



Response Coalition Building
for the Exotic Animal Industry



Zoo and Aquarium
All Hazards
Partnership

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INTRODUCTION

Merriam-Webster defines a coalition as “a temporary alliance of distinct parties, persons, or states for joint action.” This document will use the term coalition throughout to describe those tasked with the coalition formation; including the “responders” and “planners.”

Responders are the “boots on the ground,” so to speak; planners will determine the framework for the coalition including who needs to be a responder, who will be the leader, how they will be funded and mobilized, etc. **It is important to understand that the planners do not need to be the same individuals tasked with response.** Each role requires different skill sets and authorities. This document is focused primarily on the planners.

Determining Whether An Exotic Animal Industry Coalition is Needed

It is likely that the need for an Exotic Animal Industry (EAI) coalition will be identified *after* an incident has occurred, when the owners, operators, local emergency management, and state responders have recognized that they lacked a plan and/or were not properly equipped to deal with the situation.

Building an inclusive, multi-disciplined coalition allows turf battles to occur pre-event and provides space for those conflicts to be resolved in a logical and rational way. Working through these issues *prior* to the next incident allows the stakeholders to bond together and work through even more difficult challenges during an event.

The decision to form an EAI coalition will depend on many factors, including but not limited to:

- A thorough evaluation and discussion with emergency management and animal response authorities at the local and state levels to gain their buy-in and participation.
 - Incidents are ultimately under their control. Without their approval and participation, a coalition will find themselves “outside” the formal emergency response structure.
- Presence (or absence) of animal response organizations in your area, and their expertise with non-domestic species.
- The commitment of individuals and facilities to train, fund, and support the process of forming a coalition.

BUILDING THE COALITION: KEYS TO GETTING STARTED

Identifying Potential Coalition Planners

The number one **priority when identifying planners is to develop a framework/leadership that can assess and provide resources needed for prevention, response, and recovery for animal disasters or disease emergencies.** The following list of subject matter experts should be considered for a planning group:

- **Industry:** Animal owners, operators, and caretakers must be part of the planning process.
- **Government:** State and local government agencies may have authority over animal species for various reasons. Understanding which agency has jurisdictional authority, especially in disaster events, is important when navigating the early discussion of a coalition. Local government(s) should be made aware of this planning process.
 - Note that local governments may be advisory alone and not part of a planning group.
- **Academia:** The academic community has teaching experience and access to the next generation of industry professionals - students.
- **Private Sector:** The private sector knows how to get things done quickly and can bring efficiency, specific expertise, and an entrepreneurial spirit to the table. There are many ways business partners can assist with strategic planning and meeting facilitation, provide guidance and leadership, and support the coalition through in-kind donations of meeting space and other necessary assets.
- **Emergency Management: It is extremely important to include emergency management (EM) professionals as part of your planning group.** Emergency management capability and capacity for response begins and ends locally; therefore, understanding the first jurisdictional level with which an exotic facility may engage with in the event of a disaster is crucial. **A lack of understanding of the emergency management process and capacity will ultimately result in a poor planning effort.**

How-To Guide to Developing a Coalition

After the need for coalition formation is established, planning group members will need to consider some important details. The bullets below, which have been developed using firsthand experience and feedback from seasoned groups, will help you focus interested parties early in the process. See [Tips for Building a Coalition](#) and [Tips for Facilitation](#) and consider the following:

- How will the coalition be organized? See [Tips for Building a Coalition](#).
 - Who will lead the planning group? This individual must be passionate about the planning group and any coalition that results from the planning process. This should be someone with time to invest in planning and organizational excellence. See [Tips on Leadership](#).

