate animals for years before being discovered, and the animals are often in such poor condition by the time they are found by humane authorities that a large-scale rescue operation is essential. To be successful, such operations require significant staff time and volunteer assistance, as well as considerable help from veterinarians, nearby shelters, and the community. Then, during protracted court cases, shelters often spend thousands of dollars to rehabilitate and care for the rescued animals, costs which are rarely reimbursed. To compound matters, the animals are usually not accustomed to humans, noise, and other stimulation—and sometimes the animals are unusual or exotic—thus requiring special handling, equipment, and veterinary expertise.

- ***Collector cases not only attract media coverage, but often result in mixed media messages.*** In fact, the media often portray collectors as victims. Headlines such as "They're my family" and "Lover of dogs vows to get animals back" are not uncommon. "There's such a contrast between the image people have of the collector and the conditions of the animals," says Mullen. Indeed, investigators may be portrayed as heavy-handed officials with unreasonable standards who go in and heartlessly remove a beloved caretaker's cats. Thus, humane agencies not only must be prepared to respond to inquiries from the media and the public, but also must strive to educate them about the realities of animals' conditions and the psychology of animal collectors.
- ***Collectors have an extremely high relapse (recidivism) rate.*** Take a collector's animals away without any other interventions, and he or she will likely accumulate the same number of animals within a short period of time. In one recent case, animal control authorities in Baltimore County (MD) rescued more than 50 pets from a collector, only to discover just two days later that the individual had already acquired more than 20 additional animals. "Collectors are obsessed with animals," says Mullen. Persuading a collector to release his or her animals into the humane agency's custody will get those specific animals out of a bad situation. But it will do nothing to prevent the person from starting a new collection and ending up in the same situation as before. A one-time rescue or a prosecution and a fine are rarely, if ever, permanent solutions.
- ***Collectors have unusual psychology.*** Moreover, they can only be handled effectively through an understanding of that psychology. Collectors often exhibit a variety of psychological disorders, with addiction the most prevalent characteristic. Cases can thus be won or lost on how collectors are understood, approached, and treated. Most collectors can't conveniently be labeled "abusers" and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, nor can they simply be labeled "ignorant" and educated about proper animal care.

The Prosecution Dilemma

Those four characteristics all contribute to a fundamental dilemma of animal collector cases: Should collectors be criminally prosecuted?

Some argue that collectors are a classic manifestation of good intentions gone awry, and thus criminal prosecution may not be an appropriate option. However, according to psychologists who have studied collectors, such as The HSUS's Randall Lockwood, collectors' actions are often less a result of good intentions gone bad and more a result of a true pathology.

Furthermore, as Mullen points out, the intentions and motivations of the collector are not the major issue. "The major issue is that animals are suffering, regardless of whether or not the individual in custody of them is mentally ill, inept but well meaning, or just plain mean," she says.

So the question then becomes, is criminal prosecution the most effective way to prevent animal suffering at the hands of collectors? The answer to that question, too, hinges on the intentions and motivations of the collector, as two recent cases illustrate.

First, take the case of Hazel Swindel, a 61-year-old woman from Starke, Florida, who by last summer had accumulated more than 150 cats in her 600-square-foot ramshackle house.

According to HSUS Investigator Ken Johnson, who worked on the case, Swindel seemed to fit the stereotypical collector profile: a person who seemingly means well, takes in homeless animals, abhors euthanasia, loses control of the situation, and ends up causing large-scale animal suffering.

A court ruled that Swindel was unable to properly and humanely care for all of her cats, and all but six of the cats had to be euthanized. The six cats without serious health problems were treated by a veterinarian, sterilized, and returned to Swindel. Swindel was not prosecuted for cruelty to animals; under direction of the court, however, she is now monitored on a regular basis.

That resolution would not have been appropriate in a different situation, that involving Justin McCarthy of Ellenville, New York. In one of the most notorious collector cases of the last decade, McCarthy kept nearly 1,000 animals in squalid conditions, many of whom were on the brink of death when local law enforcement and humane agencies entered his Animals' Farm Home under court order in November 1987. According to those who worked on the case, the animals on McCarthy's farm did not arrive there solely by chance; McCarthy actively raised money to operate as a "refuge" and even had a sign-in form for accepting pet owners' animals.

McCarthy was indicted for 25 separate violations of the animal cruelty statute; he pleaded guilty to four of those counts. His ultimate sentence included the stipulation that he and his wife would never again have anything to do with animal sheltering or any related business.

Intervention vs. Prosecution

The Swindel and McCarthy cases illustrate the importance of understanding the profile of the individual collector when deciding how to approach a case. Indeed, the classic "education vs. prosecution" dilemma common to many investigations of cruelty has a corollary for collector cases: intervention vs. prosecution.

All collectors need intervention; all collectors do not necessarily need to be criminally prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. For the stereotypical "cat lady" or "dog man"—an individual like Swindel who continues to accumulate homeless animals and who gradually loses control of the situation—to successfully intervene in the case is to get the animals out of the home, treat and sterilize any animals who may be returned to the collector, and monitor the collector to prevent a similar problem from developing in the future. In many cases, assistance from mental health and adult protection professionals is needed as well.

"The Swindel case wasn't a situation where we just went in, removed all the animals, and pushed the prosecutor for a full conviction," says Johnson. "People in the community donated furniture, helped clean her house, and basically tried to improve the quality of life for this woman as well as for the animals whom she was allowed to keep. It's important to look at these collectors as human beings, and try to understand, to a certain extent, why they've gotten themselves in this situation. Criminal prosecution is not always the solution. We felt that this woman, with help from the community, could take care of a limited number of cats and continue to be a pet owner."

In contrast to Swindel, McCarthy did not accumulate animals simply because they showed up on his doorstep. He actively raised money for his "sanctuary," and assured pet owners that their pets

would be well taken care of for life. For a case like his, resolution involves not only getting animals out of the situation, but also working toward a conviction of the collector on animal cruelty charges. Jail time, fines, and probation may all be appropriate goals, but the ultimate goal for a collector case like McCarthy's should be to legally prohibit the collector from owning any animals in the future.

Linking Solutions with Causes

Thus, in addition to removal of the animals from the premises, successful case resolution generally involves choosing interventions appropriate for the collector at hand. The key, agrees Lauren Joniaux, assistant director for the San Diego Humane Society and SPCA (887 Sherman St., San Diego, CA 92110-4088), "is concentrating on the individuals and why they have that behavior." Joniaux organized a training session in San Diego last year to educate local humane investigators about the need for interventions on behalf of collectors.

"Sometimes, we get so wrapped up in enforcing the law that we don't stop to think about why that person was in that situation in the first place," she says. "Who's abusing the animals? It's the individual. We need to help that individual so that the situation doesn't develop again."

Humane agencies commonly apply three types of interventions to collector cases, interventions which often overlap in practice. One is a cooperative approach, aimed at working with the collector to improve the animals' conditions and, in many cases, persuading the collector to voluntarily relinquish all or at least some of the animals and to spay or neuter any they may keep. Another is the securing of a court order that limits the number of animals the individual can keep in the future and/or authorizes the humane agency to monitor the individual either indefinitely or for a specified period of time. The third is a social services intervention to help "treat" the collector.

Working With Collectors

The cooperative approach doesn't work for most collector cases; in fact, it is often just the first step in a progression of interventions. Cooperation is, however, the method least likely to take a sudden, large chunk out of the agency's resources. It is also a worthwhile approach in those cases where a judge refuses to grant a warrant based on lack of evidence.

Humane agents for the Toledo Humane Society (1920 Indianwood Cir., Maumee, OH 43537) have used this tactic for years. Investigators first attempt to approach collectors as "equals" and work with them to gain control of the situation.

"I first make a determination about the conditions of the animals," says Diana Murphy, investigations and rescue supervisor for the humane society. "If the animals don't have to be removed, I try to establish a relationship of trust with the person."

Murphy and her colleagues often succeed at helping collectors gradually gain control of their situations. Sometimes, however, the cooperative approach simply doesn't work. After visiting one collector 13 times within a 10-month period, investigators for the Michigan Humane Society (MHS, 7401 Chrysler, Detroit, MI 48211) recently abandoned the approach and secured a search warrant. "We went in with two police officers, a code enforcement officer from the housing

department, and a social services worker," says Timothy Clements, chief cruelty investigator for the humane society.

Clements still cooperates with several collectors, frequently exchanging food for permission to take some animals to a veterinarian or have others sterilized.

"Working with collectors requires making a judgment based on how adequately the animals are being cared for," says Mullen. "But where do you draw the line? If you can't convince a judge to issue a warrant, then helping collectors care for their animals may be the only choice. Yet it's not always realistic to expect an agency to provide the staff needed to conscientiously monitor a collector indefinitely. It's a bit like asking the humane agency to assign a team of social workers to each collector."

The Court Order

While the cooperative approach can indeed be time-intensive for humane officers, its value lies in helping a collector gain control of his or her situation and in possibly saving the humane agency from the financial drain of a major rescue operation, multiple-animal impoundment, and court-related actions. But the cooperative approach is clearly inappropriate when animals are in dire need of rescue and ineffectual when attempts at cooperation fail. In those cases, court-related actions usually become essential.

In cases where animals are not in need of immediate rescue, but the collector proves unresponsive to humane agents' requirements, investigators in some states can try to persuade the court to use a tactic called deferred prosecution. Under deferred prosecution, the collector is charged with cruelty but is allowed to keep his or her animals as long as certain conditions are met—such as providing proper veterinary care, food and water, and exercise, or having all animals spayed or neutered. Only after the person fails to meet those requirements are charges activated and the animals seized.

Typically, though, humane investigators must charge the collector with animal cruelty and/or related charges and have the animals removed. (In some cases, agencies may opt to temporarily keep the animals on the premises under the agency's supervision—a tactic called "on-site Impoundment"—until permanent resolution of the case. In other cases, animals can be removed on the basis of zoning or animal limitation ordinances, or through actions in court to abate nuisances.)

Investigators must then push prosecutors for a full conviction—and the goal, in most cases, is to secure a court order. "Investigators may wonder, 'What do I have to gain from prosecuting an 82-year-old woman?'" says Belinda Lewis, director of animal control for Fort Wayne, Indiana (2225 Dwenger Ave., Fort Wayne, IN 46803). "What you have to gain is the court order that limits the number of animals that this individual can own. It also allows for ongoing monitoring by your agency. Without that court order, you may never get back [on the premises] again."

Lewis and Mullen both emphasize that, in most cases, a plea bargain (also called a pre-trial diversion) that includes a court order should be considered a desirable outcome of a collector case. "But to get that court order, humane agencies and the prosecutors they work with must be willing to push for full conviction if the collector and his or her attorney prove uncooperative," says Mullen. "In other words, remember that a plea bargain is a deal made with the defendant; if

the defendant isn't willing to make a deal you find acceptable, be prepared to take the case all the way to a jury."

"It's your responsibility to educate your judge or prosecutor," says Lewis, whose agency has stopped 14 of the last 15 collectors it has investigated. "They're not going to automatically know that the protective order must state that your agency has the right to inspect the premises at any given time over the next 'X' number of years, that adult protective services has access to inspect the premises, or that only 'X' number of animals may be owned by this individual over the next 'X' number of years."

It's also essential, stresses Mullen, for shelters to specify to the judge or prosecutor that the order include the requirement that any animals returned to the collector be spayed or neutered. "This may sound like an obvious point," she says. "But if it's not specified, it's like giving collectors their seed crop."

Effective court orders typically include the following provisions:

- a total ban or limit on animal ownership indefinitely or for a specified period of time;
- a requirement that any animals returned to the collector be sterilized;
- authorization for the humane agency to monitor the collector indefinitely or for a specified period of time, including specific provisions for home inspections;
- a requirement that the collector reimburse the humane agency for the costs of treating and caring for seized animals; and
- release of veterinary records, if needed.

One requirement that should definitely *not* be included in a court order or sentence is that the collector perform community service work at a shelter. This is because working in a shelter will only fuel the collector's addiction, likely causing problems for the shelter. "Requiring a collector to work in a shelter for community service is akin to requiring an alcoholic to work as a bartender," says Susan McDonough, president of NYSHA and an investigator for the New York State Police.

Collaborative Interventions

Judges can also include social service or mental health requirements in their orders—such as the stipulation that a collector be assigned a caseworker from the local elder services department. Courts usually include such provisions only in those cases where the applicable agencies have already intervened on behalf of the collector.

Lewis suggests that humane groups strive to develop working relationships with the local mental health department, housing department, and other applicable social service offices—and involve those agencies early in collector cases. This usually means educating them about the psychology of collectors and the fact that collectors, while they often can function in society, nonetheless need social services.

Lewis's agency now approaches every collector case in tandem with the Adult Protective Services (APS) department of the Allen County Mental Health Association. "That way, we

handle the animal interventions, and APS handles the human interventions," says Lewis. "In many cases, we actually are perceived as the good guys. I think it's vital that animal care agencies approach collectors as a mental health problem with assistance from other agencies and not attempt to resolve the cases alone."

Sometimes, humane groups can take advantage of specific actions taken by these other agencies. For instance, a health or housing official can often make demands on the collector based on the environmental and zoonotic problems usually created as a result of the collection. They may require, for example, that the house and yard be cleaned up or that an exterminator be hired. Under these circumstances, the collector may perceive the humane investigator to be the "good guy" who offers to take in animals to help him or her comply with the "bad guy's" demands.

Other collaborative actions may be social-service interventions on behalf of the collectors themselves. Humane agencies can ride the coattails of these interventions, too. They include:

- **Eviction.** Collectors often live in violation of health or housing standards, and eviction may be ordered by the local health or housing department. The humane agency then offers to care for the animals until the collector can find a place for them; faced with the prospect of abandonment, the collector accepts. "We have an impound fee, and this is an emergency impound for us," says Lewis about the collector evictions her department has handled. "We essentially price the collector out of getting the animals back." (This strategy can backfire, however, when the collector knows like-minded individuals who may agree to temporarily house the animals. Thus humane agencies must be prepared to secure a warrant in situations where the animals are in need of immediate rescue.)
- **72-hour evaluation.** Sometimes called a 72-hour commitment, this occurs when a person appears to be mentally ill and poses a danger to himself or herself. The mental health agency petitions the court for an order to have the collector placed in a psychiatric facility for evaluation for 72 hours. Here, too, the animals are involuntarily abandoned, and the humane agency may be able to impound them without a warrant of its own (although a separate warrant secured by the humane agency is always recommended). Under 72-hour commitments, patients are often judged to have some kind of mental incapacity; thus, the humane agency can later make a strong case, in arguing for a court order prohibiting or limiting future ownership of animals, that the collector's mental health problem led to the conditions of the animals.
- **Guardianship.** In cases of severe mental impairment, another adult is appointed the guardian of the collector and is responsible for acting on behalf of the collector in every legal capacity. Not only can guardians immediately sign animals over to the shelter, but they can also assist the agency in monitoring the collector in the future so that recidivism is prevented.

These collaborative interventions only work when the humane agency has developed a good working relationship with social service organizations. More common and frustrating, however, are those cases where individuals are judged mentally and/or emotionally competent by social service professionals or those professionals prove unresponsive to humane agencies requests for assistance. In these cases, humane officers themselves are frequently thrust into the role of

counselor or psychiatrist, and they must rely on cooperation or court-related interventions to resolve the case.

An Ounce of Prevention...

Regardless of other interventions—including any specific requirements mandated by a court order—a long-term solution involves continual monitoring to prevent the collector from starting the collection anew. Such monitoring is always time-intensive, but failure to follow up on a court order can have disastrous consequences. In one case in the Midwest less than two years ago, a humane society was successful in securing a court order limiting a collector to seven cats, all of whom were sterilized. Accompanied by a veterinarian, the agency rechecked the animals one month later and found only minor problems with the animals' care. But humane society personnel were devastated earlier this year when the collector's house burned to the ground: Among the ruins were the charred bodies of more than 20 cats.

Developing a cooperative relationship with the collector can be particularly helpful in monitoring the individual's behavior. "When the collector trusts you enough to call on you when there's a problem, or when you are welcome in their home, you're generally going to have better luck at making sure the animals are being taken care of properly," says Toledo's Murphy. Regardless of the level of cooperation, however, humane officers should take responsible action when a known collector moves: they should notify their counterparts in the area of the collector's new address so that regular monitoring can continue.

Finally, humane agencies should keep in mind that collectors don't accumulate animals overnight. "Animal collectors are generally people who function normally in society and begin by taking in strays or accepting pets discarded by others," says Robin Weirauch, program coordinator for The HSUS Great Lakes Regional Office. "At some point, they find they have trouble keeping their home clean, and stop inviting people over. Eventually, they lose control."

But until that loss of perspective becomes apparent from the outside, collectors are usually hard to spot. Mullen says she often recounts the story of a rescue in a home in South Carolina, where investigators discovered five cats and a dead dog amid piles of garbage and leftover food. In the bathroom hung a sparkling, freshly washed nurse's uniform.

"Those kinds of situations make prevention difficult," says Weirauch. "How can you know what's going on inside someone's home? But what humane agencies *can* do, as a routine matter, is investigate reports of potential collector situations on a regular basis. These are the calls about 'an awful stench coming from next door,' general complaints about neighbors 'who seem to have a lot of cats,' or other curious reports. After all, the best way to handle collectors is to try to prevent them from *becoming* collectors."

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The Humane Society of the United States*

This article is the second in a two-part series on handling animal collector cases from the July 1994 issue of *Shelter Sense*, published by The Humane Society of the United States.

Handling Animal Collectors, Part 2: Managing a Large-scale Rescue Operation

By Geoffrey L. Handy

When officers for the Brazos Animal Shelter and Humane Society/SPCA (P.O. Box 4191, Bryan, TX 77805) first received complaints about a large number of animals being kept in poor conditions last summer, they weren't entirely prepared for what would come next. Soon, however, those officers and a slew of people assisting them were hard at work rescuing 438 animals confined in filth by their keeper.

Dogs and cats seemingly did not appeal to this animal collector. Instead, his menagerie included 117 rats, 57 gerbils, 49 mice, 39 chickens, 23 hamsters, 17 squirrels, 9 opossums, a European hedgehog, and more than 100 birds ranging from finches to small quail. By the time the shelter had wrapped up the case, it had received assistance from nearby humane societies, several exotic-animal veterinarians, the local game warden and health department inspector, city attorneys, a U.S. Army Medical Center, the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Center, Ryder Truck Rental, numerous other agencies and businesses, and a host of volunteers.

"We went in thinking there were maybe a hundred animals," says Kathy Bice, executive director for the agency. "When we took an inventory and realized that we had not a hundred, but over 400 animals, the adrenaline started rushing. That day was a 14-hour day, and so were the next three."

Managing the Crisis

For staff and volunteers of animal care and control agencies, the rescue operation is the most intense and emotional part of any animal collector case. Achieving a long-term solution to the case is the ultimate goal, but alleviating the suffering of the animals at hand becomes the immediate focus.

"Large-scale rescue operations invariably force shelters into crisis mode," says Samantha Mullen, public affairs and programs administrator for the New York State Humane Association (NYSHA, P.O. Box 284, New Paltz, NY 12561). "There is just so much that needs to be done."

Not only must humane agencies assemble their own teams of staff and volunteers, but they must also call around for help from veterinarians, local businesses, and other humane groups. Not only must they coordinate the removal of scores of animals, but they must simultaneously document the cruelty and neglect. Not only must they spend time and money gathering everything from extra carrying crates to surgical masks, but they must also figure out ways to defray the costs of caring for multiple animals. And not only must they work to educate judges and prosecutors about what interventions are necessary, but

they must also strive to educate an often fickle media and public that the collector is anything but an animal savior.

This crisis mode is especially acute when the sheer number of animals pushes the agency to its limit. "Agencies that find themselves overwhelmed in a big case or other demanding situation often do not have the time to call around for help," says Mike Oswald, former director of Multnomah County Animal Control (2115 S.E. Morrison, Portland, OR 97214). "All of their time is committed to managing the crisis."

Oswald urges shelters in nearby areas to "put themselves in the shoes of the agency suffering through the crisis." Indeed, a support network of agencies is crucial for handling any large-scale case or disaster involving animals. In many states, humane federations can serve as networking organizations for local agencies in need.

Belinda Lewis, director of animal control for Fort Wayne, Indiana (2225 Dwenger Ave., Fort Wayne, IN 46803), offers this caveat, however: "The lead agency should be careful to maintain control of the case: It is their case, and they're responsible for not only accurately documenting the conditions of the animals but also making sure other agencies know where their roles begin and end." One helpful tool for establishing agency responsibilities is a written agreement.

Be Prepared

Even with the cooperation of nearby facilities, shelters may still lack the space to house all rescued animals. "While obstacles like lack of space are some of the toughest to overcome, no humane law enforcement agency can let animals languish in bad conditions because they feel they don't have the space or don't have other necessary resources," says Sally Fekety, associate for animal care and control for The HSUS.

That means finding creative solutions to problems. For one case involving more than 200 cats, Fekety remembers driving nearly two hours to a cat fanciers' show to purchase, at a discount, 50 cages from an equipment supplier exhibiting at the show. The shelter she worked for at the time, the Humane Society of Huron Valley in Ann Arbor, Michigan, set up cage banks in the basement of a small house the shelter had previously used for storage. The basement even included a treatment area. "The case cost our shelter a lot of money, although by the end of it we had received quite a few donations and some new members," says Fekety. "But thanks to the cooperation of staff, volunteers, and veterinarians, we managed to handle the case and care for the animals quite well."

Ensuring adequate space and care arrangements is just one of a host of vital preparatory tasks. "Have you appointed a reliable media spokesperson?" says Lewis. "Do you have facilities designated for large, aggressive animals? Do you have the facilities and supplies for the euthanasia of many animals with sodium pentobarbital? And, assuming you will be performing a large number of euthanasias, have you contacted the rendering company to come the day of the rescue?"