- How frequently should the planning group meet?
- Does the planning group feel that establishment of a Board of Directors for the coalition is appropriate? This could include a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Training, Policy and Fundraising Officers, and County Liaison.
- What is the current state of the response structure for the EAI in the state/region? The coalition planning group must determine this, as it varies tremendously from state to state.
- What is the identified area the coalition will serve? State? Multi-state?
 - How will planners identify the geographic area for providing response?
 - How might consensus be built across the industry in the identified area? (See **Tips for Facilitation** for more on this topic.)
- Who are potential industry participants in a response coalition?
- What types of incidents might the coalition need to respond to? Undertake a risk assessment process that identifies the EAI facilities in the area or region to help you understand the incidents most likely to occur based on geography and other factors that could necessitate activation of the coalition. This will help you to identify the skill sets needed in coalition members.
- What requirements must be met for relevant agencies to recognize the coalition's response capabilities? Recognize that mentorship by a lead government entity is important, especially from an agency charged with animal health and safety. Buy-in from the government must occur for adequate recognition of planning efforts and coalition capabilities. This must be accomplished before missions are approved for assignment to the coalition. Meetings with elected officials will likely be required during coalition creation. Please see **Tips for Meeting with Your Elected Official**, which may help with more fruitful conversations with these key allies.
- Is additional mentorship needed to build a successful coalition?
 - Should the planning group consider a Board of Advisors? This could include EAI representatives, government entities (e.g., emergency management, public health, USDA, state Department of Agriculture, and county governments), etc. The Board of Advisors should include government agency representatives so that any policies created by the Board are in sync with local emergency response planning efforts.
 - Never underestimate the expertise of those in other states that have developed similar programs. Determine if a mentorship can be established to utilize the lessons learned by others when they developed their programs.
- What type of funding, if any, is required to get started building a coalition?
 - Where possible, a paid coordinator can be critical to success so that the mission remains a priority, even during times when there are no disasters to manage.
 - See **Tips for Building a Coalition** for additional guidance.

MEMBERSHIP: RECRUITING COALITION MEMBERS

Remember that in recruiting coalition members, you are recruiting for a specific purpose (you need planners and responders) and need as determined by the planning group. For coalition recruitment, efforts should target places where these types of individuals can likely be found - such as the EAI community, State Animal Health Official (SAHO)'s¹ office, university programs, zoological associations, etc. Additional advice is available in the [Tips on Gaining Participation in a Coalition](#).

Prior to recruitment, make sure that the planning group has determined the requirements for joining the coalition. Consider the following:

- Has the planning group identified how their coalition can assist initially with non-domestic wildlife response? Capabilities may change over time, but in early stages of organizing, it is recommended to thoughtfully start identifying the tasks that a coalition could do and expand capabilities and capacity as training and experience is gained.
 - Will you assist with emergency housing of animals evacuated from an area of impact?
 - Will you assist with transport of animals out of an area of impact? Will you assist with transportation of forage, feed, and supplies into an impacted facility?
 - Will you mobilize your coalition to provide “relief” animal husbandry options for facilities stressed from a long-term response?
 - Will you mobilize your team for any type of water operations?
 - **NOTE:** This **may** require advanced training and certification.
 - Will you mobilize for oiled wildlife response?
 - **NOTE:** This **will** require advanced training and certification.
- Adopt, review, and accept a Code of Conduct from organizations and individual responders. See [Appendix I: Code of Conduct](#) for more information.
 - Note Appendix I is provided as a guide only. Legal representation should approve any Code of Conduct document.
- Recognize that permission to participate in the coalition may be necessary from an employer.
- **Proof of insurance coverage** (if not covered by insurance obtained by non-profit status).
 - **NOTE:** Some states will cover volunteers under insurance provided by state regulation if you are a response team that has been identified and approved by the state or local emergency management authority. This option should be clearly understood and discussed early in the planning process.
- **Any training certifications or licenses required to fill a given position.**
 - Emergency managers will often require specialized training to actively participate in certain operations. It is best to discuss that with emergency management early in the planning process.

¹ Throughout this document, “State Animal Health Official(s)” or “SAHO” will be used to describe the head State Veterinarian of their authorized representative(s) working on their behalf.

COALITION MANAGEMENT

Remember, coalition management happens at two levels. Day-to-day management of the coalition will include the scheduling of meetings and training, representing the coalition at the state and local level, and other administrative-type functions. The management of the coalition during a “boots on the ground” response is a different responsibility! The coalition planning team should consider the following:

- **Build trust and credibility.** Management should strive to build trust and credibility by ensuring that all members (planners and responders) play by the same rules, ensuring a strong team concept.
- **Hold regular meetings.** Your coalition members need to feel some ownership to the success of the coalition; therefore, it is important to hold regular meetings and training opportunities. Determine which individuals should be invited to meetings to keep them informed of progress.
- **Keep people informed.** This is especially important, as coalition volunteers can lose interest if your team is not activated regularly. Send minutes out immediately following meetings, reminding people of what they have agreed to do. Each year, the planning group and coalition should send out key objectives and any changes that will be made to either the planning group or coalition composition. Follow up with each person periodically. Email is an invaluable tool.

Depending on the size of the coalition and its relationship to government stakeholder agencies, the coalition management may want to consider organizing themselves according to the Five Formation Elements as described below. Organizational needs may change over time, but considering all possible options during early stages of the planning process will be helpful as each will require different levels of participation, organization, training, and funding.

Five Formation Elements For Coalition Discussion

Regardless of what option the coalition decides to take as it forms, there are certain key elements that will likely be needed at different phases of coalition development. The Five Formation Elements to consider are as follows:

- Leadership to build Incident Command System (ICS) Sections
- Administrative support
- Communication needs, Webmaster, and social media assistance as needed
- Pro-bono attorney +/- accountant to manage and advise coalition
- Policy leadership

Leadership to Build Incident Command System (ICS) Sections

It is important to mention that any coalition is responsible for understanding the basics of the Incident Command System (ICS). ICS is an organizational tool that is both flexible and scalable and which, by virtue of standard terminology and position descriptions, allows the responders an understanding of responsibilities and authority.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers free online classes that provide an introduction to ICS and explain how it can be a valuable tool for organizing a response.²

It will behoove the coalition to consider their responders' capabilities and determine how they might best organize themselves using ICS. Once the basics of ICS are understood by the coalition, they will understand the roles that each responder will play, and the responsibilities of that role.

A coalition must also recognize that in any incident that necessitates the assistance of police, fire, or emergency management, **your coalition will not be in control**. These professionals will take charge of the incident, and your responsibility will be to assist them in the task to which you are assigned.

Administrative Support

Coalitions that are just starting out should discuss potentially necessary administrative functions with existing response organizations. No matter which organizational option your coalition chooses, someone will need to be in charge of administrative support. These tasks can be divided out across the coalition, but responsibility should be articulated and agreed upon. These responsibilities may include, but not be limited to:

- Maintaining basic contact and medical information/databases on each response volunteer and ensuring that emergency contact information is on file.
- Ensuring that Code of Conduct paperwork is on file for all members of the coalition.
- Ensuring that Proof of Insurance is on file for each responder.
- Tracking all volunteer hours that the coalition members have in training and response. This can be critical for any reimbursement or grant opportunities.
- Ensuring that any forms are filled out and filed (this may be more critical for reimbursable incidents where the coalition is deployed as part of a larger response effort).
- Maintaining any training certificates or re-certification requirements.
 - If formal credentialing is required, based on your location and participation, are these kept up to date?

The need to have a good working relationship with the SAHO cannot be overstated. Maintaining a good relationship with them will allow your coalition to be included in any animal health emergency or disaster planning/preparations that they organize. The SAHO or designated representative should be included in any contact list.

² You can view a list of all training courses on ICS and other topics in All-Hazards planning at <https://training.fema.gov/nims/>.

Communication Needs, Social Media Assistance, and Webmaster

Determine communication modes and options for the coalition. Certain individuals are charged with responsibility for notification of an event (listservs, group texts, emails). Maintaining an up-to-date contact list is extremely important. Consider:

- What types of communications will be needed day to day versus during an event?
 - Who will be responsible for sending communications?
- How will the contact list be maintained?
- Will the coalition want to develop a webpage?
 - Does it make sense to have a login and password protection for coalition members to locate specific, sensitive information during a response?
- Do you consider newsletter development to be shared internally or with exotics stakeholders outside the coalition?
 - Utilize visual technology to create maps, dashboards, graphs, etc. for coalition members.
- Who monitors social media on behalf of the coalition?
 - Does the coalition decide to have some sort of social media presence via Facebook or other platforms?

Pro-bono Attorney +/- Accountant to Advise and Manage Coalition

Regardless of how your coalition wishes to proceed, you should have input and advice from an attorney and/or accountant. There is tremendous liability when an individual is mobilized to assist in a response. Mobilizing without understanding coverage can result in tremendous personal or facility liability. An attorney will also be important to understand insurance and liability issues for the coalition and its members.