To that list of questions Mullen adds another: "Do you have enough cage and kennel space to ensure that unsterilized males and females are kept separated? I've seen too many

shelters mix them up 'temporarily,' only to regret it later after the animals bred. Shelters must *never* allow animals in their care to mate."

Finally, there's the job of collecting all the needed equipment and supplies. "Everything should be double-checked in advance, from extra leashes to backup camcorder batteries to a supply of medical evaluation forms for assisting vets," Mullen says.

The Team Approach

Of course, adequate human resources are even more essential; it's common for humane agencies to underestimate the number of staff and volunteers needed for particularly large rescues. And bringing diverse staff and volunteers together to make an effective rescue unit is always a challenge.

Most agencies succeed in improvising based on the circumstances of the case, the number of staff and volunteers available to help, and the types and conditions of the animals. The Loudoun County Department of Animal Care and Control (Route 1, Box 985, Waterford, VA 22190) did just that when it rescued 317 neglected sheep from a local farm.

"We had a number of specialized volunteers helping," said Animal Care and Control Administrator Barbara Cassidy. "We had several people on horseback rounding up the animals on site, we rented livestock haulers to transport the sheep back to the shelter, and we got a friend to bring in her trained sheepdogs to herd the animals into one confined area on the shelter property."

At the shelter, Cassidy and her staff set up a triage operation. One person would straddle and restrain the animal and then administer an oral dosage of worming medication. Another would examine the animal's hooves and apply nontoxic spray paint to the rump of the animal; the color of the spray paint indicated both the animal's sex and whether or not the animal needed additional hoofwork or other veterinary intervention.

Several years ago, NYSHA and the Ulster County (NY) SPCA, in consultation with the American SPCA in New York City, devised a systematic way to conduct multiple-animal rescues using teams of staff and volunteers. Here's how it works:

Before traveling to the rescue site, a coordinator from the lead agency briefs all staff and volunteers about the case, appropriate behavior, and other matters such as who the designated press contact is. He or she then assembles several teams of five persons each. Each team consists of a team leader, a veterinarian, a photographer, a recorder, and an animal handler. (The number of teams depends primarily on two factors: the number of animals and the number of veterinarians available.) In addition to the teams, several experienced animal handlers are designated as "runners"—those who catch animals and bring them to the teams.

The team leader, usually a shelter staffer, advises team members about individual responsibilities. He or she also records the name, address, telephone number, and organization of each team member; not only is this information essential for case records

(and may even be required by local police), but it also makes it easier to send out thank-you notes after the rescue. Each team member is also given a stick-on identification badge.

Once allowed on the property by authorities, teams set up work stations. Then, a "runner" catches each animal and brings him or her to the animal handler for one of the teams. The team handler restrains the animal while the other team members perform their roles, and (under veterinary supervision) provides the animal with water and/or other sustenance. The team recorder writes down information about the animal, including the animal's assigned identification number, a description of the animal, and the animal's eventual disposition. The team photographer takes a picture of the animal. The team veterinarian examines the animal and completes an evaluation form. The animal is then either taken to a special area designated for on-site euthanasia, or provided an identification collar and put in a carrier for transport.

Documenting Cruelty

Although attending to the animals' suffering must be the top priority, investigators should be careful to accurately document the cruelty and neglect with both video and still photography. Mullen offers the following tips:

- On a large index card or plain sheet of paper, write the identification number assigned to the animal, sex of the animal, and date in large, broad strokes using a thick, felt-tip marker.
- Have someone hold the identification card very close to the animal being photographed so that the card appears in the photo.
- Have the photographer stand only about four to five feet away.
- If possible, position animals so that special markings or wounds and other signs of debility will be visible in photographs.
- Take close-ups of overgrown nails, wounds, or other signs of neglect, being careful to include the index card with identifying information in each photo. To demonstrate that close-up photographs are of the same animal, take a short series of photos, gradually increasing the degree of close-up with each one.
- Take two still photos of each animal, one using a 35mm camera and one using a Polaroid™ camera.
- Try not to photograph consecutively two animals who appear very similar, to avoid possible confusion over whether the same animal was photographed twice.
- If animal handlers are included in any photos, remember that both attire and facial expressions are important:
 - Uniforms or coveralls are best, although jeans and plain shirts are acceptable. Ragged clothing and T-shirts with artwork of dubious taste are not.

- Even during a rescue mission in a tragic animal abuse case, moments of levity will undoubtedly be shared by some of the rescuers to break the tension. *Beware of recording such moments on film.* A photograph of an apparently jovial person handling a suffering animal would send an extremely confusing message to the judge or jurors examining the evidence in a cruelty case. So too would "gallows humor" picked up by the sensitive microphone of a camcorder. Remember that *all* photographs, recordings, and other evidence gathered at the scene become part of the legal case against the defendant. This evidence is subject to scrutiny by defense attorneys.

Who Pays the Costs?

After the animals have been photographed and removed from the abusive situation, they all too frequently remain in the humane agency's custody for a long period of time pending the outcome of the case.

Virtually every humane agency that investigates animal cruelty has been left holding the bill for long-term impoundment of animals. For multiple-animal cases, these bills frequently amount to tens of thousands of dollars. Even if a court rules that a multiple-animal owner pay restitution to the impounding agency, it's a rare case indeed in which the owner has any money to give.

Financial costs are just one drawback. Long-term impoundment is an especially cruel fate for animals who have already suffered through neglect. Vicky Crosetti, executive director of the Knox County Humane Society (P.O. Box 9479, Knoxville, TN 37940-0479), expresses a frustration familiar to many shelter personnel: "It's one thing to look at animals in the shelter for a short time," she said after caring for eight animals for more than ten months. "But you get very attached to animals you hold for a long time, and you live with the knowledge that while they're much better off in the shelter than they were in the place you rescued them from, they're still in an abnormal situation. Where they really belong is in an adoptive home."

Because voluntary surrenders are rare, states and localities have struggled to devise effective ways to address the cost and stress issues. Tactics such as on-site impoundment and deferred prosecution can help, but they are not always appropriate options.

To help protect shelters from the costs of care, many states prohibit rescued animals from being returned to their owners until the owners have reimbursed impounding agencies for the costs of the seizure and care. As long as the impounding officer follows prescribed rules for seizure, no conviction on animal cruelty charges is needed. If the owner does not pay within a certain period of time (e.g., ten days), then the humane agency takes ownership of the animals.

Putting the Burden Where It Belongs

These laws help, but humane agencies can still end up in the proverbial poorhouse after animal collectors fail to pay required restitution. A recent legal innovation, however, can prevent these situations from developing in the first place. Enacted by at least two states (Minnesota and Missouri) and several localities, so-called "security bond" laws require the animals' owner to guarantee payment *up front* for the costs of long-term impoundment. If such payment is not guaranteed within a short period of time, the impounding agency can adopt out or euthanize animals at its discretion.

Security bond laws generally take the form of amendments to existing laws regarding the disposition of seized animals. Minnesota's law authorizes animals seized under warrant to be "humanely disposed of [i.e., adopted or euthanized] at the discretion of the jurisdiction having custody of the animal seven days after the animal was taken into custody." Such disposition may be prevented by the animals' owners *only* if they post "a bond or security in an amount sufficient to provide for the animals' care and keeping for at least 30 days." The bond is renewable in 30-day increments. Even in cases where a court order prohibits disposition of animals (e.g., for evidence), that order must provide for a bond or other security in the amount necessary to protect the sheltering facility from incurring costs.

"One county [in Minnesota] spent over \$13,000 on horses who were unsound in every way," says Shirley Taggart, president of the Minnesota Federated Humane Societies (810 N. Lilac Dr., Ste. 206, Golden Valley, MN 55422). "The security bond law puts the responsibility for the costs of caring for such animals back on the owner where it belongs."

According to Taggart, the Minnesota state legislature passed the law in 1991 after a rash of multiple-animal abuse cases siphoned off already-scarce county funds; the legislation had the backing of the state sheriffs' and county attorneys' associations.

Indeed, costly collector cases seem to be the best impetus for the enactment of such laws: The Loudoun County, Virginia, legislature passed its version of a security bond law after two collector cases drained more than \$135,000 from county coffers. (Nonprofit humane agencies that are reimbursed by city or county governments for animal-impoundment costs may wish to suggest such laws to local officials as well.)

Loudoun County's version of the law includes a special wrinkle. Under Virginia law, animal owners who neglect their animals can be charged under a special "unfit owner" clause, and the case must be heard within ten days. Loudoun County requires that the owner post a security bond within ten days as well. Thus, "unfit owner"—which frequently apply to collectors—are heard *before* the owner is forced to post a bond.

That's what happened in the case involving the 317 sheep. "When the animals' owner saw that he would have to post the bond if he appealed the case, he signed them over to us immediately," says Barbara Cassidy. "The security bond law is a total deterrent to frivolous appeals." According to Taggart, the Minnesota law has been applied four times and no one has yet posted the security bond; instead, each owner has relinquished the animals to the humane law enforcement agency involved.

(For details on the security bond law passed by Loudoun County, Virginia, see the August 1993 issue of *Shelter Sense*.)

Other Strategies

Absent security bond laws, humane agencies can pursue several other, albeit less effective, ways to either reduce costs or bring in extra funds. They include:

- Persuading prosecuting attorneys to file motions for expedited proceedings—especially in cases where the animal owner appeals a conviction;
- Persuading the court to allow the humane agency to foster the animals, under written contracts with select foster caregivers, until permanent resolution of the case;
- Persuading local veterinarians, businesses, and nearby humane agencies to donate expertise, equipment, and/or human resources; and
- Appealing for donations through the media.

Handling Adoptions

Another significant challenge occurs after the shelter secures legal ownership of the animals: placing the animals. Because of publicity, collector cases and puppy mill busts inevitably capture the interest of the public, many of whom transform that interest into a desire to own one of the rescued animals.

As a way to recoup some of the costs of handling the cases, a few shelters have conducted animal auctions, in which animals are literally sold to the highest bidder. Government-run shelters facing funding deficits, in fact, are sometimes instructed to hold such auctions. But, says Ken White, HSUS Vice President for Companion Animals and Field Services, "Auctions do nothing to guarantee the appropriateness of the new owner. Auctions and adoption guidelines simply do not mix."

A close cousin to the auction is the controlled "sale," a silent auction in which potential adopters are screened after the bidding process takes place. If a bidder does not meet specified guidelines, then the next highest bidder is considered, and so on down the line. These, too, are often ordered by courts as a way to recoup costs. And they offer their own challenges—especially the necessity of telling potential adopters that their bid may be rejected.

Because of the problems associated with auctions and controlled sales, shelters must strive to convince judges to allow them to place animals through normal adoption procedures. "The last thing shelters want to do is put animals who have already been abused into another bad situation," says White.

Adoptions are generally conducted after the shelter takes legal custody of the animals. Some shelters, however, offer adoption "holds," where animals are selected by adopters but held by the shelter prior to the conclusion of the case; the adoptions are conditional on the shelter gaining legal custody of the animals.

For cases involving an extremely large number of animals or particularly heavy media coverage, some shelters have run so-called "lotteries" as a way to make the adoption process run smoothly. Lotteries are used strictly as a traffic-management tool: Instead of having shelter staff face hundreds of potential applicants all clamoring to adopt at the same time, the shelter issues a press release describing the lottery. Those interested in adopting are put into the proverbial hat and chosen at random. Then, the "winners" are given scheduled times to visit the shelter and look over the animals. The shelter is closed to the rest of the public during those times, and animals up for adoption who are not part of the case are made available as well.

While the term "lottery" connotes no adoption screening, responsible shelters apply normal adoption standards to lottery winners, moving on to the next name on the list of lottery winners when an adoption is denied. Those not chosen in the lottery are urged to visit the shelter in the future to adopt a companion.

Regardless of whether adoption priority is determined by random drawing or on the more usual first-come, first-served basis, adopters should always be specially educated about the particular needs of abused or neglected animals, from behavior problems to eating disorders.

Educating the Media

Publicizing special adoption procedures is one of the easiest ways to work with the media on an animal collector case. Much more difficult is educating the media to portray collectors not as caring animal "saviors" but as people who, for reasons that may or may not be worthy of compassion, cause suffering for tens or even hundreds of animals.

"Collectors present an incongruity that is difficult for the public to accept," says Mullen. "The public often sees issues in black and white: people either intentionally abuse animals or they don't. When presented with an image of a collector who is obviously devoted to animals, the public wants to believe that the charges against that individual are false. It's so hard to convey that someone who professes to love animals is actually causing them to suffer horribly."

The fact that some collectors can be quite sophisticated makes educating the public even more difficult. One collector in the Northeast recently sent a well-written press release to local media to counter the facts presented by humane agencies.

Many humane agencies are already painfully aware of the consequences of the media's portrayal of collectors as people wrongly accused of animal cruelty by officials with "ridiculously high standards." Angry attacks on the agency are the all-too-common result.

Animal care and control agencies must strive to educate the media about the animals' actual conditions. More importantly, they must supply the media with information about animal collectors and their psychology, so that the media can report on cases accurately to help the public understand the phenomenon. "It's usually helpful for the agency to assign one reliable person to handle media inquiries about collector cases," says Mullen.

"I actually invited a reporter I'd worked with previously to accompany me in my truck during visits to several collectors, says Timothy Clements, chief cruelty investigator for the Michigan Humane Society in Detroit. The result was an extremely enlightened article that appeared in the *Detroit Free Press*.

To avoid countersuits for defamation of character, agencies should always consult with prosecuting attorneys and their own legal counsel when making statements or releasing information about pending cruelty cases.

Ending the Suffering

From working with the media to gathering all the right equipment, the challenges of a large-scale rescue operation are indeed enormous. But humane agencies must never lose sight of their responsibility to end the suffering of the animal victims.

"That means doing whatever it takes," says Mullen. "These cases have a way of taxing shelters' abilities and resources, but there is a silver lining. Not only can they bring the satisfaction of having rescued animals from an intolerable situation, but they can ultimately result in greater public support for the shelter."

"These are the cases we talk about, even have nightmares about, for years," says White. "Shelter personnel and volunteers will always have memories of what they saw and smelled and felt. These are the memories which assault the senses, sometimes years after the event. But these are also the memories we hold on to in recognition of our own hard work done under seemingly impossible conditions. These are memories we can and should be proud of."

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES LIST FOR ANIMAL RESCUE OPERATIONS

SUPPLIES

<p>Pocket tape recorder and extra tapes</p> <p>Collars that can be written on (to record ID numbers and sexes of animals), preferably cardboard encased in plastic (sturdier collars and tags must be applied later)</p> <p>Leashes</p> <p>Muzzles</p> <p>Catch poles</p> <p>Gurneys</p> <p>Scale</p> <p>Gloves (both rubber and bite-prevention)</p> <p>Flashlights</p> <p>Folding tables (for veterinary exams)</p> <p>Airline carriers (or other strong but lightweight cages for transporting animals)</p> <p>Resealable bags for gathering evidence (food samples, etc.)</p> <p>Emergency medical supplies (from veterinarians)</p>	<p>First-aid kit for humans</p> <p>Surgical/dust masks</p> <p>Tubes of mentholated ointment, extract of clove, or extract of spearmint (which can be applied to rescuers' surgical masks or around their nostrils to make strong odors less bothersome)</p> <p>Body bags for dead animals found on-site or for those who may have to be euthanized on-site</p> <p>Plain, carbon, and lined paper</p> <p>Clip boards (and plastic coverings in case of rain)</p> <p>Large supply of pens and thick felt-tip markers</p> <p>Adhesive tape to use for labeling evidence, marking on carriers, etc.</p> <p>Camcorder, Polaroid™ camera, 35mm camera, and film (200 speed works well for 35mm)</p> <p>Portable lights</p> <p>Back-up camera lights, batteries</p>
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FORMS AND OTHER ESSENTIALS	
Search warrant or other form authorizing your presence on the property of the person being charged	ID badges, especially for non-uniformed rescue workers
Lined pad (or prepared form) for ID listing. Information recorded for each animal should include medical condition, brief description, ID number assigned at time of rescue, and destination (for those situations where many animals are being sent to various shelters or other holding facilities until a legal determination about the animals can be made).	Agreement form for those responsible for foster care
Veterinarian evaluation form to record each animal's condition	Euthanasia authorizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For veterinarian's signature • For animal owner's signature (for use in those rare cases in which owner voluntarily gives permission for euthanasia of some of his or her animals)
List of important phone numbers	

Removing Animals From Collectors: Legal Justifications and Procedural Considerations

Whether animal collectors are criminally prosecuted or given other appropriate interventions, an investigator's first priority should be the removal of animals in danger from the collector's premises.

Occasionally, in cases where animals have been neglected but are not in a state of severe suffering and the collector is reasonably cooperative, a humane agency may keep the animals on the premises under the agency's supervision until the case is resolved. Sometimes, regardless of the conditions of the animals, on-site impoundment is dictated by the sheer number of animals on the property.

Typically, however, physical removal is the only appropriate action.

Investigators do occasionally succeed in persuading the collector to voluntarily sign over the animals, but they often rely on one of five legal justifications for removing them:

- **Animal cruelty laws.** State animal cruelty laws and local animal care and control ordinances are the usual justification for removing animals from collectors and otherwise resolving collector cases. By far the most common charge filed against collectors is cruelty to animals, but prosecutors often add charges such as failure to vaccinate animals and failure to provide necessary veterinary care.
- **Public health ordinances.** Collectors often live in violation of local health codes—from poor sanitary conditions to improper disposition of dead animals. Public health officials—and in some jurisdictions animal control authorities—can sometimes remove animals on the basis of violations of such codes.
- **Nuisance laws.** These laws protect neighbors and the public generally from persons who use their property in unreasonable, annoying, or injurious ways. A collector's operation will often create problems—such as noise, stench, or wandering animals—that affect neighbors' properties or a larger public interest. In such cases, the neighbors or the municipal government, depending on the scope and scale of the impacts, can seek an injunction from a court to abate the nuisance. Removing excess animals from the collector's property can be part of the remedy petitioned for, if not the central remedy.
- **Animal limitation ordinances.** The typical animal limitation ordinance limits the number of dogs and cats people in the jurisdiction are allowed to keep. Exceptions are usually made for the operation of licensed kennels and catteries, which must meet specified standards to be licensed.
- **Zoning ordinances.** These ordinances typically regulate everything within prescribed community "zones," from the types of buildings allowed to the height of street signs. Enterprising investigators have successfully rescued animals from collectors by persuading zoning commissions or other applicable agencies to enforce zoning ordinances that prohibit the operation of kennels or catteries.

Each of these five legal justifications comes with its own procedural requirements, which vary from state to state and locality to locality. Common procedures for removing animals include:

- **Obtaining a warrant for search and seizure.** In what is by far the most common process used to remove animals, the humane law enforcement agency secures a warrant from a court in advance of the rescue. Fort Wayne's Belinda Lewis offers this caveat, however: "If a humane law enforcement agency secures a warrant, it doesn't necessarily mean that it has the authority to serve that warrant. It may need to call in a police agency to assist in serving the warrant." Humane agencies, of course, must always be aware of the scope and limits of their enforcement authority, and they may find police support helpful for particular cases even when they themselves do have enforcement authority.
- **Removing animals based on exigent circumstances.** Exigent circumstances are those with such dire, immediate, and obvious consequences (e.g., an animal on the brink of death) that a court does not require a warrant in advance of the seizure (but requires a hearing after the seizure). Because such removals run the risk of

violating constitutional protections, agencies must be particularly careful when removing animals without a warrant.

- **Removing animals under an order from another authority.** In some jurisdictions, police or health departments can order humane agencies to remove animals for violations of public health and nuisance laws.

Because state and local laws vary significantly with regard to both substance and procedure, humane agencies must work closely with local judges, prosecutors, or other attorneys in pursuing legal remedies.

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Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium*

Animal Hoarding: Intervention and Management Suggestions for Agencies

Our understanding of the nature of animal hoarding is still incomplete. Nevertheless, some appreciation of the hoarder's perspective may be very useful in deciding how to begin intervention and management of a hoarding case. Analysis of preliminary data from interviews with hoarders suggest that the following themes seem to be very common:

- Much of the hoarder's identity may be tied to their possessions. Therefore, giving up anything can be associated with tremendous fear, apprehension, and even a grief-like reaction. Be aware of this when you begin to negotiate with the hoarder and understand the implications [for the hoarder] of asking them to reduce the number of animals present, particularly if this is expected to occur quickly. If possible, avoid any discussion of reduction in number initially as this will be likely to evoke strong resistance and be a barrier to future communication. Slow reductions in the number of animals may be much more palatable to the hoarder and lead to greater cooperation.
- Hoarders often firmly believe they are providing quality care and have special empathy with the animals. They believe they are devoted to the animals even though they lack insight into the true nature of the conditions. It may be helpful to try to acknowledge their attempts to provide care, however unsuccessful, and their special connection with the animals, to gain their confidence and trust. Hoarders are often very eager to talk about their caregiving, which may be a conduit to communication.
- Expect that denial will be present. There is probably little point in arguing about what may appear to be a serious lapse in care or insensitivity to obvious suffering. Don't badger about what will probably be very different views about the conditions. Hoarders are often not lying. They lack the insight to appreciate the true conditions present.
- Hoarders often view the world as a very hostile place for both animals and people, and may have almost delusional levels of paranoia about officials. This, coupled with the role the animals play in their lives, and previous attempts of others to get them to reduce their collection, will make them doubly suspicious about the motives of those seeking to help. Carefully consider your approach and understand that a uniform represents the most extreme threat they could imagine. Avoid badges or other official paraphernalia if possible. It may be helpful to identify a friend, neighbor, family member or possibly a veterinarian to intercede or act as an intermediary.

- Instead of arguing about the adequacy of the conditions for the animals or people, consider analyzing function (eg, what they cannot do because of the hoarding). For example, are they having trouble cooking, or affording pet food, or sleeping, etc? Working on these issues could be a conduit to trust and better communication that will let you indirectly work on the animal hoarding problem.
- Hoarders may have problems concentrating and staying on track with any management plan. Be prepared for a long term process and frequent monitoring of the situation.
- Treat each hoarding case as unique - avoid a "one-size-fits-all" protocol, which can jeopardize the individuality of each case.