An attorney can help craft:

- Coalition participation agreements, including Code of Conduct.
- Any memorandums of understanding (MOU) or mutual aid agreements (MAA) between the coalition, individual facilities, or emergency management. See [Appendix II: Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) for more information on creating an MOU.
- The pros and cons of incorporation.
 - **It is not necessary to be incorporated to get a lot done!** North Carolina State Animal Response Teams did not incorporate until year three of its existence.

An attorney should be consulted about the advantages and disadvantages of incorporating your coalition. Incorporation is the process of becoming a private, non-profit organization. This may not be needed early in the coalition organization, but it can be beneficial for a number of reasons:

- 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt status will be available to you if you decide to pursue the incorporation route.
 - Other options besides incorporation do exist. A lawyer should be involved in the discussion of possible options to explain both benefits and disadvantages.

- A non-profit organization needs bylaws and a board of directors.
- Non-profit status allows for fundraising (hence the possible need for an accountant), use of MOUs, and the purchase of insurance.
 - **One benefit of incorporating is that the process allows you to purchase liability and workers' compensation insurance to cover volunteers when activated.**

Government workers are typically insured; however, public-private partnerships, such as a coalition, must provide insurance for members. Individual member institutions must ensure that their employees are covered by *their* insurance in the act of responding on behalf of the coalition. As an example, North Carolina requires volunteers to be covered under both workers' compensation and liability.

Laws on insurance vary from state to state, and it is important to research and understand the laws in your state. EAI responders in recent events such as Hurricane Harvey were covered by their individual institution's insurance policies.

The responsibility to insure a responder *must* be clearly stated in any documents, charters, participation agreements, etc. that are developed by the planning group.

Policy Leadership

A policy leader can be an invaluable member of the coalition. Policy decisions are typically made by regulatory officials, industry owners/managers, and subject matter experts from multiple disciplines based on the circumstances. Many – though not all – policy decisions can be made pre-event using a policy group which is formed to work through likely scenarios with governmental agencies for a specific disaster response and disease outbreaks. Policy decisions can be issued pre-event as guidance and then confirmed or amended at the appropriate time during the event for that specific occurrence.

The following are considerations for establishing the need for a policy person:

- Unique disaster and/or disease outbreak characteristics for EAI will require new strategies, and a policy person would work with authorities to that end.
- Existing policies in government may limit the ability to respond or remedy the situation in the case of a disaster. The coalition's relationships with elected officials may be extremely important in these situations.
- If resources are not immediately available, this may limit a coalition's ability to carry out pre-existing policies. Modification(s) to a regulation or rule may be needed in this case.
- Decision makers are not always focused on science – they may be prioritizing an expedited solution. A policy leader must present the facts to the decision-making authorities for an appropriate response.
- Policy flaws create untenable outcomes or, in the worst case scenario, the ultimate failure of the policy. Governmental authorities may have unrealistic expectations of the coalition's ability to manage a situation, and the policy leader would work with the authorities to come to reasonable solutions.
- A policy person may work with the media and how the press depicts an event.

- Occasionally, new policy requirements on a politically-sensitive subject or during an election year can escalate tensions during crisis events.
- A disease agent may change in pathogenicity or adaptability and force strategy changes that require policy shifts. Remember, foreign animal disease response will not be driven/managed by emergency management. Response will be managed by SAHOs in concert with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- Consumers/concerned citizens may react unpredictably. A policy leader tries to anticipate this and work with authorities to manage this.
- Other simultaneous events may affect the ability to control a situation (for example, a catastrophic weather event or legal challenges). A policy leader works with authorities to adapt to these changes.

OPTIONS FOR COALITION STRUCTURE

It is important to understand the variety of roles that the coalition may have in a response. Some requests for the coalition's assistance will only necessitate the most basic of considerations as described in the above requirements. However, there will be incidents where the assistance of an EAI coalition will be needed, but the coalition **will not be in charge of managing the incident. To understand the direction for how an EAI coalition would be able to respond or assist alongside professional responders, it is best to determine if your state has an existing animal disaster/disease preparedness program and how it is organized.**

Many states do have existing animal disease/disaster response structures in place, usually following the lead of Departments of Agriculture/SAHO with statutory authorities and policies in place for animal disaster/disease response. It is imperative to have a “meeting of the minds” between coalition planners and the jurisdictional authorities³ to determine where a coalition could offer valuable assistance, and therefore how best to organize itself.

Option 1: Basic Industry Assistance

EAI coalitions can be useful to the industry in many ways. The vast majority of “minor” situations where a coalition can help may be described as “industry assistance” or “mutual aid.” A coalition may wish to organize to assist a facility struggling to manage an appropriate response. This could include:

- Offering temporary shelter for animals moved out of an area of impact.
- The transportation of these animals from their original institution to temporary housing.
- Providing temporary keepers for overwhelmed facilities.
- Providing clean-up and rebuilding assistance after a disaster.
- Recovery-type activities that may include rebuilding enclosures, etc.

Requesting and Authorizing Basic Assistance

This type of industry assistance would likely occur when a facility reaches out to the coalition for assistance that does not require more advanced resources such as search and rescue functions, water rescue capabilities, or police, fire, or emergency management authority. Assistance may be requested with a phone call to coalition managers that help is needed.

A request for assistance must come from an individual authorized to make that request on behalf of the facility as opposed to, for example, a random person requesting assistance via social media. Therefore, coalition leadership and authorized facility representatives should discuss and agree upon roles, objectives, and responsibilities before deploying in order to protect the integrity of the coalition. This will also ensure that the facility requesting assistance recognizes what responsibility they might bear in making their request.

³ “Jurisdictional authorities” generally refers to emergency management professionals who manage incidents such as fires, floods, etc. The jurisdictional authority in animal disease events is usually the State Veterinarian, supported by the USDA and Emergency Management.

NOTE: The relocation of any animals to a new site will likely require permission for relocation from the SAHOs in both the originating and receiving state. **There may be other permissions needed for moving into or out of a quarantine zone or an area under curfew.**

As you consider the following list of questions, it is easy to see that working things out ahead of time via MOUs or MAAs can be critical to reduce response times. Some of the things that will be important to document will depend on the nature of the incident, but if your coalition is responding to a longer-term incident, it is best to determine:

- Who will be the “leader” of the response? If the incident doesn’t rise to the level of jurisdictional authority (police, fire, emergency management), then the “leader” would be the facility owner or operator. Coalition members must follow directions of the authority in charge.
- Will coalition members have difficulty accessing the facility? Can arrangements be made to allow them access? (For example, to assist with rebuilding, the coalition may require arrangements to pass through road closures, etc.)
- Where will coalition members be housed? Nationally recognized, non-governmental response agencies such as ASPCA, American Humane, and others arrange those logistics themselves as part of their assistance service, but coalition members outside these organizations may require their own housing accommodations.
- How will coalition members travel to the affected facility? Does the auto insurance policy cover a team mobilization? **If engaging in an activity not stated in the auto policy coverage, be sure to check whether drivers will be liable for accidents or injury.**
- How will food be provided to responders, and who will provide it?
- Are coalition members responding as volunteers, or are they going to be paid by their employer during their deployment?
- What equipment should coalition responders take with them? If coalition equipment is damaged during the response, who is the responsible party for repair or replacement?

It is imperative to ensure that coalition participation requires that members and facilities keep resource inventories updated, and maintenance and repairs are remediated and ready for the response. Arriving on scene and realizing that equipment is in disrepair or missing since the last response is a poor and inefficient way to begin the assistance effort.

Option 2: Train and Organize to Join a Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group

For an EAI coalition located in states with functioning animal disaster and disease programs, the following structure is suggested for initially being included in response decision making. An EAI coalition in disaster/disease preparedness activities would benefit tremendously by organizing as a multi-agency coordination group (MAC). **As an exotic animal industry MAC, the coalition could offer expertise and response resources to those existing programs which would expand existing efforts on behalf of the exotic animal industry.**

Multi-Agency Coordination groups (MACs) are multi-disciplinary, high-level authority groups composed of representatives that support ICS and emergency operation centers through policy, authority, or governance and resource allocation. The group is part of the command and control structure. (This will be better understood after completing the recommended ICS courses.)