Treatment

Much remains to be learned about the psychological underpinnings of hoarding behavior, and little is known about how closely the hoarding of animals parallels the hoarding of inanimate objects. Although anecdotal evidence suggests that hoarding behavior may have a strong psychological component, it would be inappropriate to suggest that all animal hoarders require psychological intervention. At this time, the following broad recommendations seem reasonable in light of the preliminary data:

- It is best to assume that the person does not have a mental health problem. However, if it becomes apparent that the person has unusual or bizarre thinking (e.g., paranoid ideas, magical thinking such as hearing things that others don't hear or seeing things that others don't see) and / or excessive emotional reactions or behavior (for example, extreme sadness, strong anxiety or fear, angry outbursts or threats of violence), consultation with or referral to a mental health professional is advisable.
- Be aware that at the present time, because the problem of animal hoarding is a very new area of study, it is unlikely that you will find mental health services that specialize in intervention with animal hoarders. It may be useful to refer the hoarder to a clinician with extensive experience in assessing and diagnosing people with a wide range of mental health problems, including chronic mental illness, addictions, severe anxiety disorders, and depression. A cognitive questioning strategy where people think through their capacity to take care of animals and the animals' needs might prove useful, and also help provide data on the hoarder's legal competence.
- If the home is in a dilapidated or very dirty condition and the hoarder seems unable to correct the problem, contact a local social service agency to identify the type of services needed. If the person is over 60, contact the local Council on Aging or Elders at Risk program to make a referral. These agencies can also be helpful in making a mental health referral if needed.

- Since many hoarders reside in highly unsanitary conditions, they may suffer from infectious diseases that may not be apparent. Encouragement to seek medical attention might be appropriate. In view of hoarders' financial problems, they might need social service help to obtain adequate medical services.>

Many people, especially those with concern about animals, have difficulty feeling sympathy or even respect toward hoarders of animals when they see or read about the appalling conditions in which the creatures are found. Many hoarders provide seriously unsanitary and restricted environments for themselves and for the other people in their households. Individuals attempting to intervene in hoarding situations are likely to find it easier to retain a constructive perspective if they maintain an awareness of their own emotional responses to these troubling circumstances. This can enhance effectiveness.

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A research collaboration of Tufts University Center for Animals and Public Policy
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Animal Hoarding: Recommendations for Intervention by Family and Friends

Jane N. Nathanson and the Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium¹

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Since 1997, the Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium (HARC) has continued its research to improve the knowledge and understanding of animal hoarding behavior, so that methods of treatment can be determined. Although we are still in the process of studying this condition, and definitive conclusions have yet to be formulated, HARC periodically receives inquiries from family members and friends of animal hoarders. The living conditions of the humans and animals involved have caused concerned individuals to be perplexed, distraught, and in need of guidance to intervene in these situations. There are some aspects of animal hoarding behavior for which relevant interventions and methods of communication have been utilized with some promising results. We have therefore developed the following guidelines based on outreach practices associated with crisis management for at-risk persons resistant to assistance and care which we believe to be applicable to many hoarding situations. ¹

General Information About Animal Hoarding Behavior

Although the exact nature of this problem is still not understood, we define an animal hoarder as someone who:

- accumulates a large number of animals;
- fails to provide minimal standards of nutrition, sanitation, and veterinary care;
- fails to act on the deteriorating condition of the animals (including disease, starvation, and even death), or the environment (severely overcrowded and unsanitary conditions)
- fails to act on or recognize the negative impact of the collection on their own health and well-being.

Prior to commencing intervention efforts, it is advisable to keep in mind that you will be encountering a way of life, a sense of values, and a belief system that may be extremely difficult to understand and accept. While you may find the conditions to be unbearable for humans and animals alike, the animal hoarder may adamantly disagree. The animal hoarder may neither notice nor be

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bothered by his/her surroundings. Furthermore, since the conditions have likely developed over a long period of time, individuals may have become well accustomed to them to the point of being quite comfortable with the status quo. Even if public and/or animal health authorities have cited code violations, imposed fines or other penalties, the animal hoarder may still not consider such consequences to be incentives for change.

In order to begin to make a personal connection with a family member or friend who is an animal hoarder, it is important to suspend your own expressed ideas of proper living conditions and prioritize your efforts to strive for developing a trusting relationship and some common ground for positive communication. This approach is based upon an acceptance of the fact that there is probably little you can do in the short term to change the living situation of the animal hoarder. However, maintaining or developing favorable social interaction may be a key, initial step toward an improved way of life for the animal hoarder, who has likely become isolated, unchallenged by social norms or contrasting values, and extremely fearful or resistant to change. Perhaps an animal hoarder's inclination to avoid human interaction and social activity in general has been exacerbated by his/her sense of embarrassment about the home conditions and/or a fear that if other authorities, repair or service providers are given access, only negative consequences will follow. Consequently, over time, as you engage in a steadfast, consistent, and positive manner of sensitive communication and demonstration of genuine concern, the animal hoarder may develop greater tolerances for social interaction in general. In this way, there can be greater potential for your role to provide the animal hoarder with the motivation and support that facilitates the process of change.

Preparation

Prior to communicating concerns and trying to assist an animal hoarder to improve personal and home conditions, it is essential to critically examine one's own attitudes, manner of approach, and style of communication, as well as the specific objectives.

Attitudes and Communication Style

Identify both positive and negative feelings that you have about the individual and the status of your relationship. Consider whether there are particular preexisting, problematic issues between you and this person and how these matters may interfere or undermine your efforts to provide constructive assistance. If there have been prior conflicts or hostilities, become determined to exclude such history or hot topics which would contribute to contentiousness. Assume a mindset that is genuinely positive, respectful, polite, sensitive, and patient. The priority of intervention is the development of trust and rapport. To facilitate this objective, refrain from verbal or non-verbal communications which may be viewed as challenging, moralistic, or condemning of the living conditions or the person's apparent sense of values.

Education about The Human-Animal Bond

Enhance your understanding of the human-animal bond in general, so as to facilitate engaging in empathic communications with the animal hoarder. Keep in mind that the individual's affinity and devotion to animal companions are often founded on a number of attributes generally ascribed to pets. We may be most familiar with the concept of "unconditional love" as being profoundly motivating for

those who seek the companionship of animals. Yet, there are additional, significant and fundamental characteristics that may contribute to a person's appreciation of animals. The animal caregiver's pets may be the exclusive resource from which she or he derives a sense of trust, control, and self-esteem. The animal hoarder may regard the animals as being devoted family members, with whom there are no conflicts, only constant pleasurable interactions, providing continuous gratification.

It is important to acknowledge that while the observer may find the living conditions of the person/pets to be unsafe and unsanitary for human and/or animal quality of life, the animal hoarder may find this home to be a safe haven for the humans and animals alike. The animal hoarder may consider this domain to be a refuge from the stresses and challenges encountered in alternative settings. The individual may derive pride in his/her role as a "savior" and caregiver of these animals and strongly assert ethical and moral objections to the potential for animal homelessness or euthanasia. There may be physical, emotional, and/or cognitive impairments which affect the animal hoarder's capacity to insightfully acknowledge that the conditions for the humans and/or animals are problematic. If the animal hoarder does acknowledge the poor conditions, he/she may still object to any need for remediation. He/she may defensively and adamantly assert, "Any life is better than no life." From the perspective of the animal hoarder, this conviction may override quality of life considerations. Since the person and animals are typically sharing the same conditions, any critical or challenging remarks of the living situation of the animals may be readily perceived by the animal hoarder as being personally threatening or offensive. It is important to keep in mind how strongly identified the individual may be with the animals.

Listening Skills

Be ready, willing, and able to LISTEN ATTENTIVELY to the individual. Be receptive to learning what may be specific and critical to motivating or inhibiting the person's behavioral response to alter the status quo. The animal hoarder may only indirectly convey that s/he is experiencing inconveniences, difficulties, or conflicts regarding personal or home conditions. While initially averse to receiving any assistance with such issues, the animal hoarder may gradually become more accepting of guidance and support as further trust, rapport, and communication develop over time. Focus on the values, wants, and needs that the animal hoarder may express or imply. Reserve your own agenda until you have derived these essential clues to guide your method, manner, and content for subsequent communication.

Recruiting Help of Others

Recruit other family members or friends who might be willing to help, if not directly with the animal hoarder him/herself, then perhaps as a resource or advisor for you. It can be particularly helpful to enlist those who have an affinity towards animals; who understand the challenges associated with proper care; have strong interpersonal skills; or special knowledge or experience as related to particular aspects of the situation. If the hoarder has a relationship with a local veterinarian whom s/he trusts, that individual or a member of her/his staff may be able to offer some help. The local humane society or animal rescue group is another possible avenue for help. Initially, you may want to proceed cautiously when you contact others, in order to be sure you are comfortable with their understanding of the situation and approach. However, with any individual whose assistance you seek, proceed very slowly and selectively, if and when you consider directly introducing her/him to the animal hoarder.

Keeping a Record

Since the problems are complex, it can be helpful to keep a diary of telephone calls and other actions involved in the intervention efforts. This practice can be helpful for you to maintain reference notes on the different contact persons you will be calling upon, as well as specific recommendations or suggested resources that you derive from them. It can also be helpful for you (together with the animal hoarder) to keep notes about what tasks have been agreed upon for individual or mutual follow-up review, so that the steps being taken are clarified and confirmed in writing. This practice can alleviate subsequent disagreement or chance of forgetting. Documenting the plan and its progress or set-backs, as well as keeping track of the specific assistance provided are helpful tools for periodic assessment and modification of the measures and approaches that are being utilized.

Optimizing The Animal Hoarder's Response

Expressing Your Concerns

In order to facilitate access, convey simply that you are concerned about the well-being and safety of both the animal hoarder and the pets. You might emphasize:

- a) The person's physical health (avoid references to mental health);
- b) Without indicating your own standards or subjective appraisal, present the possibility that the Department of Public Health, humane organizations, and child or adult protective services may receive reports from neighbors, utility workers, or even passersby, and investigations would follow;
- c) Department of Public Health may cite health and safety violations that could result in property condemnation, with subsequent homelessness resulting for the individual and the animals alike;
- d) Department of Public Health, Department of Social Services, Adult Protective Services, or Law Enforcement investigation may cite specific conditions which these authorities deem to be neglectful/abusive (animal, dependent child or elder;) and the animal hoarder would risk having the animals (and/or human dependents) forcibly removed; fines and/or imprisonment may also result. Focus on your desire to provide supportive efforts to prevent these consequences if possible.

Creating a Comfortable Setting for Discussion

Given the likelihood that the animal hoarder may be anxious or ill at ease about your request to meet and talk, (if such activity is not a customary occurrence,) it is suggested that you give priority to addressing her/his needs for comfort - i.e. time and place for meeting, duration of visit, if/which others will be participating, and other factors that may be conducive to an amicable and productive encounter. Be flexible, changing the focus or style of communication depending on how the person is reacting. Defuse contentious interactions that may develop with shared humor and laughter, along with safe subjects. Animal hoarders may welcome opportunities to provide stories about individual animals. Express compliments or praise for the person, or notice a special feature about a specific pet. If and

when even minor steps have been taken to improve conditions, express positive reinforcement – i.e.: “Your hard work shows;” “What a good job you’ve done.” In the course of conversation, freely express corroborating comments whenever possible – i.e. “That’s true;” “I agree.” Continually demonstrate warmth, caring, and respect: i.e. “I’m so glad you called;” “I’ve been concerned about how you are;” “Might I stop by with an extra casserole dish I made?”

Developing a Positive Alliance

To maintain access and to sustain involvement, the priority objective of your interactions must be to achieve a sense of alliance, without which progress cannot develop in your relationship as a supportive helper. Put aside any sense of urgency to fix the conditions of human(s) or animals. It is advisable to avoid any precipitous manner of taking charge and taking action. No matter how well intended and completely benign you believe yourself to be, your proposed assistance may be viewed as an imposition of your negative judgment of the situation. Likely unaccustomed and leery of social interactions, the animal hoarder may consider you to be an unwelcome intruder on her/his turf. It becomes crucial to slowly, deliberately, and persistently strive to ease the animal hoarder’s anxieties regarding change and associated loss. Continuous efforts to create a positive mood and a cooperative working relationship are essential factors conducive to further steps toward remediation.

Waiting for Acknowledgement of Problems Before Offering Help

Await the individual’s readiness and/or expression of being emotionally conflicted or overwhelmed by the numbers of animals or related conditions before conveying your willingness to facilitate “downsizing” (i.e. via placing any of the animals in other homes or shelters.) This objective, if assumed prematurely in an unsolicited manner, can readily be considered by the animal hoarder to be antagonistic, as it reflects a failure to acknowledge the profound attachment that the person may feel for each and every one of her/his flock. In order to maximize the potential for continued access and constructive intervention, it is advisable to focus only on mutually defined problems and needs, one step at a time.

Offering Specific Assistance

A direct question such as “how can I help you?” may not evoke any specific response from the animal hoarder, no matter how glaring and numerous the needs may be to address health, financial or legal problems, home repairs, cleaning, etc. The animal hoarder may simply express a terse and dismissing “There’s nothing I want you to do” or “I don’t know.” It may become more productive for you to provide specific suggestions with a focus on particular tasks that appear to be least challenging to one’s sense of privacy or control, such as:

“Perhaps I can help you by getting some new containers to store the pet food or some large metal cans to hold garbage or newspaper items for disposal or recycling... if difficult to lift or move to the street, I could help with that.”

“Would you like me to put some shelving up over there? We could organize the pet food and supplies, and set up the feeding and watering bowls below.”

“I have a very pretty sofa cover that I’m not using anymore, and it might look nice here.”

“If you or the animals are bothered by the fleas (or flies, cockroaches, rats, etc.), we could see what we could do about that.”

“We could plan on re-screening some of your windows – it’s quite easy and we could do it together as a project... Maybe we could get some colorful curtains at a tag sale next weekend.”

“I know someone who is redecorating and planning on getting a newer stove (dishwasher, clothes washer, refrigerator). She’s asked me if I know of anyone who might like to have the one(s) being replaced.”

“For you and the animals to be safe, it would be a good idea if we got smoke detectors, and I could put them up for you.”

“You might be eligible for this new program I just heard about in your community for elders to receive grants for home repairs. I could get more information about this for you...Did you know that there are telephone (or other utility, and service) discounts for elders’ and persons with disabilities? Would you like me to find out more about this for you?”

“I see that you have some sores on your legs that might become infected if not treated” or “I hear you have a bad cough.” “I could arrange an appointment for you with a doctor I know who I think you would like. I’d be happy to give you a ride, or go along with you, if transportation is any problem.”...”You know how dependent the animals are on your being physically well.”

Providing Help and Setting Limits

The issue of assisting the hoarder with the costs or care associated with the animals is one which poses questions or concerns. Family and friends who are able and willing to help with the finances or physical assistance related to veterinary services, food, supplies, grooming, and cleaning will need to assess whether such assistance would actually encourage the animal hoarder to acquire additional animals. In this regard, it is advisable to discuss with the animal hoarder specifically what it is that you are willing to do and under what conditions (i.e. that no additional animals will be acquired during this time of your efforts to help out.) If the animal hoarder is able to acknowledge the importance of having pets sterilized, you might suggest your assistance with locating low-cost resources and helping with transportation. If you are amenable to providing help with food, grooming, or cleaning, it may be necessary to have a clearly expressed agreement that no additional animals be acquired in the course of either your doing so or your deriving and coordinating help from others.

Community Resources

Area human and humane organizations may be available to provide you with information, support and/or referral services that address aspects of the individual, animal, home and health care needs. In order to familiarize yourself with the parameters which define safe and sanitary conditions for humans and

animals, you can contact the town's Department of Public Health and the humane society or SPCA. While maintaining the anonymity of the animal hoarder her/himself, you may find it helpful to become informed of the definitions or guidelines utilized by these groups, so that you can better advise the animal hoarder of the specific standards for property and human or animal conditions which are not being met. Generally speaking, all states have anti-cruelty statutes that specify that companion animals must have sufficient food, clean water, sanitary housing, and veterinary care when illness or other suffering is present. Failure to provide these conditions can be justification for removal of the animals and prosecution. However, it may be possible to arrange a negotiated agreement whereby the hoarder gives up some or most of the animals and agrees to periodic monitoring in lieu of prosecution. This can also be a vehicle to provide care to both the hoarder and pets.

Depending upon the individual's age, physical or mental condition, income, dependents, etc., there may be particular outreach or support services available at the regional or community level which may be contacted to either provide information, referral, and recommendations to you or provide direct services to the animal hoarder. Such resources would include:

- Council on Aging or Department of Elder Affairs
- Elder at Risk Program or Adult Protective Services
- Child Protective Services
- Department of Mental Health
- State Rehabilitation Agency
- Department of Public Health
- Local humane society, animal welfare or animal control programs

You may also find particular service providers or outreach programs that focus on difficult to reach, oppositional or involuntary clients. Specific organizations or agencies can apprise you about the general scope of potential services and the procedures that an authority or agency would follow or recommend with regard to introducing prospective services to the individual in need. If there are financial resources available, it may be advisable to consider the option of private human service providers or case managers for family and/or individual needs for counseling or care management. Referrals to social workers or case managers with specific specialties can be derived from professional organizations such as the National Association of Social Workers (listed by state) or the National Association of Private Geriatric Care Managers. Consult the HARC website (www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/hoarding.html) for information regarding the availability of private individual and family consultation services with members of HARC.

Local humane societies or other animal protection groups may be able to offer suggestions with regard to staff, affiliated social workers or counselors, or other professionals who specialize in human-animal bond issues. However, given the relatively recent development of research and services devoted to animal hoarding, a lack of available resources with this expertise can be expected at this time. Nonetheless, there may be health and human service professionals who possess particular knowledge and experience in addressing certain behavioral aspects or contributing factors as may be associated with animal hoarding – i.e. the potential needs for medical or neuropsychological evaluation and treatment (including specialized geriatric services, treatment for depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, etc;) housing, financial, and legal aid; counseling related to crisis management, major loss and grief, trauma and abuse history; or, the potential need for humane education as related to the need to learn responsible, animal caregiving practices.

In the event that 1) one suspects that the animal hoarder is in fact violating laws related to the neglect and abuse of dependent humans or animals, and 2) that such report(s) has not been made, it is one's responsibility to see to it that the appropriate authorities are apprised in a timely manner. In order to preserve one's role as an intervening ally, it may be best to designate another individual in the intervention team to make the report.

The Role of Authorities

Family members and friends of animal hoarders often become frustrated when they believe that there has been no response on the part of an authority or agency when a report to investigate or a referral to provide service intervention has been made in order to effect the animal hoarder's cooperation to improve conditions. In this regard, keep in mind that when human service and/or law enforcement agencies have made efforts to intervene, the person need not accept further contacts or services, unless violations of the law have indeed been found and corrections mandated. Also, the involvement of human service agencies will be confidential, prohibiting communication with you about any intervention with the animal hoarder unless they have the individual's written consent. In addition, it is important to realize that in the absence of violations of health and welfare regulations and without the clinical criteria and a determination by the court that would deem an individual to be incompetent, the individual is assumed to be competent with the right of self-determination, despite conditions and risk factors which others may consider to be unacceptable.

Closing Commentary

It can become exceedingly challenging and distressing when we do not feel we are achieving a favorable response, no matter how patient and extensive attempts have been. As noted above, it is important to be continually aware of the contributing physical, mental, and emotional factors that may adversely affect the animal hoarder's response. Maintain realistic expectations regarding your own objectives, as well as the animal hoarder's capabilities to change attitudes and behaviors of long standing. You may not readily achieve discernable progress, and it is natural to become discouraged when conditions are not improving in spite of the steadfast efforts that have been made. Nevertheless, the communication and positive interaction that you are able to sustain can reduce the animal hoarder's level of isolation, help build trust, and affect greater self-esteem. These factors are essential to keep the door open for potential change.

Questions The following questions are based on information in this <i>Training Key</i> . Please select the one best answer for each question.	Answers
1. Which of the following statements is <i>false</i> ? (a) <i>It has long been believed that people’s treatment of animals is closely associated with their treatment of fellow human beings.</i> (b) <i>Organizations for the protection of children grew out of animal protection groups.</i> (c) <i>Cruelty to animals is linked primarily to serial murderers and serial rapists.</i> (d) <i>Animal abuse is closely linked to domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, and other violent crimes.</i>	1. (c) Animal abuse does have linkages to persons who commit serial murder and rape but also to those who abuse their spouses, children, and the elderly and who may commit other violent crimes.
2. Which of the following statements is <i>false</i> ? (a) <i>Few states have adopted felony level animal anti-cruelty laws.</i> (b) <i>Studies reveal a close association among physical abuse by one or both parents, cruelty to animals, and violence toward people.</i> (c) <i>Abusers often threaten to harm or kill a victim’s favorite pet if the victim leaves the relationship.</i> (d) <i>Collaboration between law enforcement, animal protection agencies, and social welfare organizations can aid the investigation and prevention of both animal and familial abuse and other violent crimes.</i>	2. (a) Thirty-one states have adopted felony-level crimes for animal abuse.
3. Which of the following statements is <i>false</i> ? (a) <i>Investigators should go beyond simple reports of animal abuse to determine whether other vulnerable and often hidden, victims are present, such as the elderly and children.</i> (b) <i>Families in abusive settings show a disproportionately high rate of “turnover” of family pets and pets of young age.</i> (c) <i>Children of abusive parents are rarely harmful to their pets; rather, they see their pets as one of their only sources of comfort.</i> <i>Animal abuse by children is one of several early indicators of youths who may be at risk for future aggressive and antisocial behavior.</i>	3. (c) Children of abusive parents may in turn abuse their pets even though they often profess great affection for those same animals.
Have you read...? “Cruelty to Animals and Human Violence,” <i>Training Key</i> 392, International Association of Chiefs of Police, Alexandria, Virginia. This <i>Training Key</i> specifically discusses the relationship between notorious violent murderers and sexual predators and their prior histories as perpetrators of animal abuse.	
Acknowledgement This <i>Training Key</i> was prepared by Claire Ponder, First Strike manager, and Randall Lockwood, Ph.D., psychologist and vice president of education and outreach for the Humane Society of the United States in Washington, D.C. For further information about the First Strike Campaign or the animal abuse/family violence connection, contact Randall Lockwood at (301)258-3030, lockwood@hsus.org .	

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL LITERATURE AND RESOURCES ON ANIMAL HOARDING NOT INCLUDED IN THIS MANUAL

Adapted with permission from: *Animal Hoarding: A Review of the Literature*, Adult Abuse Review 1(3), December 2002 [<http://www.wordbridges.net/elderabuse/AAR/vol1issue3/editor.html>]

Animal Hoarding Basics

- Gary J. Patronek, Ph.D. and the Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium, “The Problem of Animal Hoarding”, Municipal Lawyer Magazine, May/June 2001. Available at www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/hoarding/hoarding_pubs/MunicipalLawyer.pdf

This is a good introductory article for professionals of many types. It includes information on the characteristics of animal hoarders, possible causes, health issues, “concerns with prosecution,” possible legal interventions and preventions, the link between hoarding and adult abuse or neglect, and the benefits of multidisciplinary task forces. It also includes “management recommendations,” a bulleted list of suggestions for approaching hoarders.

- Susan E. Davis, “Prosecuting Animal Hoarders is Like Herding Cats”, California Lawyer, September 2002. Available at www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/hoarding/hoarding_pubs/Herding_Cats.html

This article is a general introduction to animal hoarding and how it can be prosecuted. Contains several interesting case descriptions.

- Margaret Combs, “Too Many Pets”, broadcast by Living on Earth, November 22, 2002. Both an audio version and a transcript are available in the archives at <http://www.loe.org/>.

This 8-minute radio segment offers a short introduction to animal hoarders. It includes a statement that toxic levels of ammonia present in homes with a great deal of cat urine may cause confusion in hoarders; although ammonia is a topic on the Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium website (www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/hoarding/), this reviewer could not find additional evidence supporting this hypothesis.

- Bridget M. Kuehn, “Animal Hoarding: A Public Health Problem Veterinarians Can Take a Lead Role in Solving”, Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, October 15, 2002. Available at www.avma.org/onlnews/javma/oct02/021015a.asp

Another basic introduction to animal hoarding, this article stands out because of its “tips for identifying hoarders,” which may be useful to those who see one or more animals outside of a hoarder’s home.

- “Veterinarians and Animal Hoarders”, Undated fact sheet, Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium. Available at http://www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/hoarding/hoarding_pubs/vettips.html

This one-page fact sheet is aimed specifically at vets, giving them more tips on how to spot animal hoarders and how they can use their unique position to aid such hoarders.

- Chris Colin, “Loving Animals to Death”, Salon.com, March 8, 2002.
Available at www.salon.com/people/feature/2002/03/08/hoarders/print.html

In this readable article on the animal hoarding phenomena, the author points out that echoes of St. Francis of Assisi’s work with animals can be heard in modern-day hoarders’ descriptions of what they are doing.

- “People Who Hoard Animals”, The Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium, Psychiatric Times, April 2000.
Available at www.psychiatristimes.com/p000425.html

Written for mental health professionals, this article emphasizes causal theories (delusional disorder, early dementia, addiction, zoophilia, attachment disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder). It also compares inanimate object hoarding with animal hoarding.

Research

- Gary J. Patronek, “Hoarding of Animals: An Under-Recognized Public Health Problem in a Difficult-to-Study Population”, Public Health Reports, January/February 1999, pp. 81-87.

Patronek, the Director of the Center for Animals and Public Policy at Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine, analyzed 54 case reports of animal hoarders from eight states. This article reports on the demographics of the hoarders and their households, what kinds of and how many animals were involved, how the hoarders obtained the animals, the physical conditions of the homes, and case outcomes.

Prevention and Intervention

- Tracy Vogel, “Knowing When to Say When”, VetCentric, October 7, 2002.
Available at www.vetcentric.com/magazine/magazineArticle.cfm?ArticleID=1878

How do you tell the difference between a legitimate animal rescuer or foster home and a hoarder? This article explores the vague line between them. Most importantly, the article includes advice on how shelters and other agencies that are overseeing animal foster homes can help prevent loving foster parents from becoming neglectful hoarders.

- Monica Rhor, “Police Now See Cruelty as an Indicator of Domestic Violence, Other Crimes”, The Miami Herald, December 8, 2002.
Available at www.broward.com/mld/browardherald/news/local/4685131.htm

Although not specifically about animal hoarders, this newspaper article reports on the Special Victims and Family Crimes Section of the Broward (Florida) Sheriff's Office, which cross-trains its investigators in "all types of family crime, including animal, child and elder abuse, and domestic violence."

Media Coverage

- Arnold Arluke, et. al., "Press Reports of Animal Hoarding" by Society and Animals, 10, 2, 2002.

Available at www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/hoarding/hoarding_pubs/press%20reports.pdf

This somewhat academic study is based on the premise that "the power of the news media derives from its ability to elicit emotions in readers," and that these emotions can in turn "promote action on certain issues by helping 'new' social problems gain support and momentum." The researchers looked at 100 articles about animal hoarders published from 1995 to 2001 in the United States and Great Britain and found five primary emotional themes in the articles: drama, revulsion, sympathy, indignation, and humor. The authors conclude that "[w]hile these themes draw readers' attention and make disparate facts behind cases understandable by packaging them in familiar formats, they also present an inconsistent picture of animal hoarding that can confuse readers about the nature and significance of this behavior as well as animal abuse, more generally."

- Sample of Recent Newspaper Coverage, The Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium,

Available at www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/hoarding/newspaper.html

This is a bibliography of 44 newspaper articles published in the United States from 1997 to 1999. It may help you locate a local story for use in media or lobbying efforts.

Other Resources

- Animal hoarding legislation across the U.S.
Available at www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/hoarding/legislat.html

This webpage links to five pieces of legislation: two bills that were offered in New Mexico and Vermont, the Illinois hoarding law, the Illinois law mandating that veterinarians report elder abuse, and a Colorado law that governs animal facilities.

- On-line consultation.
Available at www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/hoarding/consult_ed.html
- Online self-help group for hoarders.
Available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/H-C>

This group is for hoarders and/or clutterers with obsessive-compulsive disorder (one theory of the cause of hoarding) who have “a strong desire to improve their living or work spaces.... This is a working list, so be prepared to [make] goals and report back to the group.”

- Pictures of animal hoarders’ homes.
Available at www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/hoarding/photo.html

Available at this website are seven copyrighted pictures showing interiors of the homes of animal hoarders. None of the pictures shows animals, and could be from the homes of those who hoard only inanimate objects.

APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

The following case scenarios are composites of news reports of real situations from Wisconsin of animal hoarding in older populations.

For each case one should consider:

- a. Is any additional information needed?
- b. If so, who might be able to get that information and how?
- c. What intervention might be advisable?
- d. As an animal protection officer, how would any information, resources, or training provided by the county lead elder abuse agency help enhance your approach to this case?
- e. As a lead elder abuse worker, how would any information, resources, or training provided by the local animal protection agency help enhance your approach to this case?

Case One

Mr. B, 84, and Mrs. B, 72, were ordered to leave their home after local law enforcement declared it uninhabitable. The authorities had been called in to investigate an odor similar to natural gas that was being emitted from Mr. & Mrs. B's house. Wearing facemasks to enter the home, police and firefighters discovered twenty cats, eleven birds and three dogs. The home was filled with debris, animal feces and human waste. There were no working toilets in the home and at least four dead birds were found in the house. The local animal welfare agency took custody of all the animals.

(The newspaper accounts did not explain what happened to the elderly couple.)

Case Two

Ms. C, 75, is charged with five felony counts of animal mistreatment resulting in death. A neighbor tipped off authorities that Ms. C was not taking proper care of her animals. As soon as authorities went to the home, approximately 30 cats ran outside and began licking the snow. After entering Ms. C's house, humane society workers found four dead cats, a dead frozen dog and more than 50 sickly cats. Animal feces and rotten food covered the floor.

(The newspaper accounts did not explain what ultimately happened to the elderly woman.)

Section Five - Animal Cruelty as an Indicator of Family Violence/Abuse

The co-occurrence of child abuse, domestic violence and animal abuse has been well-documented in many reports and compilations of essays and scientific literature (Ascione, 1996; Lockwood and Ascione, 1998; Ascione and Arkow, 1999, Ponder and Lockwood, 2001). Information about this connection is now incorporated into the training of many law enforcement officers (see the Training Key from the International Association of Chiefs of Police later in this section). Only recently have animal protection and social service professionals begun to realize that this same connection can often be found in the dynamics of the abuse or neglect of the elderly and other vulnerable adults (Rosen, 1995; Goldman Institute, 1997).

As with other forms of family violence, recognition of the association between elder abuse and animal cruelty is often first seen in the form of dramatic case histories. A California humane investigator recalled responding to a call about several abandoned dogs left to starve in an empty apartment. After removing the animals, she heard whimpering from a closet. Expecting it to contain more dogs, she was horrified to find an emaciated old man who had also been left behind by his caretakers. Recently in Washington, cruelty investigators responded to an anonymous call that a woman had been seen throwing a dead dog in a dumpster. When they arrived at the address they found another dog alive, as well as a 90 year-old emaciated and disoriented woman whose daughter had been coming by only to cash her mother's Social Security checks. Adult protect service investigators were called to the scene and the older woman was hospitalized.

The elderly are often strongly attached to their animal companions (Cusack and Smith, 1984). Pets fill many needs for older persons. They can be a connection to the past and an incentive for future orientation, a source of engagement in reality, a facilitator of social interaction, providers of contact, comfort and stress relief, a stimulus for physical exercise and much more. This special relationship makes them vulnerable to those who would exploit this bond to exert power and control over an older victim.

Animals may become involved in the abuse or neglect of the elderly in a variety of ways. They may be a tool for power and control, as seen in traditional domestic violence cases. They may be also used as tool in financial exploitation, as in cases where adult children refuse to care for a parent's pet and demand that assets be turned over to them. Frequently, declining animal welfare can be an early warning sign of self-neglect or an indicator of hoarding or other behavior problems.

Elder abuse is perhaps the most under-reported form of family violence. Some experts estimate that less than seven percent of elder abuse incidents come to the attention of authorities (Pillemer and Finkelhor, 1988). According to the National Center on Elder Abuse (1997), reports of such abuse rose from 177,000 to 293,000 in the period from 1986 to 1996, an increase of 150%. Advocates for vulnerable adults are beginning to see the need to enlist many other professionals, including animal care and control professionals and veterinarians, in the effort to identify and respond to people in need.

Perception of the Problem

Although many professionals within animal protection provided case histories where there had been clear overlap between elder abuse and animal cruelty, we were uncertain how widely recognized this connection was by social service professionals. During late Spring and Summer of 2001, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA), with funding from the Dr. Scholl Foundation, distributed a questionnaire to Adult Protective Service supervisors and front line case workers surveying the level of awareness of and response to these issues within their agencies.

Responses were received from nearly 200 professionals in 40 states. The survey indicated that many of these professionals recognized the connection and often encountered situations requiring sensitivity to the attachment that older clients had to their pets. However, few agencies currently provide special training or have special policies in place to address these issues and there has been little attempt to coordinate activities of humane societies, animal control agencies and social services involved in protecting vulnerable adults.

Specifically:

- More than 35 % of respondents reported that clients seen by Adult Protective Services (APS) talk about pets having been threatened, injured, killed or denied care by caregiver.
- More than 45% reported that when visiting clients, they have encountered evidence of intentional abuse or neglect of animals.
- More than 92% said that APS workers encountered animal neglect coexisting with clients' inability to care for himself/herself, indicating that reports of animal neglect may be an important warning sign for the presence of self-neglect by vulnerable adults.
- Over 75% of respondents noted that clients' concern for a pet's welfare affected decisions about interventions or additional services. Many people indicated that their clients often refused services or housing if the needs of their pets were not taken into consideration. However, few agencies had established working relationships with the appropriate animal care and control agencies in their area.
- Despite these concerns, only about 35% indicated that their agency include questions about client's animals on intake/assessment, fewer than 25% have policies in place for reporting suspected animal cruelty and only 19% have formal or informal cross-reporting and/or cross-training with animal agencies.

Solutions

In December of 2001 the first National Summit on Elder Abuse was held in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the National Center on Elder Abuse with support from the Administration on Aging and the Department of Justice. This meeting brought together eighty national leaders on elder abuse and family violence. The HSUS was asked to participate in recognition of its experience in establishing strategies to educate professionals and the public on issues of abuse. Among the many recommendations made by the Summit was a call to fund the development and implementation of a national elder abuse education and training curriculum that can be used as a toolkit by a wide variety of professionals, including those in humane work, animal care and control and veterinary medicine. It is hoped that this manual will serve as one component of such a toolkit.

Neglect or abuse of a pet may be the first, and often the most visible, indication that an older adult is at risk. Once again, by being alert to animal cruelty, we can prevent the suffering of human and animal victims. Several resources are provided in this section on the connections between animal cruelty and other forms of family violence. The Training Key from the International Association of Chiefs of Police is attached in its entirety. This is followed by a series of articles from the Domestic Violence Report providing detailed background on how pets frequently become involved in the dynamics of domestic violence. This section concludes with case histories for study and review.

APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

The following case scenarios are based on real situations outside of Wisconsin where older victims of abuse or neglect faced few viable options for escaping abuse with their pets.

For each case one should consider:

- a. Is any additional information needed?
- b. If so, who might be able to get that information and how?
- c. What intervention(s) might be advisable?
- d. As an animal protection officer, how would any information, resources or training provided by the county elder abuse agency enhance your ability to respond to this case?
- e. As an elder abuse worker, how would any information, resources or training provided by the local animal protection agency enhance your ability to respond to this case?

Case One

A 40-year old man was arrested on a felony assault charges after allegedly stabbing his 78-year old mother in the arm and striking her on the head after she called police for help. Police had reportedly visited the home shared by mother and son a month ago when neighbors complained of strong animal smells. Following the attack on the elderly woman, police and animal control officers investigated the home and retrieved approximately four dozen dogs, including the remains of three dead dogs. Dog feces and urine coated the floors of the home and many of the dogs were dirty and exhibited signs of malnutrition. Police also found six wooden riot control sticks and two baseball bats that were covered with what appeared to be canine teeth marks. According to court records, the mother had previously obtained two emergency protective orders against her son.

Case Two

A 56-year old woman was jailed for allegedly allowing her 83-year old mother to lie in her own waste for two days after falling out of bed. Police transported the elderly woman to a hospital where she was found to be suffering from bedsores, dehydration and other ailments. When police investigated the home shared by mother and daughter, they found twenty dogs living in extremely poor living conditions, many of them suffering from malnutrition and dehydration. The daughter was arrested on adult abuse charges.

Section Six - Options for Abused Elders with Pets

The difficult decision to leave an abusive relationship can become even more challenging and complicated if the victim has a pet and is worried about its safety and welfare.

- Three separate studies have documented that from 18% to 40% of women seeking shelter at a crisis center report that concern for their pets' welfare prevented them from seeking shelter sooner, in some cases, for more than two months (Ascione 2000).
- A 1995 study of 72 women taking refuge in women's shelters in Wisconsin found that 86% had animals and in 80% of those cases the batterers had been violent to the animals (Lerner 1999).

The challenges of working with older victims with pets are probably familiar to most elder abuse workers.

- The older victim may view his or her cat or dog as a member of the family whose safety is sometimes even more important than his or her own.
- The victim may decide to stay in the abusive home to protect the pet instead of seeking safety for him or herself, if the animal is being hurt or threatened by the abuser.

Although this may be frustrating, it is important not to dismiss the victim's actions as unreasonable and instead try to understand and respect what is motivating his or her decision. In addition to being sources of comfort, humor and attention, the strong attachment older adults have to their pets may be attributed to:

- the absence of children;
- pets providing a connection to the past; and/or
- an elder's social isolation.

In an abusive situation these factors may be intensified, causing the attachment to become even stronger as the pet becomes a single source of happiness and security in the older adult's life. When one recognizes these dynamics, it is easier to understand why victims may risk their own safety to protect their pet.

Ideally, system responses would be developed that support the victim's decision to protect their pet while allowing him or her to leave the abuser. For instance:

- Include questions on elder abuse assessment forms like,
 "Do you have pets?"
 "Are you concerned for their safety?"

- Work cooperatively with area animal shelters to establish a Safe Haven program for the pets of battered women. *Note: Refer to Section VII on interdisciplinary action for more information on this option.*
- Advocate for supportive housing arrangements to accommodate pets and for nursing homes to provide facilities and care for their clients' pets.

To learn more about animal abuse in family violence situations, see the following three articles in this section. The first article, *Saving Battered Women: One Pet at a Time*, describes some of the unique challenges of finding shelter and safety that are faced by battered women with pets. The second article includes information on both the psychology involved and animal cruelty laws in the context of domestic violence. Titled *From Safety to Healing: Representing Battered Women with Companion Animals* and authored by Michelle Lerner, it is helpful for understanding the role of companion animal abuse in domestic violence. The third article, *What Advocates Can Do for Battered Women with Companion Animals* by Michelle Lerner and Joan Zorza, provides useful and concrete suggestions. All three of these articles are written for younger domestic violence victims, however they are applicable to situations of domestic violence in older populations, and perhaps are even more pertinent considering that older adults are often particularly attached to their pets. The articles and case studies included will help to illustrate the obstacles faced by victims of family violence with pets and suggest steps elder abuse workers can take to help their clients find safety for themselves and their companion animals.

*Reprinted from "Saving Battered Women: One Pet at a Time" by Susan McCullough
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Saving Battered Women: One Pet at a Time

For Amanda and her puppy, Jordan, the car was the only place left to sleep. She fled after a year and half of being kicked, pummeled, and threatened and seeing her pets abused by her live-in boyfriend. She'd hastily gathered up Jordan and driven 1,000 miles nonstop to a city where some friends lived.

But now, in the dead of night, she hesitated to ask those friends for help; the abuser might find and threaten them, too. And the only other avenues open to her-local women's shelters-told her that she couldn't bring Jordan. In fact, one shelter worker suggested that Amanda surrender the pup to the local pound and concentrate on saving her own life.

"But Jordan was the only sense of security and stability I had," Amanda recalls. "I couldn't give him up."

Many battered women are just as devoted to their pets as Amanda was to Jordan. In fact, pets may be even more important to abused women than they are to other people.

Abusive men often try to isolate their victims from other people, says Kim Roberts, who manages the First Strike campaign for the Humane Society of the United States (the group's name is meant to suggest that abuse of an animal is often the first step to abuse of people). "The batterer is often the woman's sole source of human contact, but he's definitely not a source of love and comfort. So the pet is a source of unconditional love that a battered woman may not get from anywhere else."

Ironically, that love and devotion can work against her. All too often, a batterer uses a woman's feelings for her pet to force her to comply with his wishes or to keep her from leaving him. Jane, a young woman from the South, recalls that her then-husband "would threaten to drop my dog and cat off the balcony of our apartment if I didn't do what he wanted me to do."

Nasty Research Results

Jane's experience isn't an isolated one. When Utah State University sociologist Frank Ascione, Ph.D., surveyed 37 women who entered one Utah women's shelter, more than two out of three pet-owning respondents told him that their partners had harmed their pets or threatened to do so. Some women do try to protect their pets by finding another home for them.

In fact, Amanda did that for two puppies she'd had before acquiring Jordan. "One night, my boyfriend got so mad at one puppy for sniffing another dog's butt that he drop-kicked the puppy across the room," she recalls. "I told him if he ever touched the dogs again that

I'd call the police. He packed up and left for a couple of days. I found a new home for the puppies while he was gone. I knew they'd be happier there."

Other women, however, choose to stay with their partners so that they can protect their pets or because they can't bear to give up their animals. Nancy Hunt, who runs a women's shelter in Arlington, Virginia, saw this happen often. "I would get calls from women who wanted to come to the shelter and bring their pets with them," she recalls. "I'd have to tell them no because our shelter is so small, other people here may be allergic to animals, and there's always a chance of fights between pets. Many times, the women would tell me that if their pets couldn't come to the shelter, they couldn't come either. I'd feel terrible when that happened."

Research bears out Hunt's experience. When Dr. Ascione surveyed 101 battered women at five Utah shelters, he found that nearly one in four women had delayed coming to a shelter-sometimes for many months-because they were concerned about the safety of their pets. Among those whose pets already had been threatened or hurt by abusers, the proportion was even higher.

A New Partnership

To correct this situation, community groups all over the United States have forged partnerships designed to help both women and pets escape from abusive homes and rebuild their lives.

Some women's groups work with animal shelters. Nancy Hunt's women's shelter now works with the local animal shelter to house a battered woman's pets for up to a month until she finds alternate housing. Other programs rely on networks of foster-care providers-generally private homes or kennels-to temporarily house battered women's pets.

One program uses both approaches to serve an exceptionally diverse set of animal clients, including horses and livestock. The Greenhill Humane Society/SPCA of Eugene, Oregon, uses not only its own on-site pastures, barns, and corrals but also a confidential network of foster-care providers.

Word about Greenhill's program has spread a surprisingly long way. Says director Kimball Lewis, "I remember one woman in California whose husband threatened to kill her horses if she left him. She and her kids drove all the way from California to Eugene and brought the horses with them. We sheltered the horses for six months, until she could get back on her feet."