An EAI coalition will need to be given the *authority* to respond to exotic animals in incidents where emergency management, police, or fire are in charge. This is more easily accomplished if jurisdictional authorities are aware of the coalition, know their capabilities, and have trained together.

Essentially, the EAI coalition becomes a part of a larger recognized response structure with specific training and subject matter expertise. These organizations with diverse backgrounds and responsibilities are termed Multi-agency Coordination groups.

MAC groups are most often industry and private sector groups with resources to offer, and therefore can be very valuable for Incident Management Teams (IMT)⁴, the group that has the authority to organize the incident. Thus, as your EAI coalition considers its role in response, if there is an existing emergency response team at the state level, forming an Exotic Industry MAC may be the best choice. As an EAI MAC, members could organize and offer the following:

- Standard operating procedures and field operations guides that would help direct Incident Management Team operations
- Expertise through industry subject matter experts to the IMT (operations, planning, and logistics)
- Specialized equipment
- Personnel to perform various functions (assessment, rescue, transport, etc.)
- Facilities to house animals displaced by disaster

So, in a complex event involving EAI members, such as a hurricane that damages infrastructure, displaces people, affects a zoo, etc., the EAI coalition would function as an *assisting* MAC group. **This means that the MAC group will be working with the existing IMT (who has overall command)** to make sure that whatever resources are needed are available to benefit the impacted EAI members.

IMPORTANT: The EAI MAC group does not “run the event;” it functions as a support group to the IMT and works with those who are impacted. The EAI MAC group would provide expertise and resources to more effectively and efficiently respond to the needs of the EAI’s impacted members. In other words, it’s a way for the industry to form partnerships that improve response capability for those who do not know very much about the exotic animal industry.

Situations can arise quickly as a result of a high-profile event that garners the attention of the media and the public. A MAC group that represents the various aspects of the EAI and supporting organizations could be essential to help decision makers, media, and other parties be well informed on how to manage information flow to the public, how to de-escalate a tense situation, or how to act

⁴ Incident Management Team (IMT): Sometimes known as All-Hazards Incident Management Team (AHIMT), an IMT is a comprehensive group that responds to local, regional, or national emergencies, natural disasters, and public events and is available 24/7/365. IMTs are designed to either enhance ongoing operations through provision of infrastructure support, or when requested, to transition to an incident management function to include all components and functions of a Command and General Staff. The IMT members may be local, state, federal or private sector employees with formalized training to assume the roles within the IMT.

as the public face of the industry to speak professionally on the situation.

To be considered a recognized EAI MAC group, the Five Formation Elements **described on page 7** will likely still apply. If your coalition wants to respond to these larger, more complicated incidents to function as an MAC, additional requirements may be necessary. For example:

- Coalition members may be required to have additional ICS courses.
- The coalition must be recognized by the jurisdictional authority in charge. They need to understand your organization, capabilities and training before they may trust you to perform specific tasks under the formal response structure.
- The coalition should (and may be required to) train with IMTs whenever possible.

Option 3: Starting a Multi-Agency Coordination Group (MAC) From Scratch

The third (and frankly, the most difficult) route that an EAI coalition may take involves members of the coalition taking charge of working with other agencies to develop formal leadership when no formal leadership has emerged in your state. Again, most states already have such leadership in place, usually through the state's Department of Agriculture. Asking the SAHO, usually the State Veterinarian, would be the first logical step to determining whether this is the right option for your group. Often state Department of Agriculture SAHO offices have websites where they describe how they are organized and who and what is involved in their response preparedness programs.

It will be MUCH EASIER to work with existing response agencies that have statutory authority for animals in disasters or other high-level, complex incidents rather than going it alone. Much can be done (and learned) with a more integrated approach to animal emergency management, regardless of species.