Sometimes, formerly battered women start programs. Jacqueline K. Beckstead of Waldport, Oregon, has never forgotten how hard it was to leave her abusive husband and find a place to live for her, her two children, and Reno, her Bernese mountain dog. Now the president of a local humane society, Beckstead has established a foster-care network for the pets of other women like herself.

The Movement Grows

"I know from experience that people won't leave their animals," Beckstead says. "I'm hoping the network will be a way to let a person be able to keep the animal she loves so much." Meanwhile, national groups have launched campaigns aimed at broadening awareness of how pets may become victims of domestic violence. Among them are the First Strike campaign and the Campaign Against Violence sponsored by the American Humane Association.

All these efforts are making it easier for women to leave their abusers, begin new lives, and keep their pets with them. That certainly was true for Amanda and Jordan. After four days of sleeping in her car, Amanda found a women's shelter that could house her and also arrange for Jordan to stay at a nearby animal shelter.

That gave Amanda the time she needed to find a job and a new place to live. In the meantime, she recalls, "I got to visit Jordan every day. I'd play with him and groom him and take care of him and spend time with him." Today, Amanda runs her own business, attends law school, and has just bought a house where, she says, "I'll create happy memories."

And although Jordan has passed away, she says she's starting to look for another dog—maybe even two—to share those future memories with.

APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

The following case scenarios are composites of real situations in Wisconsin where older victims of domestic violence with pets faced few viable options for escaping abuse.

For each case one should consider:

- a. Is any additional information needed?
- b. If so, who might be able to get that information and how?
- c. What intervention(s) might be advisable?
- d. As an animal protection officer, how would any information, resources, or training provided by the county lead elder abuse agency help enhance your approach to this case?
- e. As an elder abuse worker, how would any information, resources, or training provided by the local animal protection agency help enhance your approach to this case?

Case One

Mrs. J, 62, has been in a relationship for nine years with an extremely controlling, abusive man who calls her names and even threatens to kill her. Mrs. J is largely financially dependent on him and suffers from chronic fatigue syndrome and extreme depression. Mrs. J is extremely attached to her two cats and after years of abuse they are the only things that keep her going. She has made limited contact with the local domestic violence shelter but her caseworker is having difficulty finding low-income housing that will accept cats. If her caseworker cannot locate housing that will accept cats, Mrs. J is adamant that she cannot leave her abuser.

Case Two

Mrs. D, 68, contacted a battered women's shelter, and requested advice on divorcing her abusive husband. The advocate at the shelter noticed that even after several meetings, something was holding Mrs. D back from leaving the abusive relationship. Finally, Mrs. D explained that her pet dog was the only source of unconditional love in her life and she couldn't leave it to go to the shelter where animals are not allowed. Whenever the advocate tries to convince her to come to shelter, Mrs. D cries and asks to end the discussion.

Section Seven - An Interdisciplinary Response

I. INTRODUCTION

The first several sections of the manual should help the reader gain a comprehensive understanding of the intersection of elder abuse and the cruelty and mistreatment of animals. Hopefully, the reader is also persuaded of the need for lead elder abuse and animal protection agencies to work cooperatively. This section of the manual offers suggestions for accomplishing that goal:

A. Memorandum of Understanding

1. Each county's lead elder abuse agency could craft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the county's appropriate animal protection agency, whether it be through the humane agent, humane society or animal control officer. This document would establish the terms of a shared system of referrals, investigations, services and training. It would also provide the foundation for interagency communication and future collaboration.
2. Included in this section is a sample MOU (*see page 97*), which each agency may adapt to specific county conditions. Establishing duty to report instances of abuse (perpetrated against either elders and/or animals) by the county elder abuse agency and animal protection agency may also be included in the MOU.
3. Sample reporting forms are included (*see pages 104 and 105*) and may be adapted should you decide to include a reporting requirement as part of your MOU.

B. Sheltering Pets

1. In his manual, *Safe Havens for Pets*, Frank R. Ascione, Ph.D. offers suggestions and recommendations for developing, operating, and evaluating sheltering programs that provide shelter for the pets of battered women. Ascione's primary sources are survey responses from and interviews with 41 agencies across the nation that have already initiated formal and informal sheltering programs. This allows him to provide concrete suggestions for what your agency can do to get a "Safe Haven for Pets" program running in your community.
2. In LaCrosse, Wisconsin, a domestic abuse program assists in sheltering companion animals when victims of family violence leave abusive situations. A profile of the LaCrosse project is provided to demonstrate how a "Safe Haven for Pets" project can operate within this state.

C. Elder Abuse Interdisciplinary Teams

1. As an addition to the elder abuse interdisciplinary teams that are now operating throughout the state, it is also recommended that an animal protection position be created, if not already in place. This position would be specific to an individual

who can share expertise and advice on cases related to animals, for instance an animal control officer or a county humane agent. This would be a consultation position, meaning the representative would not have to attend all meetings, but would be available to offer help when cases brought before the team concern the protection of animals.

2. A sample interdisciplinary team member description detailing such a position is included in this section (*see page 123*).

II. SAMPLE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Developed by: Wisconsin Department of Health & Family Services, Bureau on Aging and Long Term Care Resources, September, 2002

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)
BETWEEN**

(LEAD ELDER ABUSE AGENCY NAME)

and the

(LOCAL/COUNTY/REGIONAL ANIMAL PROTECTION AGENCY)

Acknowledgement

Addressing the needs of elder abuse victims and animals that are being abused and/or neglected is an overwhelming challenge for one agency to undertake. In these difficult situations it will be to the advantage of all involved parties, especially the elders and animal companions, if the (lead elder abuse agency) and the (animal protection agency) share resources, expertise, information and exchange training. It is acknowledged that both elders and animals have the right to safe and healthy environments and a sharing of information and services is the best way to protect such rights.

Objective

The above parties jointly recognize the need for a proficient, high quality, coordinated service system dealing with elder abuse and animal abuse in (county name) County. The system can only function effectively if there is:

1. a sharing of available knowledge and resources;
2. elimination of duplication of services;
3. an effective system of client referral, assessment and response, and,
4. a shared commitment to victim safety and holding abusers accountable.

The purpose of this agreement is to establish a formal framework for joint actions between the parties to accomplish a common goal. Therefore, this agreement has been entered into for the purpose of delineating responsibilities of the (lead elder abuse agency name) and (local animal protection agency) in the implementation of Wisconsin's State Statute 46.90 (Elder Abuse Reporting Law), relevant civil and criminal statutes, and local ordinances.

I. ELDER ABUSE DEFINITIONS

- A. **“Elder person”** means a person who is age 60 or older or who is subject to the infirmities of aging [Sec. 46.90 (c), Wis. Stats.].
- B. **“Infirmities of Aging”** means organic brain damage caused by advanced age or other physical degeneration in connection therewith to the extent that the person so afflicted is substantially impaired in his or her ability to provide for his or her care or custody [Sec. 55.01 (3), Wis. Stats.].
- C. **“Abuse”** means the wilful infliction on an elder person of physical pain or injury or unreasonable confinement [Sec. 46.90 (a), Wis. Stats.].
- D. **“Emotional Abuse”** is language or behavior that is intimidating, humiliating, threatening, frightening or otherwise harassing. [Sec. 55.01(1)(a) 2. Wis.Stats.]
- E. **“Material Abuse”** means the misuse of an elder person’s property or financial resources [Sec. 46.90 (e), Wis. Stats.]. **“Neglect”** means a significant danger to an elder person’s physical or mental health because the person who takes care of the elder person is unable or fails to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing or medical or dental care [Sec. 46.90 (f), Wis. Stats.].
- F. **“Self-Neglect”** means a significant danger to an elder person’s physical or mental health because the elder person is responsible for his or her care but is unable or fails to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing or medical or dental care [Sec. 46.90 (e), Wis. Stats.].
- G. **“Sexual Assault”** has the meaning defined by Sec. 940.225, Wis. Stats.
- H. **“Elder Abuse”** means abuse, emotional abuse, material abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or sexual assault, as defined in this sub-section.

II. ANIMAL ABUSE DEFINITIONS

- A. **“Animal”** includes every living warm blooded creature, except a human being
 - a. Reptile; or
 - b. Amphibian
- B. **“Cruel”** means causing unnecessary and excessive pain or suffering or unjustifiable injury or death. **Note:** Conviction under s. 951.02, Stats., (Mistreatment of Animals), does not require proof of intent or negligence. *State v. Stanfield*, 105 Wis. 2d 553, 314 N.W. 2d 339 (1982).
- C. **“Neglect”** means failing to provide adequate food, water, shelter or veterinary care.
- D. **“Humane officer”** means an officer appointed under s. 173.03, Stats

III. ELDER ABUSE AND WISCONSIN'S CRIMINAL CODE

Some incidents of elder abuse may constitute one or more crimes codified under Wisconsin State Statutes, including but not limited to:

- Abuse of vulnerable adults [§ 940.285]
- Attempted crimes [§ 939.32]
- Battery, substantial battery or aggravated battery [§ 940.19]
- Battery-special circumstance [§ 940.19(6)(a)]
- Criminal trespass to dwelling [§ 943.14]
- Damage to property [§ 943.01]
- Disorderly conduct [§ 947.01]
- Domestic Abuse Incidents; arrest and prosecution [§ 968.075]
- Emotional abuse [§ 940.295(1)(j)1.b.]
- Endangering safety by use of dangerous weapon [§ 941.20]
- Harassment [§ 947.013]
- Injury by negligent handling of dangerous weapons, explosive or fire [§ 940.24]
- Intimidation of a victim [§ 940.44; § 940.45]
- Kidnapping [§ 940.31]
- Mistreating animals [§ 951.02]
- Reckless injury [§ 940.23]
- Recklessly endangering safety [§ 941.30(1)]
- Sexual Assault [§ 940.225]
- Theft [§ 943.20], and,
- Threats to injure or accuse of crime [§ 943.30].

IV. ANIMAL CRUELTY AND WISCONSIN'S CRIMINAL CODE

Some incidents of animal cruelty/neglect may constitute one or more of the following crimes under ch. 951, Wis. Stats.:

- Mistreatment of animals [§ 951.02]
- Causing death through decompression [§951.025]
- Dognapping and catnapping [§951.03]
- Leading animal from motor vehicle [§951.04]
- Transportation of animals in cruel manner [§951.05]
- Use of poisonous and controlled substances [§951.06]
- Use of certain devices prohibited [§951.07]
- Instigating fights between animals [§951.08]
- Shooting at caged or staked animals [§951.09]
- Providing proper food and drink to confined animals [§951.13]
- Providing proper shelter [§951.14]
- Abandoning animals [§951.15]

V. REPORTING

The need for providing referrals of both elder abuse and animal cruelty to the appropriate agencies was identified at the beginning of this document.

The (**lead elder abuse agency**) will notify the (**animal protection agency**) of any instances of known or suspected animal cruelty or neglect (after having received the training as described below).

Required Information: A report of a known or suspected instance of animal abuse should include the name of the person (*and/or their agency*) making the report, the name of the animal/owner/custodian (if known), the location of the animal and animal premises, the number, type and applicable description of the animal(s) involved, an indication of the suspected condition of the animal and or/animal premises, and any other information, including information that led that person to suspect animal abuse.

When (how soon) to report: A telephone report should be made to the (**animal protection agency**) as soon as practically possible. A written report should be sent by the close of the next business day. If the reporter believes he or she has knowledge of an emergency situation, he or she should contact law enforcement immediately.

To Whom Do You Report: Contact should be made with the (**animal protection agency**) and in the case of an emergency, law enforcement.

Similarly, the (**animal protection agency**) will notify the (**lead elder abuse agency**) of any instances of known or suspected elder abuse (after having received the training as described below).

Required Information: A report of a known or suspected instance of elder abuse should include the name of the person (*and/or their agency*) making the report, the name of the victim, the present location of the victim, the nature and extent of the injury, and any other information that led that person to suspect elder abuse.

When (how soon) to report: A telephone report should be made to the (**lead elder abuse agency**) as soon as practically possible. A written report should be sent by the close of the next business day. If the reporter believes he or she has knowledge of an emergency situation, he or she should contact law enforcement immediately.

To Whom Do You Report: Contact should be made with the (**lead elder abuse agency**) and in the case of an emergency, law enforcement.

VI. INVESTIGATIONS

The parties acknowledge their joint responsibility for investigating possible cases involving elder abuse and animal cruelty and/or neglect.

- A. Humane officer/humane society official acknowledges that in cases involving animal cruelty/neglect, it has available more effective tools for conducting investigations such as access to the subpoena power of the district attorney. Therefore, the animal protection agent/agency will take the lead role in investigating these alleged crimes.
- B. In situations of an elder's self-neglect, which involve animals at risk, it is acknowledged by both parties that a team consisting of personnel from the animal control agency and the lead elder abuse agency may be more effective in furthering an investigation and/or the offering of services. Activities that may be appropriate to undertake as a team addressing such issues would include development of an investigation plan and/or assessment, interviewing concerned parties and securing and/or assessing the welfare of the animals.
- C. At the conclusion of any response, whether done independently by (animal protection agency) or completed jointly with (lead elder abuse agency), the lead elder abuse agency shall prepare and submit the required elder abuse reporting form to the state (# DSL-441, Rev.1/98). (Animal protection agency) shall furnish to (lead elder abuse agency) the necessary information to complete said report.
- D. If civil and/or criminal charges are filed as a result of its response, the lead elder abuse agency shall notify the animal protection agency of such as soon as practicable.
- E. Both (lead elder abuse agency) and (animal protection agency) acknowledge that reports of suspected elder abuse are confidential and may not be released except in circumstances indicated under Sec. 46.90(a) (b) (1 through 8), Wis. Stats.
- F. Both (lead elder abuse agency) and (animal protection agency) recognize that certain cases require ongoing consultation and technical assistance and each agency should use their best judgment in requesting and providing services.

VII. SERVICES

In situations of elder abuse related to animals, both lead elder abuse agencies and animal welfare agencies can provide services to remedy the problem.

Here are several examples of potential services and resources that lead elder abuse agencies can provide in such situations.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ <i>CORE SERVICES</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Intake and assessment➤ Case Work➤ Case review by I-Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ <i>EMERGENCY</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Temporary financial support➤ Emergency shelter➤ Emergency caretaker➤ Crisis intervention |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ <i>HOME SUPPORT & HOUSING</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Respite➤ Alternative housing➤ Homemaker/chore worker➤ Home repair | <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ <i>LEGAL & FINANCIAL</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Guardianship➤ Civil commitment |

Here are several examples of potential services and resources that animal welfare agencies can/may provide in such situations:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ <i>CORE SERVICES</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Intake and assessment➤ Case Work➤ Case review by I-Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ <i>EMERGENCY</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Temporary financial support➤ Emergency shelter➤ Emergency caretaker➤ Crisis intervention |
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- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ <i>MEDICAL & PERSONAL CARE</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Health screening ➤ Home health care ➤ Mental health services ➤ Health education
 □ <i>CORE SERVICES</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Animal adoption ➤ Animal cruelty investigation
 □ <i>MEDICAL & PET CARE</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Low cost spay/neuter ➤ Low cost veterinary care ➤ Emergency food for pets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ <i>SOCIAL SUPPORT</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Outreach ➤ Information and referral ➤ Telephone reassurance ➤ Friendly visitor ➤ Support group ➤ Transportation ➤ Counseling
 □ <i>HOUSING</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Foster care for pets ➤ Temporary housing for pets ➤ Safe Haven Program for pets
 □ <i>SOCIAL SUPPORT</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pet care education ➤ Pet loss support (bereavement counseling) |
|--|---|

VIII. TRAINING

The (animal protection agency) will include information regarding elder abuse in scheduled training sessions. Topics should include basic dynamics of elder abuse, indicators of elder abuse, Wisconsin’s Elder Abuse Law, and appropriate services provided by the (lead elder abuse agency). The (lead elder abuse agency) shall assist the (animal protection agency) in developing and presenting materials for training sessions. As an outcome of the training, humane agents and animal rescue workers will be able to recognize signs of elder abuse, know to what agency they should report instances of known or suspected elder abuse, and be aware of what services the (lead elder abuse agency) can offer.

The (lead elder abuse agency) shall also train its staff and providers on the issues related to animal protection, identifying instances of animal cruelty and/or neglect, statutes and ordinances that may be used in remedying animal abuse, as well as services the (animal protection agency) can provide. The (animal protection agency) shall assist the (lead elder abuse agency) in developing and presenting materials for training sessions. As an outcome of the training, elder abuse workers will be able to recognize signs of animal cruelty and/or neglect, know to what agency they should report instances of known or suspected elder abuse, and be aware of what services the animal protection agency can offer.

IX. COLLABORATION

(Animal protection agency) agrees to appoint a representative of its agency to participate on the (lead elder abuse agency) interdisciplinary team on an as needed basis.

Throughout period of agreement, (animal protection agency) and (lead elder abuse agency) will meet routinely to identify issues of mutual concern and potential solutions.

X. REVIEW

A meeting between the (lead elder abuse agency) and the (animal protection agency) will take place at least annually to review, and amend as necessary, the policies and procedures contained in this Memorandum of Understanding. The annual meeting shall occur within two weeks of the date of the initial signed agreement, and shall be convened by (insert agency name).

XI. PERIOD OF AGREEMENT

This Memorandum of Understanding between the above mentioned parties provides for continuing performance and shall be in force from _____, unless modified at any time upon mutual consent of the signing parties or at the time of the annual review between (_____) and (_____) (insert dates that range from when the annual review is due and two weeks past the deadline; reflects agreement from Section VIII, Review).

(signature)
Director, Lead Elder Abuse Agency

(signature)
Director, Animal Protection Agency

Date

Date

III. Sample Form for Interagency Reporting (Part 1)

SUSPECTED ANIMAL ABUSE/NEGLECT REPORT FAX to (lead animal protection agency) at (insert FAX contact number) <u>REPORTING PARTY (APS/ELDER ABUSE WORKER)</u>	
Name and Title: _____	
Agency name/address: _____	
Business telephone: _____	Email address: _____
Suspected abuse or neglect location: _____	
Date: _____	Time: _____
<u>ANIMAL DESCRIPTION (complete to the best of your ability)</u>	
[Multiple Animals on Site _____ If yes, number/type _____] Dog ___ Cat ___ Other _____	
Male ___ Female ___ Altered ___ Breed _____ Color _____ Age _____ Weight _____	
Distinctive markings and visible identification (note any special injuries or deformities): Animal's name, if known: _____	
<u>ANIMAL ABUSE/NEGLECT INFORMATION</u> (Improper Condition Observed - please give details)	
ANIMAL CONDITION:	ANIMAL PREMISES:
<input type="checkbox"/> Abandoned/ Running at large	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate shelter/access to shelter
<input type="checkbox"/> Bleeding	<input type="checkbox"/> Entangled
<input type="checkbox"/> Coughing/breathing problem	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate water/access to water
<input type="checkbox"/> Hair loss/skin problem	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsanitary food/water container
<input type="checkbox"/> Injured/disabled	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsanitary or hazardous conditions
<input type="checkbox"/> Appears Sick	<input type="checkbox"/> Other : _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Underweight	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other : _____	
Additional information/summary of any extemporaneous statement(s) (if applicable):	
Sample Report Form developed by: The Humane Society of the United States March, 2003	

III. Sample Form for Interagency Reporting (Part 2)

SUSPECTED ELDER ABUSE/NEGLECT REPORT FAX to (lead elder abuse agency name) at (insert FAX contact number)																							
<u>REPORTING PARTY (ANIMAL PROTECTION AGENCY/WORKER):</u>																							
Name and Title:																							
Agency name/address																							
Business telephone:	Email Address:																						
<u>ALLEGED VICTIM/SELF-NEGLECTER:</u>																							
Name of individual:	Street Address:																						
City:	State																						
Phone Number:	Zip Code:																						
Present location of the victim/self-neglector (if different):																							
The nature and extent of the injury:																							
<u>INCIDENT INFORMATION:</u>																							
Date/Time of observation/incident:																							
Specify the possible indicators of abuse observed:																							
<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">INDICATORS FROM THE FAMILY/CAREGIVER(S)</th> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">PHYSICAL INDICATORS</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> The elder person is not allowed to speak for him or herself or to others without the presence of the suspected abuser(s)</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Injury that has not been cared for properly</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Obvious absence of assistance</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> A lack of necessary equipment such as walker, cane, bedside commode, etc.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Attitudes of anger or indifference toward the older person</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> A lack of necessities such as heat, food and/or water</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Family member or caregiver "blames" the elder person (e.g., accusation that incontinence is a deliberate act)</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> General unsafe conditions in the home</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive behavior (threats, insults, harassment)</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Poor skin hygiene</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Conflicting accounts by the family, supporters, and/or victim</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Soiled clothing or bed</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Problem with alcohol and/or drugs</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Bruises, welts, discolorations</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Apparent social isolation of the elder person from the rest of the family, restriction of activity of the older adult within the family unit and/or community</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds, burns</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Apparent dehydration and/or malnourishment</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Household pet appears to be abused and/or neglected</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	INDICATORS FROM THE FAMILY/CAREGIVER(S)	PHYSICAL INDICATORS	<input type="checkbox"/> The elder person is not allowed to speak for him or herself or to others without the presence of the suspected abuser(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Injury that has not been cared for properly	<input type="checkbox"/> Obvious absence of assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> A lack of necessary equipment such as walker, cane, bedside commode, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Attitudes of anger or indifference toward the older person	<input type="checkbox"/> A lack of necessities such as heat, food and/or water	<input type="checkbox"/> Family member or caregiver "blames" the elder person (e.g., accusation that incontinence is a deliberate act)	<input type="checkbox"/> General unsafe conditions in the home	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive behavior (threats, insults, harassment)	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor skin hygiene	<input type="checkbox"/> Conflicting accounts by the family, supporters, and/or victim	<input type="checkbox"/> Soiled clothing or bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem with alcohol and/or drugs	<input type="checkbox"/> Bruises, welts, discolorations	<input type="checkbox"/> Apparent social isolation of the elder person from the rest of the family, restriction of activity of the older adult within the family unit and/or community	<input type="checkbox"/> Cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds, burns		<input type="checkbox"/> Apparent dehydration and/or malnourishment		<input type="checkbox"/> Household pet appears to be abused and/or neglected	
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Apparent dehydration and/or malnourishment																						
	<input type="checkbox"/> Household pet appears to be abused and/or neglected																						
Include any other information that led you to suspect elder abuse/neglect:																							
Sample Report Form developed August, 2002 by: Wisconsin Department of Health & Family Services DSL/Bureau on Aging and Long Term Care Resources																							

IV. GUIDELINES FOR SAFE HAVEN FOR PETS (SHP) PROGRAM

Adapted with permission from Frank Ascione, Ph.D.

Developing Alternate Housing for Companion Animals

*In 1998, Dr. Frank Ascione, a psychology professor at the Utah State University, with funding from the **Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation** began researching sheltering programs for the pets of battered women. He interviewed program directors, identified successful and unsuccessful practices, and used that information to create an instructive manual¹ that can help your agency launch a Safe Havens for Pets (SHP) program. Ascione's primary sources are survey responses from and interviews with 41 agencies across the nation that have already initiated formal and informal sheltering programs. He shares his research so that agencies that are contemplating establishing a SHP program can shape expectations with an awareness of potential obstacles and recognize that serving battered women with pets is a challenge faced by advocacy groups throughout the nation. Moreover, Ascione's work demonstrates that although these agencies shared many of the same concerns, they were able to overcome them. Below are excerpts from his manual that will help your county's lead elder abuse agency work with the local animal protection agency to develop and operate a SHP program to serve survivors in your community. Take notice of the specific recommendations that Ascione offers along the way. They reflect important strategies for best serving clients and meeting challenges.*

Developing a Safe Haven for Pets [SHP] Program

Agency concerns that the SHP programs would be overwhelmed. One of the concerns that I have heard voiced by some animal welfare agencies is that the number of requests to shelter pets for women who are battered would dramatically exceed the capability and resources of animal welfare agencies.

Agencies that were not concerned mentioned the following reasons:

- The SHP was purposely developed on a small scale
- Advertising the program had been minimal
- Rather than being concerned, there was awareness that not every woman's needs could be accommodated since the community is small and has few veterinarians available for sheltering pets

¹ Published January, 2000 Ascione, F.R. Safe Havens for Pets: Guidelines for Programs Sheltering Pets for Women who are Battered. Logan, Utah. All hard copies of the "Safe Havens for Pet" manual have been distributed. A PDF version can be accessed by going to the following site: <http://eres.usu.edu>, then click on electronic reserves, then select "Psychology" and "Ascione, Frank", then select PSY3120, and use the password asc3120 to access the Safe Haven documents.

Agencies that were concerned about being overwhelmed noted the following reasons:

- Difficulty in finding shelter for farm animals
- Small size of the animal welfare agency
- Insufficient number of foster families to shelter pets
- Concerns expressed by animal welfare agency board of directors and recent media attention
- Increased demand if more than the one current domestic violence shelter wanted to access this service

None of the respondents indicated that these concerns were sufficient to forestall implementation of the SHP program.

Agency resistance to starting a SHP program, factors underlying the resistance, and methods of dealing with the resistance. Sixteen [76.2%] domestic violence agency respondents said there was no resistance to the SHP program. Three of these sixteen respondents expanded on their answer by noting the agencies' delight with the programs' availability and two others emphasized the desire to help victims and that staff in the district attorney's office liked animals. Five [23.8%] domestic violence agency respondents described cases of resistance to the SHP program by some staff or board members. One respondent noted staff concern with needing to interview women about pets during a crisis situation. This was portrayed as a diversion of staff attention from more important issues. The respondent suggested the need to educate some domestic violence staff about the importance of pet welfare issues for women who are battered. Two respondents said staff had raised concerns about pet ownership issues [i.e., the woman's right to take a pet with her that might be owned by the batterer] and the potential for litigation. Other factors underlying resistance included: fears that animals would be abandoned, safety issues when transporting pets, fears that violent incidents with the batterer might occur as a result of the pet sheltering, and, in cases where pets were temporarily housed at the domestic violence shelter, worries about clients not controlling pets, children and animals being bitten by pets, and client or staff allergies to pets.

Ten [50%] animal welfare agency respondents stated there was no resistance to the SHP program and four of these respondents expanded by describing staff as "very supportive", hoping to expand the service, and being willing to "make space" for these pets. The fourth attributed the lack of resistance to the fact that the animal welfare program's executive director initiated the SHP program! Ten [50%] of the animal welfare agency respondents described cases of resistance to the SHP program by some staff or board members. In one case, a lone critic suggested that domestic violence programs would not share information with a male animal welfare agency director. Two respondents noted resistance based on the increased workload and scope of activities required by the SHP program and another said board members raised concern about a SHP program being beyond the mission of the animal welfare agency. Three respondents mentioned concerns about the health and/or potentially aggressive, unsocialized SHP program pets, making placement with fosterers more difficult. Two respondents also raised worries about the duration of sheltering. Two

respondents noted that concerns had been raised about staff safety should a batterer show up at the animal shelter [to allay this concern, one agency uses pagers to call for help if necessary]. Two other respondents noted ethical concerns with allowing women to retrieve pets, after sheltering, and who were returning to the batterer.

Formal cooperative agreements between the domestic violence and animal welfare agencies to operate SHP programs. Eighteen [85.7%] of the domestic violence agency respondents described a cooperative agreement between agencies, one [4.8%] said no agreement was in place, and two [9.5%] described self-run SHP programs, at veterinary hospitals, for which the question was not applicable. The cooperative agreement was in writing for six [33.3%] of the eighteen agencies with agreements. All of the animal welfare agency respondents had cooperative agreements with the domestic violence agencies and the agreement was in writing for ten [50%] of these programs.

Operating a SHP program

Written policies and procedures guiding the operation of the SHP programs. Eleven [52.4%] of the domestic violence agency respondents described written policies and procedures used in the operation of the SHP and four [19%] suggested I contact the animal welfare agency for this information. Two [9.5%] respondents were unaware of written guidelines, three [14.3%] respondent said they were in the process of developing written policies and procedures, and one [4.8%] judged the question to not be applicable since SHP was an in-house service.

Sixteen [80%] of the animal welfare agency respondents stated their programs operated using written policies and procedures and, according to two [10%] other respondents, these were in the process of being developed. Two [10%] other respondents said operating guidelines were not in writing.

Legal assistance in developing forms for use in the SHP program. Six [28.6%] of the domestic violence agency respondents said they had enlisted the assistance of an attorney in developing SHP forms [e.g., client agreement, pet health history, policy on retrieving pets]. Twelve [60%] of the animal welfare agency respondents had solicited the advice of an attorney in developing their SHP program forms.

RECOMMENDATION – SHP programs should operate with policies and procedures developed cooperatively by the collaborating agencies and formalized in writing. It is also recommended that the policies and procedures be reviewed by the agencies' legal advisors to protect the interests of all parties involved.

Publicizing the availability of the SHP programs. Respondents were first asked if their programs had developed brochures for advertising the SHP programs. Four [19%] of the domestic violence agency respondents said brochures were available. In cases where a brochure was not available, some respondents noted that they were being considered or that the SHP program was included in the domestic violence program's general brochure or newsletter.

There appeared to be polar attitudes about the appropriateness of advertising the SHP program beyond the collaborating agencies. On the one hand, some programs wanted to disseminate information about SHP programs as widely as possible. On the other hand, concerns for safety and worries about being inundated with requests for services resulted in some programs keeping a low profile. When asked if they publicized the SHP programs beyond domestic violence agencies, four [19%] of the domestic violence agency respondents said they did, including soliciting media attention.

Seven [35%] of the animal welfare agency respondents described efforts to advertise the SHP programs beyond domestic violence agencies. A variety of targets for such publicity were identified and included the following: hospital, pediatricians, mental health centers, police departments, child welfare agencies, other social service agencies, and the animal welfare program's donor base. An animal welfare agency respondent from one agency that does not advertise said that if they did, "it would be a death sentence for the pets."

Another noted that they were not going to advertise the SHP program until they had developed a pool of foster families – they did not want to promise a service that they could not deliver. This comment again highlights the mixed emotions agencies have about publicizing the availability of SHP programs.

Most women who are battered and learn about the availability of a SHP program probably hear about the service during a crisis call or other direct contact with a domestic violence agency. How do agencies try to inform women who are battered, who have **not** yet been in touch with a domestic violence program, that shelter for their pets is available should they wish to leave batterers? The strategies described by the agency respondents ranged from public outreach efforts to more private contacts with individuals who may interact with women who are battered.

The domestic violence agency respondents mentioned the following forms of outreach: including information about the SHP programs in presentations to community groups including school organizations, using press releases and other forms of media attention, posting information in community merchant and business locations, making personal contacts with physicians and other social service agencies, posting information at hospital and clinics, and equipping law enforcement officers with cards describing the SHP program.

Although three animal welfare agency respondents specifically stated they did not know how to address this issue, other respondents listed the following forms of outreach: use of a media "roll out" describing the SHP program, presentations for community groups especially women's roundtables and general meetings on violence education, highlighting the SHP during Domestic Violence Awareness month, and informing fire departments, police departments, and the Red Cross about the availability of SHP programs.

Other specific targets for brochures or informational flyers about SHP programs.

Respondents were asked if materials providing information about the SHP programs were placed at the offices of veterinarians, pet groomers, or humane societies and animal control departments. For the domestic violence agency respondents, it was reported that nine

[42.9%] programs placed materials with veterinarians, two [9.5%] with groomers, and nine [42.9%] with humane societies and animal control departments. For the animal welfare agency respondents, the figures were eight [40%], two [10%], and nine [45%], respectively. Both Petco™ and Petsmart™ were noted as other possible locations for placing brochures.

Other locations, not already noted, for promotional materials that were listed by the domestic violence agency respondents included: military bases, animal-facilitated therapy programs, churches, drug rehabilitation programs, Native American associations and tribal councils, hotels, women’s restrooms, and courthouses. Locations mentioned by the animal welfare agency respondents included: self-service laundries, post offices, beauticians, at festivals and other community events, with classroom teachers and other humane education targets, with parks and recreation, and nursing homes.

Source of referrals for women in need of SHP program services. All of the eighteen domestic violence agency respondents whose SHP programs collaborate with animal welfare agencies indicated that their own domestic violence shelter was the primary referring agency for women who were battered and who needed pet sheltering. For sixteen [80%] of the animal welfare agency respondents, the collaborating domestic violence shelter was the primary source of referrals for women needing SHP program services. Eight [40%] of the animal welfare agency respondents also mentioned other sources of referrals including the following: women’s friends or family members, police departments, direct phone contacts by women, family services, transitional housing directors, the Salvation Army, shelters for the homeless, the Red Cross, mental health centers, and hospital social workers.

Pet sheltering sites

Locations where women’s pets are sheltered. Pets who were being sheltered as part of the SHP programs were assigned to one of four primary locations – animal welfare agency facilities, foster families [referred to as fosterers], veterinary clinics, and private kennels. The percentage of respondents describing use of these primary locations were:

	<u>domestic violence agencies</u>	<u>animal welfare agencies</u>
animal welfare facilities	57.1%	80%
fosterers	52.4%	55%
veterinary clinics	28.6%	10%
private kennels	4.8%	10%

It should be noted that eleven [52.4%] domestic violence agency respondents and eleven [55%] animal welfare agency respondents described housing pets at more than one location. In addition, two [9.5%] domestic violence agency respondents reported housing pets at their own domestic violence shelter. If pets were judged to be aggressive or if they only needed to be sheltered overnight or for a few days, they were placed at the animal

welfare agency's facility; otherwise, placement with fosterers was preferred. Fosterers were also used to shelter horses or farm animals if the animal welfare facility did not have space.

Screening Potential Fosterers

RECOMMENDATION – Since it is clear that many animal welfare agencies operating SHP programs already conduct some form of screening for potential fosterers, it is recommended that screening occur in all programs using fosterers. Background checks, especially for any form of family violence, and preparing fosterers for unannounced visits to check on pets should be standard practices. It would also be desirable to include a home visit as part of screening.

Training Potential Fosterers

*RECOMMENDATION – Although we cannot expect fosterers who assist in the operation of SHP programs to become experts on domestic violence and animal abuse, we should provide them with basic information on the difficulty of a woman's decision to leave her partner and how leaving may heighten the danger to a woman. Especially in small communities where fosterers may live in relatively close proximity to victims' residences, fosterers should be advised to be cautious when taking pets in public areas [e.g., for a walk, to a park] where they might be identified by a batterer or his acquaintance. Since fosterers volunteer to provide the sheltering service, it does not seem unreasonable that they be required to sign a form releasing the animal welfare agency from liability should problems arise from sheltering pets. Since the overwhelming majority of programs do not reveal women's identities to fosterers it is recommended that victims' identities **not** be revealed to fosterers. This may require issuing temporary identification tags, without the owners' identification, for pets that are fostered.*

Women's own resources for placing their pets in safe settings.

Since SHP programs may not be able to meet the needs of everyone requesting their services, the programs may need to prompt women to consider alternative placements for their pets. These could include assistance from family and friends or, if the woman is financially capable, using a private boarding kennel. Twenty [95.2%] of the domestic violence agency respondents reported that they do ask women about their own resources for placing their pets and help women explore all their options. In one case, the SHP program was described to women as a "last resort."

RECOMMENDATION – Given the stresses and concerns associated with being a victim of domestic violence, women may not have considered alternatives to using SHP programs. It is appropriate to assist women in exploring all the options for pet placement that are available and that the women may not have considered. Since not all programs may be able to shelter pets in foster homes, it is legitimate to forewarn women of the possible health hazards, to which their pets may be exposed, at animal shelters.

SHP services mentioned by domestic violence advocates when they arrive at a shelter site.

RECOMMENDATION – During a crisis call and when meeting with a woman at a domestic violence site, counselors and advocates should routinely and consistently ask two simple screening questions – “Do you have pets?” and, if the answer is YES, “Are you concerned for their safety?” These questions would provide an opening to a discussion about a woman’s possible needs related to her pets and whether pet welfare is an obstacle to leaving her partner, should she wish to do so. In the midst of a crisis, some women may not think to express their concerns about pets or may misjudge the significance of pet welfare [e.g., the possibility that animal abuse may indicate that violence will escalate].

Hours of operation and transportation of pets

Periods of the day and night when SHP program services are available. Since domestic violence victims’ needs for pet shelter may not always happen to occur during agencies’ business hours, I asked respondents whether SHP services were available 24 hours per day or only during the agencies’ business hours. Seventeen [81%] of the domestic violence agency respondents reported that their SHP services were available at all hours of the day and night. The remaining four [19%] respondents noted restriction of services to business hours or the services only being unavailable between 2-6 a.m. [a time period when animal welfare was not available]. One of these four respondents noted that the police could page animal welfare personnel at any time and another noted that services were available according to the availability of fosterers.

For animal welfare agency respondents, fifteen [75%] reported that SHP services were available 24 hours a day. This was facilitated by animal welfare personnel carrying pagers, by leaving pet carriers at the domestic violence shelter, or by giving police keys to the animal shelter and specifying a location where pets could be left overnight. Five [25%] respondents reported that SHP services were only available during the animal shelters’ business hours but three of these respondents qualified their answers by noting that they could be called in an emergency, that domestic violence shelters had been provided pet carriers, and that the period of unavailability was only 2-6 a.m.

RECOMMENDATION – Given the needs of domestic violence victims, it is recommended that agencies work toward having SHP program services available around the clock. This can be achieved by designating specific animal welfare agency contacts who can be reached after hours for accepting pets. These contacts could be reached via an emergency telephone number or by using pagers. Where this is not possible, domestic violence agencies should have available pet carriers for the temporary housing of pets until the animal welfare agency can arrange to pick up pets.

Transportation of pets.

RECOMMENDATION – In order to facilitate use of SHP program services in cases where a woman is unable to transport pets to the program herself, SHP programs should have established guidelines for alternative agents to transport pets. In developing these

guidelines, care should be taken to insure the safety of all agents involved [e.g., domestic violence advocates, unarmed animal control officers]. If there is the possibility that the batterer may be present at the time and place from which pets are retrieved, requesting a police “standby” should be routine. Agencies should also consider liability issues related to the injury or loss of pets during transportation.

Duration of pet sheltering and dealing with failures to retrieve pets

Pet sheltering duration in SHP programs. Respondents were asked how long pets in SHP programs could be sheltered. Six [28.6%] of the domestic violence agency respondents reported that there was no limit or that it corresponded to the length of time women resided at the domestic violence shelter.

Three [14.3%] respondents did not know if there was a time limit but the remaining twelve [57.1%] respondents reported sheltering time limits between seven and 49 days. In most cases, these time limits were reported to be “negotiable”. Four [20%] of the animal welfare agency respondents reported no limit on the sheltering period or that it corresponded to women's time limits at the domestic violence shelter. The sixteen [80%] remaining respondents described sheltering limits ranging from 10 to 90 days but also noted that these limits were flexible depending on women’s needs. The most frequently cited limits were for 14 day or for one month.

Limits on women’s stays at domestic violence agency shelters.

RECOMMENDATION – Ideally, SHP programs should offer to shelter pets for at least as long as women are residing at the domestic violence shelter and, in some cases, for the period of time women may reside in transitional housing. However, given the pressure on space at many animal welfare agency facilities, the best that can be hoped for are clear statements about the duration of pet sheltering, agreed upon by the collaborating agencies, and contingency plans for cases where limits are exceeded.

Policy for dealing with cases where pets are not retrieved at the end of the agreed upon sheltering period.

RECOMMENDATION – Although the experience of these agencies suggests that women’s failure to retrieve their pets at the end of the agreed upon sheltering period occurs in a minority of cases, the potential problems with unclaimed pets requires that policy be in place to deal with such cases. Most programs inform women that they may lose unclaimed pets but this should be formalized with a written agreement to avoid confusion. Since a woman’s circumstances may change dramatically even after she has completed her stay at a shelter, SHP programs should remain flexible in accommodating, within reason, a woman’s need for continuing shelter for her pet.

Pet ownership issues [See Section III, page 12 of full manuscript for additional information regarding pet ownership issues.]

RECOMMENDATION – It is clear that in cases where women are the sole legal owners of pets, women would have the right to enroll them in a SHP program and, if necessary, relinquish them for possible adoption or euthanasia. However, in other cases where pet ownership is unclear or where batterers are joint or sole owners of pets, disposition of the pets is more problematic. SHP program agencies are encouraged to discuss these issues with their legal advisors to develop policies appropriate for their programs. These policies should have the welfare of women and pets as their paramount concern yet designed to be respectful of ownership issues. More specific recommendations are not possible given the current lack of consensus about how to deal with pet ownership issues.

Confidentiality and safety issues

Confidentiality issues for pets and women enrolled in SHP programs. Given the possibility that a batterer might try to retrieve a pet his partner may have enrolled in a SHP program or approach the animal welfare agency in an attempt to locate his partner, respondents were asked about procedures to insure the confidentiality of information about these pets. This included questions about whether pets were kept in areas accessible to the public [e.g., potential adopters] or exercised in public view. Respondents listed a variety of methods to insure confidentiality:

- All paperwork related to SHP program pets is filed under a pseudonym and the shelter is in a secluded, rural area
- Pets are isolated from the general population of animals, they are listed as “already adopted” in shelter records, and no information about these pets is released to the public
- Pets are sheltered in a fenced area on 1.5 acres of property and are not exercised in public view
- Pets are listed in the name of the animal welfare of domestic violence agency and information about these pets is only released to animal shelter staff
- In cases where pets are placed with fosterers, staff locate the pet in a community different from the woman’s place of residence [to minimize accidental contact with the batterer]
- The animal welfare agency signs a confidentiality agreement with the domestic violence agency
- Pets are considered to have been relinquished ‘on paper’ and then are placed with fosterers
- Pets are kept with the general population of shelter animals but are placed in a secured location within the shelter.

In general, domestic violence agency respondents reported that they were pleased with the confidentiality procedures practiced by the animal welfare agencies.

All of the animal welfare agency respondents were able to report on procedures they had in place to insure the confidentiality of information about SHP program pets and the women who enrolled them. A sampling of these procedures are listed below.

- Pets are kept in a private area of the shelter not open to the public, and if fostered, fosterers are told of the pets domestic violence history and the need for confidentiality is stressed
- Media representatives are not allowed to take any footage of the shelter location and women sign a waiver allowing the animal welfare agency to contact them directly if necessary
- Pets are re-licensed to the SHP program and no public records associate the pets with the women who enrolled them
- Only one animal welfare shelter worker is designated to care for SHP program pets; others do not have access to information about the pet
- The addresses and phone number for SHP program pets are the domestic violence agencies' and no information is released on these pets
- All paperwork [e.g., intake forms, signed liability and agreement forms] is filed in a secure location, pets are renamed and their ages are altered
- Fosterers are trained about the need for confidentiality and sign a waiver to this effect
- SHP program pets are assigned a code number and are kept in an area of the shelter only accessible with a staff escort

RECOMMENDATION – The measures the respondents described for insuring the confidentiality of SHP program cases were impressive. Perhaps the one remaining concern is the issue of exercising pets in public view and the possibility that a batterer might come upon his pet in these cases. It is recommended that animal welfare agencies collaborate with domestic violence agencies in developing confidentiality protocols acceptable to both parties. Restricting the number of individuals dealing with SHP program pets, keeping all documentation in secured files or only on the directors' computer files, locating pets in the areas of the shelter that are isolated or at least inaccessible to unaccompanied visitors, and training fosterers in the critical need for confidentiality are practices already in place at many programs and should be encouraged at all others.

Pet-related issues in safety planning with women.