COALITION MOTIVATION: MOTIVATING AND REWARDING COALITION MEMBERS

Regardless of the structure of your coalition, members will want to stay engaged, even when there is no need to activate! It will be important to determine how best to motivate your coalition to remain involved and reward them for a job well done in the event of an activation. There are various ways to keep potential members interested and engaged in the coalition. Some of these include:

- Establish a reasonable meeting schedule. Virtual meetings are fine, but nothing beats a face to face meeting to participate in a tabletop scenario or other training. Feed your people at meetings.
- Recognize any new coalition participants in your newsletter and place them on your mailing list, so that they hear from you at least monthly.
- Invite suggestions from coalition members.
- Provide certificates and small gifts for attendance at any meetings or training. The coalition members should never leave empty-handed! Businesses are often willing to donate surplus items for this purpose. Trade shows often have small items available at booths that they are happy to offer as incentives.
- Hold an annual meeting for the coalition to celebrate the accomplishments of your team. Invite the media to attend to broaden community knowledge of the efforts.
- Provide annual awards by category. Publish these awards.
- Follow up quickly with new coalition members. Invite them to an orientation and give them a specific responsibility. Assign them to a team or a team event, based on their skills and interests. Make sure the leader of the team or leadership contacts them personally to welcome them. Ensure that volunteers feel important, appreciated and informed. Volunteers will not remain with your organization if they are not involved in activities such as meetings or training.

Now that you have familiarized yourself with the basics of coalition development and have this guide at your disposal, the hard work begins. Now it's up to you to identify what volunteers can do, be transparent about coalition goals and objectives, and set realistic expectations in terms of coalition capabilities and capacity. Creating a successful coalition and keeping members engaged is not always easy, but it is well worth the effort!

The most important aspect of a volunteer coalition is saying "Thank you!" Make this your number one priority. Think of every way you can to recognize your volunteers by name!

This information on coalition building has been gathered from those who have actually created successful coalitions for companion animals and livestock. These successful coalitions recognize the needs of the community and have provided suggestions on the subject matter experts to consult during coalition development.

APPENDIX I: CODE OF CONDUCT

Creating a Code of Conduct

- A Code of Conduct should be developed for use by coalition team members.
- Having a Code of Conduct gives an organization credibility among partners or donating agencies that might be concerned about individual group philosophies and the professionalism of personnel and volunteers.
- The Code of Conduct ensures that coalition members confine their activities to the mission at hand.
- Response systems are not set up to accept freelance and untrained personnel entering any premise to handle animal situations without approval, credentials, or waivers as needed. The coalition and supporting organizations must be activated and deactivated by the Incident Commander.
- Always have any sort of formal documentation reviewed by all parties and an attorney before adopting the final version. Consider revisiting and developing a new Code of Conduct - and requiring signatures - on an annual basis.

Code of Conduct Example

Individuals volunteering for, activated by, or representing the coalition shall adhere to the following policies:

Coalition members will sign this document to indicate that they understand and agree to abide by all codes identified within this document. Incident Commanders will have authority to deactivate any activated coalition members for behavior(s) contrary to the Code of Conduct based on their discretion:

1. Individuals shall project a professional manner and appearance while participating in any coalition-related activities. The following will not be tolerated while on-site at a disaster, conference, or other coalition activity:
 - a. Consumption of alcoholic beverages while on duty or any display of public drunkenness
 - b. Possession, use, or selling of any illegal drugs
 - c. Violation of any laws
 - d. Public outbursts or public derogatory remarks about other organizations or individuals
 - e. Illegal use or display of a firearm
2. Individuals shall identify operations that are beyond their capabilities based on their experience, training, and knowledge, and will provide and carry professional credentials during activation. Individuals shall observe all safety rules and regulations and be familiar with proper usage and operation of all equipment.
3. Individuals shall be expected to accept assignments and/or orders as directed by the supervising authority (Incident Commander, etc.), or if required, make discretionary decisions based on appropriate intent and good judgement.
4. While representing the coalition, individuals will not participate in operations that otherwise serve to promote personal gain or individual ideologies.
5. Individuals shall not enter private properties to perform search and rescue duties without

permission from the owner or supervising authority or without a law enforcement escort.

6. Individuals shall remain in contact with the appropriate ICS authority and confine their activities to the stated mission and directives of the Incident Action Plan.

7. All individuals shall wear current identification, preferably coalition badge, while on-site for a disaster.

8. Individuals will be required to document or participate in documentation for each rescue in a timely manner and submit documentation to the Incident Commander.

9. Individuals shall not transport animals to facilities other than the ones that have been assigned by the supervising authority without permission from the supervising authority.