Respondents were asked if issues involving pets [e.g., where to shelter them, what to take when leaving home with a pet, how to keep pets safe] were raised in safety planning discussions with women using SHP program services. Respondents were also asked to elaborate the types of issues that were addressed. Nineteen [90.5%] of the domestic violence agency respondents reported that pet-related issues were discussed in safety planning but most admitted that these issues did not receive a great deal of attention and might not be consistently addressed. Two [9.5%] respondents reported that these issues were not addressed at their agencies.

Ten [50%] of the animal welfare agency respondents reported addressing pet-related issues including two agencies that used HSUS guidelines and another that provided advice on managing pet behavior problems [problems that might prompt batterer violence]. Five [25%] respondents reported that these issues were not addressed by their agency and five

[25%] were not sure if they were. It should be noted that many animal welfare agency respondents judged safety-planning discussions to be within the purview of the domestic violence agencies' services. Also, some animal welfare agencies had no direct contact with women clients [e.g., case where pets were retrieved by animal control, programs where women brought pets to the domestic violence shelter and they were later transported to the SHP by someone other than the women].

Many of the animal welfare agency respondents offered suggestions for pet-related issues that should be addressed in safety planning. In some cases, these suggestions apply to women who have not decided to leave the batterer and in other cases, the suggestions are more appropriate for women who have made the decision to leave and are preparing to do so.

The suggestions for women included the following:

- Collect any documents related to your pet [e.g., ownership papers, veterinary records including a vaccination and medical history], have a leash or pet carrier available, and consider your options if you could not take your pet with you [e.g., call a friend to pick it up]
- If possible, compile a record of incidents when your pet was threatened or abused, note whether it is an indoor or outdoor pet, and indicate any danger an animal control agent might be in if called to retrieve the pet
- Consider whether worrying about your pet's welfare has been preventing you from leaving the batterer. If your pet has been abused, do you think you are in greater danger?
- Do you think your partner has been using your love and concern for your pet as a way of controlling and manipulating you?
- If you are still with the batterer and your pet has been threatened, have you considered placing your pet with a friend, family member, or humane society?
- Keep pet food, pet-related documents, and other items needed for traveling with your pet in your vehicle, if this would be safe for you to do
- If you are still trying to make decision about whether to leave the batterer and your pet has been threatened or abused, have you discussed animal abuse as a risk factor for danger with a domestic violence counselor?
- If you have decided to leave the batterer and would like you pet to accompany you, have you checked the domestic violence program to ask how they can accommodate your pet's needs?

RECOMMENDATION – Since animal welfare agencies have expertise in counseling humans about the loss of their pets, they should take the lead in offering such counseling to women and children separated from their pets due to domestic violence. Grief counseling may also be needed in cases where pets have been killed. Animal welfare agencies should explicitly inform domestic violence agencies that counseling services are available, should any of their clients desire it. And since domestic violence agencies have expertise in safety planning, they should assist animal welfare agencies in developing pet-related safety planning procedures that are reasonable to follow and would not place an excessive

burden on women planning to leave batterers. Some procedures could be described as basic and required [e.g., packing the pet's medication] and others as desirable but not critical [e.g., taking along a pet's favorite toy or food].

Serving women who have completed their stays at the domestic violence shelter

Both domestic violence agency respondents and animal welfare agency respondents offered a number of factors that facilitated women's ability to retrieve their pets after SHP program sheltering and are noted below:

- Finding affordable housing that permitted pets or moving in with family
- Finances
- Obtaining employment
- Woman is better able to care for herself
- Woman's life has become more stable
- Increase in the pet's significance since leaving the batterer
- Need for the pet's companionship
- Knowing the pet would probably be euthanised if she did not retrieve it
- Feeling safer and more competent
- Flexibility on time limits for pet sheltering [i.e., accommodating women's needs]
- Knowing that the pet had been well cared for in her absence
- Visitation kept the attachment to her pet strong [one woman was described as using visits to her pet as a reward she self-administered for progress in her domestic violence work]

[One animal welfare agency respondent, whose SHP program was just being developed, described stringent criteria under which a woman would be permitted to retrieve her pet. These criteria included proof of moving to a new residence or a copy of a recent restraining order, or a letter from a relative verifying that the woman was no longer in a violent situation. It was unclear whether women would be made aware of these criteria at the time their pets were enrolled in this sheltering program.]

Post-shelter transitional and other housing options for women.

Since the availability of affordable housing that permits pets may be such a critical factor in women's ability to retrieve their pets, respondents were asked if their programs offered transitional housing and if such housing allowed pets. Eleven [52.4%] of the domestic violence agency respondents reported that their programs did not have transitional housing and ten [47.6%] reported that they did. Of these ten programs with transitional housing, two were reported to allow pets, seven did not, and the respondent was not sure of the pet policy in one case.

Respondents were also asked if their agencies maintained listings of post-shelter housing [e.g., apartments, rental properties] that would permit pets. Eleven [52.4%] of the domestic violence agency respondents reported that such listings were available for women, one

[4.8%] reported that their agency was developing a list, and nine [42.8%] reported that they did not maintain listings of housing allowing pets. A number of respondents noted the prohibitive costs of housing in many of their jurisdictions, making finding affordable post-shelter housing a challenge for all women, even those without pets.

Eleven [55%] of the animal welfare agency respondents reported maintaining listing of housing allowing pets, one [5%] respondent's agency was working on it, and six [30%] did not have listings. Two [10%] respondents did not know if housing listings were available at their agencies. One of the eleven respondents whose agency did maintain listings of "pet friendly" housing had not previously considered how these listings might be important for SHP program clients.

RECOMMENDATION – Domestic violence agencies should consider the feasibility of designing future transitional housing that would accommodate pets.

In addition, domestic violence and animal welfare agency representatives should collaborate in seeking the assistance of local realtors in developing listing of affordable housing that will permit pets. Local government housing authorities could also be of assistance in addressing this issue.

Services other than sheltering offered to women with SHP program pets.

Respondents were asked to cite examples of services, in addition to pet sheltering, provided by their SHP programs. Animal welfare agency respondents listed a wide variety of services provided, most of which were provided free or offered at reduced cost [based on women's ability to pay]. The services provided included the following:

- Vaccinations [SHP pets may not have already received required vaccinations]
- Free spaying or neutering [one respondent described this as mandatory for all pets, regardless of SHP program status, brought to their shelter]
- Bathing and a flea dip
- Well animal veterinary care, including dental care
- Emergency medical care [in some cases, to treat abuse injuries]
- Pet socialization training [judged necessary for some pets from domestic violence situations] and assistance with the pet's psychological adjustment to sheltering
- Implanting microchips for pet identification
- Humane education [programs teaching kindness and compassion toward animals] for children of women who are battered
- Summer camp for children of women in shelter
- Transportation of pets to other jurisdictions [in one case, a trucker volunteered to transport a woman's pet from the West Coast to Florida at no cost; in another, an airline donated the cost for a pet's flight from the Northwest to Nevada]

Funding SHP programs.

Respondents were asked if their own agencies funded the operation of the SHP programs. For the domestic violence agency respondents, four [19%] reported funding the programs on their own and one [4.8%] reported using volunteer resources. Three [14.3%] agencies share program costs with the animal welfare agencies and thirteen [61.9%] rely completely on animal welfare agencies to bear program costs. Some costs are defrayed by donations specifically made to SHP programs and through fundraising.

Eighteen [90%] of the animal welfare agency respondents reported that their agencies funded all costs of the SHP programs, one [5%] did not, and the question was not applicable for one [5%] other respondent whose program was just starting. Funds had also been raised from donations, fundraising events, and, in one case, a grant from Petsmart™.

Respondents were asked if the women using the SHP program services were ever charged for any of the costs of sheltering or for their pets' medical care while in shelter. Women were not charged for any of the costs of sheltering according to seventeen [80.9%] respondents. With regard to medical care costs, four [19%] respondents did not have this information, two [9.5%] had no experiences where women had these needs, and the question was not applicable for one [4.8%] respondent. Although eight [98.1%] respondents reported that women were not charged for pet medical care, four of the eight qualified their responses by noting that women were either asked for donations or charged on a sliding scale.

For the animal welfare agency respondents, nineteen [95%] reported that women were not charged any of the costs of sheltering pets and one [5%] respondent noted that women were charged only if they failed to retrieve their pets after repeated contacts by the agency [but the respondent also noted that this policy had not been enforced]. With regard to charges for medical costs, ten [50%] respondents reported not charging women and the question was not applicable for one [5%] respondent. Nine [45%] respondents reported charging women on a sliding scale or at a reduced rate, asking women to pay on an installment plan, or using a fund designated for treating injured animals if women could not pay.

Since the costs associated with sheltering pets in SHP programs may be significant, especially if shelter is required for a lengthy period of time, respondents were asked if agencies had ever tried to recoup these costs from batterers. Only one [4.8%] domestic violence agency respondent reported ever attempting this. It occurred in a single case but the woman's attorney dropped pet sheltering costs from the lawsuit since the woman's own domestic violence shelter expenses were so substantial. Twenty [95.2%] respondents had not attempted to recoup pet sheltering cost from batterers or had never considered this as an option. Another noted that this issue might be considered in their agency's discussion of restitution by batterers and a third respondents remarked that my question about this had given her an idea about ways to pursue recouping shelter costs from batterers.

None of the animal welfare agency respondents had tried to recoup pet sheltering costs from batterers although one respondent noted that they might consider this in the future if the agency had treated a pet's injury that was a result of the batterer's abuse.

Local Initiative: The Domestic Violence Project in LaCrosse, WI

If the prospect of setting up a Safe Haven Program appears daunting to your agency, consider the success of a LaCrosse domestic violence shelter that provides this service to their clients.

According to Ann Quinlisk of the Domestic Violence Project, who works in cooperation with New Horizon's Shelter, a battered women's shelter, the pets of victims of abuse can be temporarily sheltered at a local veterinarian clinic and at the area humane society. A victim's need for the New Horizon's program is determined by asking about pets during the screening process. Before the animal sheltering program is utilized the shelter worker trouble-shoots with the victim to see if there are any other options available (e.g. the pet could stay at a family or friend's home temporarily). If not, the program's sheltering options are available for free or at a low cost with the aid of fundraising efforts. In addition pets that need shots or veterinary care are attended to. Generally, the humane society and the veterinarian clinic can only provide shelter for about a week, but during that time, the family can visit their pets with treats in tow.

Quinlisk reports that the program is a great success and emphasizes how helpful it has been for families who would not have been able to leave abusive situations had the program not been in place. Quinlisk estimates that the pet sheltering program is used several times a month. According to Quinlisk, the sheltering program has resulted in a strong working relationship between the shelter and the area humane society. In fact, since a humane society representative has participated in the domestic violence coordinated community response (CCR) team (somewhat similar to an elder abuse I-team), there has been a heightened awareness about the connection between family violence and animal abuse that has helped law enforcement and social service workers keep the community safer. She would absolutely recommend other advocacy groups or shelters to initiate a similar program and is particularly enthusiastic that elder abuse agencies would respond to the specific needs of older victims of abuse and their pets. When asked what general recommendations she would give to Wisconsin county elder abuse agencies considering starting a Safe Haven for Pets program, her advice was to find a "champion" who is not only passionate about the program but understands the complexities of the issue. In New Horizon Shelter's case, it was a local veterinarian who was already interested in helping children and Rose Vatland, the legal advocate at the shelter. She also suggested that advocacy groups and shelters utilize small fundraisers aimed at a group that is often not targeted for contributions-- animal lovers.

For further information, contact Anne Quinlisk at the Domestic Violence Project- LaCrosse, WI (608)-785-7670 or Rose Vatland at New Horizon's Shelter- LaCrosse, WI 608-791-2600

V. COUNTY-BASED ELDER ABUSE INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMS¹

The goal of the Elder Abuse Interdisciplinary Team (“I-Team”) is to improve each lead elder abuse agency’s response to victims of abuse, neglect and exploitation. An I-Team is a group of selected professionals from a variety of disciplines who meet regularly to discuss and provide consultation on specific cases of elder abuse, neglect or exploitation. An I-Team uses the varied backgrounds, training and philosophies of the different professions to explore the best service plan for the cases involved.

Wisconsin statutes require every county to designate a lead elder abuse agency to receive and respond to reports of elder abuse (physical abuse, material abuse, neglect and self-neglect). (Secs. 46.90(2) and (3)(b), Stats.) Under new elder abuse direct service funds authorized by the Wisconsin legislature in the 2001-2003 biennial budget, the Department of Health and Family Services has established as a condition of funding, the program outcome of creating and maintaining an interdisciplinary team by county elder abuse agencies.

The goals of I-Teams are to:

- increase awareness of elder abuse in the community, especially amongst professionals who regularly work with and serve the elderly;
- as a result of the increased awareness in the community, increase the number of victims identified by the lead elder abuse agency;
- coordinate the efforts of the various agencies dealing with elder abuse and build a better understanding and respect for all agencies involved;
- identify service gaps and define ways the public and private sectors can work together to meet these needs to provide the best services to the elderly population; and
- decrease elder abuse problems by developing appropriate resources, implementing preventative strategies and/or identifying and/or intervening in cases earlier.

The specific objectives can be *any or all of the following*:

- providing consultations on complex cases;
- acting as a sounding board for caseworkers;
- providing different perspectives on problems;
- identifying and developing needed resources;
- addressing systemic problems; and
- operating a Speakers’ Bureau.

¹ If you would like to review the manual developed to assist elder abuse interdisciplinary team operation in Wisconsin, go to the following web site:
http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/aps/Documents/Elder_Abuse_Interdisciplinary_Team_Manual_With_Explanation.doc

Which of these objectives is pursued by a county's I-Team depends on the **type** of I-Team the county decides to establish. Establishing its own objectives gives the team definite directions.

Types of I-Teams include:

1. **Case-Specific:** This is the traditional I-Team, with a set membership reflecting the various disciplines involved in elder abuse. Members bring specific cases to the I-Team, generally with requests for guidance and suggestions and the professionals from the different disciplines represented on the team provide ideas. This team is on-going and offers support to the members involved.
2. **Coordinated Community Response (CCR) Team:** This type of team, known for its use in the field of domestic violence, consists of a team of professionals from the various disciplines involved in domestic violence (e.g., health care, law enforcement, clergy, domestic violence program, victim-witness court staff, social services, etc.) but, rather than work on specific cases, the team meets to identify and develop needed resources (e.g., short-term shelter, emergency legal assistance, etc.) and protocols and procedures for case-handling.
3. **Combined I-Team:** A third type of I-Team is one that combines aspects of the first two types, i.e., case-specific as well as systems building. This is the type of team that is preferred.

I-Teams meet regularly (e.g., monthly, bi-monthly, etc.) most often for about two hours. Each local group, according to their own schedules, convenience and perceived need determines the date, time and location of the meeting. Since the purpose of an I-team is to solicit a wide-array of professional opinions when working to resolve elder abuse, neglect and exploitation cases, it may be advisable to add an animal protection specialist to the county's elder abuse I-team. To facilitate such a possibility, a model position description for an animal protection specialist as well as factors to consider when determining the addition of the new I-team member follows.

Adding an Animal Protection Specialist

Although most cases of elder abuse do not relate directly to the welfare of animals, the frequency of these cases is significant enough to warrant a systematic response. Accordingly, the animal protection specialist's expertise will not be necessary for all cases brought before the team, but when his or her expertise does apply (i.e. in cases of animal hoarding, abuse, neglect) it will be extremely valuable. For this reason, this member will provide consultation on an as-needed basis, but will be familiar with the I-team's format and goal.

However, having an animal protection specialist acting as a *full-time* member of the I-Team may also be the right choice for your county. The animal protection specialist will ask questions about a case that may not occur to other members of the team. Full-time membership will also provide the animal protection specialist a greater opportunity to network with law enforcement and social services agencies, while generating more awareness around the connection between animal cruelty and other forms of violence.

**SAMPLE I-TEAM CONSULTATION POSITION DESCRIPTION:
ANIMAL PROTECTION SPECIALIST**

The animal protection member of the Elder Abuse I-Team has primary responsibility for providing expertise, advice and information to the I-Team members and elder abuse caseworkers regarding legal issues related to animal cruelty, public health violations related to animals, sheltering options for pets, services provided by local humane societies and/or shelters, and the capability and availability of county humane agents.

Major Duties/Responsibilities

- Reviewing case notes and I-Team minutes, paying special attention to any animal protection aspects or remedies that may apply.
- Advising the elder abuse worker on steps involved in specific animal protection/aid options and remedies to help resolve a case (e.g. setting up animal foster care, obtaining housing for the animal(s), initiating civil and criminal actions against parties involved in cases, accessing veterinary care).
- Making presentations to the I-Team, as requested, on topics such as foster care, zoning laws, and the connection between animal abuse and domestic violence.
- Acting as a liaison to animal agencies, if necessary.
- Maintaining confidentiality of information presented.

Information and Resources Needed

- I-Team members' knowledge and meeting documentation (e.g., minutes, summary case reports, and relevant articles).
- Elder abuse workers and others who present cases at the meetings.
- Materials published by state and national animal protection organizations (e.g. The Humane Society of the United States).
- State, county and local animal rules, regulations and ordinances.

Education/Training

This member of the I-Team should be an experienced animal protection professional who routinely enrolls in animal protection seminars and conferences addressing current practices. Experience with the needs and problems of the elderly and/or with domestic violence cases would be helpful. (Formal certification of animal care and control professionals is becoming more common in some jurisdictions, but is not a requirement or available in many others. Thus, although certification is helpful, it is not considered mandatory.)

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Knowledge of incentives influencing agencies responsible for responding to reports of elder abuse (e.g. fiscal, political) to develop appropriate strategies for cases involving abused and/or neglected animals.
- Advocacy skills
- Knowledge of city housing guidelines (e.g. whom to contact, what to do about hazardous housing conditions and how and where to find animal-friendly housing).
- Knowledge of indicators of animal abuse and neglect, including animal hoarding.
- Knowledge of the interrelationship between elder abuse and animal abuse.
- Familiarity with animal protection/aid agencies.

Section Eight - Positive Relationships for Elders and Pets

The primary focus of this manual has been to address the negative consequences of animal hoarding and of an older adult's devotion to their pets in abusive situations. However, it is important to recognize the value of a companion animal in an elder's life as a source of unconditional love. Generally elders provide safe, healthy and affectionate environments for their pets to live in.

Below are initiatives in Wisconsin and elsewhere that deserve mentioning, which use the positive elder/pet relationship as a foundation for success:

- In Kenosha county, the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program's (RSVP) is sending elders to volunteer their time at the Kenosha County Humane Society. Volunteers take the dogs on short walks, play with the cats, and assist with clerical work. The Kenosha County RSVP has also initiated a 'pet pals' project. According to Dineshi Burchi, director of Kenosha County RSVP, twenty senior volunteers bring small animals into area nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The volunteers are divided into groups of five, and each group visits different institutions every week. Because many of the residents miss their own pets very much after giving them up because of declining health or nursing home policy, they very much they look forward to the pet visits each week. According to Burchi, "You take the animal to them and you see a little bit of life, they get very excited." There has been a great deal of interest from volunteers, who enjoy the visits as much as the residents do. Burchi also remarked, "I'd like this project to grow, this could be something that will last."



Mr. Bubbles gets a hug from an appreciative resident.
Picture courtesy of Kenosha County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program

- In Waukesha county, staff of the Department of Senior Services is envisioning a future collaboration with the Humane Animal Welfare Society of Waukesha County. A group of volunteers would be trained to work with animals and with elderly people. These volunteers would aid elders in providing a safe and healthy home for their pets in many ways. For example, by accompanying elders on trips to the veterinarian, cleaning litter boxes, buying pet food and walking dogs. The Department of Senior Services is already involved with grandparents who are parenting their grandchildren. Because these households often have neither the finances nor time to provide for a pet the Department of Senior Services will pair the grandchildren with the volunteers in the above-mentioned program. This will give the grandchildren the opportunity to learn the responsibility of having a pet while experiencing the kindness and affection a pet can give a person. This initiative will help children learn compassion for animals and thus decrease their risk of perpetrating animal cruelty. Staff believes that there is significant interest in this project and is looking forward to the program's inception.
- In Shortsville, NY, residents of the Homestead, a long term nursing home have been teamed up with at risk youth. Since 1995, certified therapy dogs have served as a bridge facilitating this unlikely match for the *Intergenerational Pet Therapy Project*. The youth learn how to control a dog in a nursing home setting and provide residents with human and canine companionship, by playing the role of "pet therapist". They may show the residents how to stroke the dog, talk about the animals with the seniors, and give them a treat to hand the dog. Also, the program participants enjoy structured art projects and animal related videos and stories together. These activities promote each student's self-discipline, increases his or her self-esteem, empathy, and patience while teaching each student the compassion and responsibility needed to care for pets. Additionally, the child is taught how to praise (by commending his or her dog) and creates an environment where the student receives praise (from facilitators and residents). The residents enjoy the opportunity to develop safe, caring relationships with the youth and affectionate companionship from the animals.

There are other worthwhile efforts being made that respond to the elder/pet connection.

Section Nine - References and Additional Resources

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WEBSITES

www.hsus.org/ace/11462- The Humane Society of the United States, *First Strike: The Connection between Animal Cruelty and Human Violence Campaign Information*.

www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/hoarding.html- Center for Animals and Public Policy, *Animal Hoarders Research*.

Section Ten - Resources

STATEWIDE ANIMAL PROTECTION AGENCIES

Animal Emergency: If you have an animal emergency, please contact your local humane society, animal control officer or veterinarian.

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Information</u>
Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection Animal Health Division	Dr. Clarence Siroky Wisconsin State Veterinarian 2811 Agriculture Drive Madison, WI 53708 608-224-4872
Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection Animal Health Division	Dr. Yvonne Bellay Wisconsin State Humane Agent 2811 Agriculture Drive Madison, WI 53708 608-224-4888 email: Yvonne.bellay@datcp.state.wi.us
The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)	2100 L Street, NW Washington DC 20037 202-452-1100 http://www.hsus.org The Humane Society of The US and The National Center on Elder Abuse have prepared a brochure entitled “Making the Connection: Helping Vulnerable Adults and Their Pets”. Single copies are free. Packets of 100 are \$15.00. Contact: First Strike, The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037. The HSUS’s “First Strike Campaign” addresses the connections between animal cruelty and human violence and seeks to promote public greater awareness of these connections among helping professionals and the general public. For more information visit the “First Strike Campaign” section of the HSUS website at http://www.hsus.org/ace/11462 Elders and their pets are at particular risk in natural disasters or other emergencies that might require evacuation. The HSUS Disaster Services Program has prepared many resources that address the need for individual and community planning for the needs of people and their animals in such situations. Information and brochures are available on-line at http://www.hsus.org/ace/18730 and at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) website at http://www.fema.gov/library/anemer.shtm .

Agency

Information

FEMA also offers two independent study courses developed with HSUS assistance. The first course, IS-010, discusses how disasters effect people and their animals, while the second, IS-011 focuses on incorporating animals into community's disaster planning and is aimed primarily at emergency management officials and animal-care industries. As with all FEMA's Independent Study Courses, there are no prerequisites or enrollment fees. The course materials can be ordered by writing to the Independent Study Office, Emergency Management Institute, National Emergency Training Center, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727. The courses include practice exercises and a final exam. Those who score 75 percent or better are issued a certificate of completion by FEMA's Emergency Management Institute. The average course completion time is 10 to 12 hours.

Humane Society University provides training for animal cruelty investigators through the Law Enforcement Training Institute of the University of Missouri, Columbia. For information about upcoming training events, as well as on-line instruction, visit <http://www.hsus.org/ace/11673> or contact Valerie Sheppard, Director, Humane Society University, HSUS, 2100 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20037.

The Humane Society of the
United States Central States
Regional Office (HSUS-CSRO)

(serves Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee
and North Carolina)
Phil Snyder, Regional Director
800 West 5th Avenue, Suite 110, Naperville, IL 60563
630-357-7015
630-3575725 FAX

Wisconsin United for Furry
Friends (WUFF)

P.O. Box 5152, Madison, WI 53705-0152
email: wuffery@hotmail.com
WUFF is a non-profit animal welfare organization dedicated to creating a community of care for companion animals in Wisconsin. WUFF provides charitable and educational programs and services to foster an environment of responsible and compassionate stewardship for the benefit of companion animals.

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Information</u>
The Delta Society	<p>580 Naches Avenue SW Suite 101, Renton, WA 98055-2297 425-226-7357 (8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. PST, Monday - Friday) 425-235-1076 (fax) http://deltasociety.org/</p> <p>The Delta Society is dedicated to improving human health through service and therapy animals, expanding awareness of the positive effect animals can have on human health and development, removing barriers that prevent involvement of animals in everyday life and expanding the therapeutic and service role of animals in human health, service, and education.</p>
The Latham Foundation	<p>Latham Plaza Bld., 1826 Clement Avenue Alameda, CA 95401 Tel (510) 521-0920 Fax (510) 521-9861</p> <p>Latham Foundation acts as a clearinghouse for information about humane issues and activities, the human companion animal bond (HCAB), animal-assisted therapy and the connections between child and animal abuse and other forms of violence.</p>
The Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF)	<p>National Headquarters 127 Fourth Street, Petaluma, CA 94952-3005 Phone: (707) 769-7771 Fax: (707) 769-0785 E-mail: info@aldf.org</p> <p>Anti-Cruelty Division 919 SW Taylor Street, 4th Floor, Portland, OR 97205-2542 Phone: (503) 231-1602 Fax: (503) 231-1578 Actionline: (800) 555-6517 E-mail: action@aldf.org</p> <p>Civil Litigation Division 6930 Carroll Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912</p> <p>The ALDF works within the legal system to end the abuse and cruelty that result from animals' classification as property. They provide legal assistance in animal cruelty cases and work to raise awareness of animal issues among judges and prosecutors.</p>

Agency

Information

Wisconsin Humane Society-
Milwaukee

4500 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208
414-ANIMALS (264-6257)

The Wisconsin Humane Society has a nutrition program to provide food for animals of individuals with low incomes. They have a “Guardians for Life” program to ensure care for the animal when the person can no longer provide care for their animal or passes away. They have spay/neuter services for reduced cost or no fee (again depending on income level) and a clinic that offers preventative care such as vaccinations and testing for animals of individuals with low incomes. They also have many seniors who volunteer at the shelter from petting cats to walking dogs or working in the gift shop. They provide a visiting companion program where volunteers take animals into nursing homes for visits.

WISCONSIN ANIMAL PROTECTION AGENCY DIRECTORY BY COUNTY

<u>County</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Adams	Adams County Humane Society	715-839-4797
Ashland	Chequamegon Humane Association	715-682-9744
Barron	Humane Society of Barron County, Inc.	715-537-9063
Bayfield	Northwoods Humane Society	715-634-5394
	Animal Rescue Foundation (Superior)	715-392-3215
	Chequamegon Humane Association (Ashland)	715-682-9744
Brown	Bay Area Humane Society & Animal Shelter, Inc.	920-469-3114
Buffalo	Buffalo County Humane Society	715-926-4589
Burnett	Washburn County Area Humane Society, Inc.	715-635-4720
	Arnell Memorial Humane Society	715-268-5776
Calumet	Eastshore Humane Association, Inc.	920-849-2390
Chippewa	Chippewa County Humane Association, Inc.	715-382-4832
Clark	Clark County Humane Society	715-382-4832
Columbia	Columbia County Humane Society	608-742-3666
Crawford	Vernon County Humane Society	608-637-6955
	Coulee Region Humane Society, Inc.	608-781-4014
Dane	Dane County Humane Society, Inc.	608-838-0413
	Alliance for Animals	608-257-6400
Dodge	Dodge County Friends of Animals, Inc.	920-386-9503
	New Hope for Animals	920-349-3104
Door	Door County Humane Society, Inc.	920-746-1111
Douglas	Washburn County Area Humane Society, Inc.	715-635-4720
	Animal Rescue Foundation (Superior)	715-392-3215
Dunn	Dunn County Humane Society	715-232-9795
Eau Claire	Eau Claire County Humane Association, Inc.	715-839-4747
Florence	Spring Lake Humane Society (Iron Mountain, MI)	906-774-1005
	Forest County Humane Society	715-484-7603
Fond du Lac	Fond du Lac Humane Society, Inc.	920-922-8873
Forest	Forest County Humane Society	715-484-7603
Grant	Vernon County Humane Society	608-637-6955
	Coulee Region Humane Society, Inc.	608-781-4014
Green	Green County Humane Society	608-246-6445
Green Lake	Animal Friends Humane Association, Inc.	920-398-2824
Iowa	Dane County Humane Society	608-838-0413
	Green County Humane Society	608-246-6445
Iron	Chequamegon Humane Association	715-682-9744
Jackson	Jackson County Humane Society, Inc.	715-258-0251
Jefferson	Humane Society of Jefferson County	920-674-9176
	Watertown Humane Society	920-261-1270
Juneau	Juneau County Humane Society	608-565-2313
Kenosha	Kenosha County Humane Society	262-694-4049
	Society of St. Francis	262-857-7260

Section Ten - Resources

<u>County</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Kewaunee	Door County Humane Society, Inc. Bay Area Humane Society & Animal Shelter, Inc. Lakeshore Humane Society (Manitowoc)	920-746-1111 920-469-3114 920-684-5401
LaCrosse	Coulee Region Humane Society, Inc.	608-781-4014
Lafayette	Green County Humane Society	608-246-6445
Langlade	Langlade County Humane Society	715-627-4333
Lincoln	Lincoln County Humane Society, Inc.	715-536-3459
Manitowoc	Lakeshore Humane Society, Inc.	920-684-5401
Marathon	Humane Society of Marathon County	715-845-2810
Marinette	Menominee Animal Shelter (Menominee, MI) Spring Lake Humane Society (Iron Mountain, MI)	715-735-9964 906-774-1005
Marquette	Animal Friends Humane Association (in Green Lake Co.), Inc. Adams County Humane Society Columbia County Humane Society	920-398-2824 715-839-4797 608-742-3666
Menominee	Langlade County Humane Society Shawano County Humane Society	715-627-4333 715-526-2606
Milwaukee	Wisconsin Humane Society, Inc. Animal Protective League Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission	414-264-6257 414-453-7717 414-649-8650
Monroe	Associated Society/Animal Protection	608-269-3525
Oconto	Menominee Animal Shelter (Menominee, MI) Shawano County Humane Society	715-735-9964 715-526-2606
Oneida	Oneida County Humane Society, Inc. Critter Rescue, Inc.	715-362-5533 715-358-3160
Outagamie	Fox Valley Humane Association, LTD.	920-733-7027
Ozaukee	Ozaukee County Humane Society, Inc.	262-377-7580
Pepin	Pepin County Humane Society	715-672-8389
Pierce	Humane Society of Pierce- St. Croix, Inc.	715-426-5535
Polk	Arnell Memorial Humane Society	715-268-5776
Portage	Portage County Humane Society, Inc.	715-344-6012
Price	Oneida County Humane Society, Inc. Rusk County Animal Shelter (Ladysmith)	715-362-5533 715-532-2637
Racine	Countryside Humane Society	262-554-8640
Richland	Vernon County Humane Society Sauk County Humane Society, Inc.	608-637-6955 608-356-2520
Rock	Rock County Humane Society, Inc.	608-752-5622
Rusk	Rusk County Animal Shelter	715-532-2637
St.Croix	Humane Society of Pierce- St. Croix	715-426-5535
Sauk	Sauk County Humane Society, Inc.	608-356-2520
Sawyer	Northwoods Humane Society	715-634-5394
Shawano	Shawano County Humane Society	715-526-2606
Sheboygan	Sheboygan County Humane Society	920-458-2012
Taylor	Gentle Hearts Animal Shelter	715-748-9699

<u>County</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Trempealeau	Coulee Region Humane Society, Inc.	608-781-4014
Vernon	Vernon County Humane Society	608-637-6955
Vilas	Humane Society of Vilas County	715-545-3822
Walworth	Lakeland Animal Welfare Society, Inc.	262-723-3899
Washburn	Washburn County Area Humane Society, Inc.	715-635-4720
Washington	Washington County Humane Society, Inc.	262-677-4388
Waukesha	Humane Animal Welfare Society of Waukesha County Elm-Brook Humane Society, Inc.	262-542-8851 262-782-9261
Waupaca	Humane Society of Waupaca County, Inc.	715-258-2545
Waushara	Humane Society of Waupaca County, Inc. Adams County Humane Society	715-258-2545 715-839-4797
Winnebago	Oshkosh Area Humane Society, Inc.	920-424-2128
Wood	South Wood County Humane Society, Inc.	715-423-0505

STATE-WIDE ADVOCACY AND PROTECTION SYSTEMS FOR WISCONSIN VULNERABLE ADULTS AND ELDERS

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG ABUSE (AODA) SERVICES

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Information</u>
Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS)/Bureau of Mental and Substance Abuse Services 608-266-2717	The Bureau functions as the statewide administrator of publicly funded substance abuse services and can provide statewide information on publicly funded AODA service (e.g. outpatient, residential, crisis intervention and community support). For information on local programs, refer to county Human Services Departments or Departments of Community Programs.

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Information</u>
DHFS/Bureau of Aging and Long Term Care Resources 608-266-2536	State statute (Chap. 55) requires each county to act as the protective service agency. To contact a local APS agency, call the county's Human Services or Social Services Agency or call Department of Health and Family Services Bureau of Aging and Long Term Care Resources

DISABILITIES

Agency

Information

DHFS/Bureau of Developmental
Disabilities Services
608-261-6751

The Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services (BDDS) is the primary state agency responsible for the development and implementation of statewide policy, services and supports for people with developmental disabilities. The Bureau provides leadership and assistance throughout the system in promoting best practice to improve the overall quality and safety of services and supports.

Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy
800-928-8778

Statewide advocacy organization for people with disabilities and mental health issues. Provide legal advocacy.

Wisconsin Council on Developmental
Disabilities
608-266-9538

Statewide advocacy organization for people with developmental disabilities.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY ABUSE

Agency

Information

Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic
Violence
608-255-0539

Statewide organization provides training and technical assistance about domestic violence, including domestic violence in later life, and referrals for direct service.

ELDER ABUSE AND NEGLECT

<u><i>Agency</i></u>	<u><i>Information</i></u>
DHFS/Bureau on Aging & Long Term Care Resources 608-266-2536 Website: http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/aging/elderabuse/ Email: StopAbuse@dhfs.state.wi.us	Provides case consultation and elder abuse resources (including statewide statistics and a resource list of agencies)
National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) Phone: 202-898-2586 Fax: 202-898-2583 E-mail: NCEA@nasua.org Mail: 1201 15th Street, N.W., Suite 350 Washington, D.C. 20005-2800 Website: http://www.elderabusecenter.org	NCEA exists to provide elder abuse information to professionals and the public; offer technical assistance and training to elder abuse agencies and related professionals; conduct short-term elder abuse research; and assist with elder abuse program and policy development. NCEA's website contains many resources and publications to help achieve these goals.

GUARDIANSHIP/ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

<u><i>Agency</i></u>	<u><i>Information</i></u>
Wisconsin Guardianship Support Center 800-488-2596 in Madison (Elder Law Center) 608-224-0660 Website: http://cwag.org/GuardianshipSupportCenter.htm	Operated by the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups/ Elder Law Center, the Center provides legal back up and assistance on guardianship and advance directives (e.g. living will and durable power of attorney).

HEARING IMPAIRED ASSISTANCE

<u><i>Agency</i></u>	<u><i>Information</i></u>
DHFS/Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Madison voice: 608-267-3811 Eau Claire: 715-836-3869 TTY: 608-267-4329 Wausau: 715-842-7693 Milwaukee SE Office: 414-902-5935	Ensures that all programs, services and privileges accorded to hearing people are also available to individual who are deaf or hard of hearing. For information, referral, consultation, advocacy and training, contact any of the region offices listed above.

LEGAL ADVICE FOR THE ELDERLY

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Information</u>
The Elder Law Center of the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups 608-224-0660	Provides legal assistance to and advocacy on behalf of the elderly (60+) and develops and publishes materials on topics of elder law and insurance. Also can address issues of financial exploitation.
Elderly Benefit Specialists Program	Operated by county aging units (for telephone listing, see county government offices). Offers assistance to older persons (60+) with their private and government benefits, such as private insurance or Medicare, and with the extensive and complicated paper work often required to qualify for benefit programs.

MENTAL HEALTH

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Information</u>
DHFS/Bureau of Mental and Substance Abuse Services 608-266-2717	Provides information on publicly funded local mental health services (e.g. outpatient treatment, crisis intervention, and community support).

NURSING HOMES AND OTHER LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Information</u>
Board on Aging and Long term Care (BOALTC) Phone: 800-815-0015 Web site: http://longtermcare.state.wi.us/home/	The Long Term Care Ombudsman program, operated by BOALTC, responds to complaints in nursing homes and residential facilities (e.g. group homes) and advocates on behalf of residents. Refers licensing violations to State agencies charged with enforcement actions.

RAPE AND SEXUAL ABUSE

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Information</u>
Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault Phone: 608-257-1516 Web site: http://www.wcasa.org	Statewide organization which provides assistance, including referrals to local programs, for victims of sexual abuse and assault.

VISION IMPAIRED SERVICES

<u><i>Agency</i></u>	<u><i>Information</i></u>
Wisconsin Council of the Blind, Inc. 800-783-5213 Madison area: 608-255-1166	Sells aids and appliances such as talking clocks, kitchen aids, sewing aids, tools, measuring devices, and games.
DHFS/Bureau for the Blind 608-266-3109 608-266-3170	Provides information and referral on a variety of services including assessments of visual function, recommended adaptive equipment and instructions on its use, and individual and family counseling to assist in the adjustment of vision loss.
Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped 800-242-8822 Milwaukee area: 414-286-3045	Provides books and magazines in Braille. Also provides records, discs, cassettes, record players and cassette players to eligible individuals throughout Wisconsin.

WISCONSIN INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTERS

Providing advocacy and independent living services for people with disabilities and mental health issues.

<u><i>Agency</i></u>	<u><i>Information</i></u>
North Country Independent Living Centers 715-392-9118 V/TTY	Counties Served: Douglas, Bayfield, Ashland, Iron, Burnett, Washburn, Sawyer, and Price
Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin 715-233-1070 V/TTY	Counties Served: Polk, Barron, Rusk, St. Croix, Dunn, Chippewa, Pierce, Pepin, and Eau Claire
Great Rivers Independent Living Services 608-787-1111 V 608-784-9472 TTY	Counties Served: Trempeleau, Clark, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Juneau, Vernon, Crawford, Richland, Sauk, Grant, Iowa, La Fayette
Access to Independence 608-242-8484 V 608-242-8485 TTY	Counties Served: Columbia, Dodge, Dane, and Green
Society's Assets 414-637-9128 V/TTY	Counties Served: Jefferson, Rock, Walworth, Racine and Kenosha

Agency

Information

Options for Independent Living
920-490-0500 V/TTY

Counties Served: Marinette, Oconto, Menominee, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara, Marquette, Green Lake, Outagamie, Winnebago, Fond du Lac, Kewaunee, Brown, Manitowoc, Calumet, and Sheboygan

Midstate Independent Living Center
715-369-5040 V/TTY

Counties Served: Vilas, Oneida, Lincoln, Langlade, Forest, Florence, Taylor, Marathon, Wood, Adams and Portage

LEAD ELDER ABUSE AGENCY DIRECTORY BY COUNTY

<u>County/Tribe</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Adams	County Aging Unit	608-339-4281
Ashland	Human Services Dept.	715-682-7004
Barron	Dept. of Human Services	715-537-5691
Bayfield	Dept. of Human Services	715-373-6144
Brown	Human Services Dept.	920-448-6095
Buffalo	Dept. of Health and Human Services	608-685-4412
Burnett	County Aging Program	715-349-2557
Calumet	Human Service Dept.	920-849-1400
Chippewa	Dept. of Human Services	715-726-7799
Clark	Dept. of Social Services	715-743-5233
Columbia	Human Service Dept.	608-742-9227
Crawford	Dept. of Human Services	608-326-0248
Dane	Dept. of Human Services	608-224-3666
Dodge	County Human Services/Health Dept.	920-386-3750
Door	Senior Resource Center	920-743-3083
Douglas	Dept. of Human Services	715-395-1304
Dunn	Human Service Dept	715-232-1116
Eau Claire	Human Service Dept.	715-831-5730
Florence	Human Service Dept.	715-528-3296 715-589-4322 715-696-3726
Fond du Lac	Dept. of Social Services	920-929-3400 920-929-3466 888-435-7335
Forest	Dept. of Social Services	715-478-7709
Grant	Dept. of Social Services	608-723-2136
Green	Human Service Dept.	608-328-9393
Green Lake	Dept. of Health and Human Services	920-294-4070
Iowa	Dept. of Social Services	608-935-9311

<u>County/Tribe</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Iron	County Aging Unit	715-561-2108
Jackson	Human Service Dept.	715-284-4301
Jefferson	Human Service Dept.	920-674-3105
Juneau	Dept. of Human Services	608-847-2400
Kenosha	Aging and Disability Resource Center	262-605-6646
Kewaunee	Dept. of Human Services	920-388-3777
La Crosse	County Human Services	608-785-6050
Lafayette	Commission on Aging	608-776-4888
Langlade	Dept. of Social Services	715-627-6500
Lincoln	Commission on Aging	715-536-0311
Manitowoc	Aging Resource Center	920-683-4180
Marathon	Dept. of Social Services	715-261-7500
Marinette	Human Services Dept.	715-732-7700
Marquette	Human Services Dept.	608-297-9135
Menominee	Health and Human Service Dept.	715-799-3861
Milwaukee	County Dept. of Aging	414-289-6874
Monroe	Human Service Dept	608-269-8600
Oconto	Commission on Aging	800-649-6568
Oneida	County Aging Unit	800-379-7499 715-369-7499
Oneida Tribe	Oneida Elder Services	920-869-3155
Outagamie	Health & Human Services Dept.	920-832-5169
Ozaukee	Dept. of Social Service (Metro)	262-284-8200 262-238-8200
Pepin	Human Services Dept.	715-672-8941
Pierce	Office on Aging	715-273-3531 ext. 780
Polk	Dept. of Human Services	715-485-8400
Portage	Health & Human Services Dept.	715-345-5350
Price	County Aging Unit	715-339-3943
Racine	Human Service Dept.	262-638-6322
Richland	Dept. of Social Services	608-647-8821
Rock	Council on Aging	608-757-5416
Rusk	County Aging Unit	715-532-2299
St. Croix	Dept. of Human Services	715-246-8250
Sauk	Dept. of Human Services	800-533-5692
Sawyer	SawyerCounty Aging Unit	715-634-3000
Shawano	Social Services Aging Unit	715-526-4700
Sheboygan	Dept. of Social Services	920-459-3095
Stockbridge-Munsee	Elderly Program	715-793-4236
Taylor	Human Service Dept.	715-748-3332
Trempealeau	Dept. of Social Services	715-538-2311 ext. 290

Section Ten - Resources

<u>County/Tribe</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Vernon	Dept. of Human Services	608-637-5210
Vilas	Dept. of Social Services	715-479-3668
Walworth	Dept. of Human Services	262-741-3200
Washburn	Dept. of Human Services	715-468-4747
Washington	Dept. of Social Services	262-306-2222
Waukesha	Department of Aging	262-548-7828
Waupaca	Dept. of Health and Human Services	715-258-6300
Waushara	Dept. of Aging Services	920-787-0401
Winnebago	Dept. of Social Services (Oshkosh) (Neenah/Menasha)	920-236-4615
		920-727-2882, Ext. 4615
Wood	Dept. of Social Services (Marshfield) (WI Rapids)	715-387-6374
		715-421-8600