10. Individuals shall refrain from taking photographs without explicit permission. Any photos that are made will not be used for public display without the express written permission of the owner.

11. In situations in which an animal(s) is rescued and transported from a property without prior permission, individuals participating in such rescue must leave notification of the removal of the animal or disturbance of the property *on* the property in the most visible area possible.

12. Individuals shall not accept personal gratuities. All personal donations shall be directed to the Coalition Treasurer.

COALITION MEMBER SIGNATURE:

NAME:

DATE:

SART REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE:

NAME:

DATE:

APPENDIX II: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

The items listed below are typical components of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). An MOU is an agreement between two or more parties to agree upon expectations (including roles, responsibilities, resources, and more) in the event of an incident or disaster.

This document is intended to be used only as a guide, and will help you to develop the framework for an MOU that meets your needs. It is up to you and your legal team which elements you will need to include or leave out of your MOU. **Legal counsel should always be utilized to address specific details depending on your circumstances.**

Your MOU may include some or all of the following sections and elements, depending on your specific needs and uses:

I. Introduction

This section will outline the general purpose and parties of the MOU, and may include the following:

- a. List of involved parties, including but not limited to:
 - Lead agency
 - Owners
 - Management
 - Any other agency or organization involved
- b. Purpose of MOU
- c. List of roles and responsibilities related to the purpose of the service
- d. Statement that all involved parties agree to provide support in the best interest of all engaged in the MOU

II. Definitions: MOU's often include acronyms and industry-specific jargon that may be unfamiliar to involved parties. Spelling out these acronyms and terms will ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of the language in the MOU. Consider including the following in a glossary of terms in your MOU:

- a. **MOU-specific language:** These are terms that are specific to your MOU and involved parties. For example, it may be helpful to spell out the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) if they are referenced in your MOU and/or an involved party.
- b. **Industry-specific language:** Not all involved parties may have a background in emergency response and/or the Exotic Animal Industry, so it may be helpful to define terms commonly used in your industry and appear in your MOU; for example, you might want to define contingency planning or Incident Command Systems (ICS) if they are referenced in your MOU.

III. Management/Lead Agency Roles & Responsibilities

- a. **Accommodations:** When planning for an event in which boots-on-the-ground responders are required, it is important to clearly outline who will arrange accommodations for responders for each involved party.
 - The lead agency may take on this responsibility, or that responsibility may be left up to each individual party. In a more developed team, the responsibility of arranging accommodations for boots-on-the-ground responders typically falls to the Logistics Officer(s).
 - Accommodations may include (but not be limited to) hotel arrangements, facilities for meeting and training, food and water, etc.
- b. **Communications Plan:** Each involved party may enter into the MOU with their own communications plan and system, so you will need to determine if communications will

be merged, and if so, how that will be done. Many states now utilize interoperable communications plans, which can help to streamline your efforts.

- c. **List any other items or responsibilities for which lead agencies/management are responsible.**

IV. Support Services: Support services comprise any form of technical support brought into the MOU to provide skills and/or credentials that the involved parties do not already possess or may require to boost capability. Support services may be known by a number of names, and are brought into an MOU when the involved parties mutually recognize that other groups may be needed to assist the group's mission or efforts. These services may cover a range of skills and industries, and may include such services as: logistical support, medical support, aquatic rescue teams, search and rescue teams, etc. When outlining the role of support services in your MOU, you may want to:

- a. Define expectations for support services as related to the MOU
- b. Denote the unique needs and services of your group or mission
- c. Clearly outline services to be provided by outside groups

V. Eligibility Determination: When developing your MOU, it will be up to you to determine who is eligible to participate and who has the authority to approve and sign off on the document. When working with involved parties, you will want to ensure that your MOU must be signed by someone with the authority to do so, such as a facility owner or operator. Some groups or businesses dictate that a person must possess a certain rank or title to sign such a document. Consider denoting:

- a. Any eligibility requirements for entering into the MOU
- b. The name of each involved party and any extra or specific eligibility requirements that certain groups may be required to meet

VI. Funding

- a. List current funding and its source(s)
- b. List roles and responsibilities related to specific funds, if necessary
- c. Denote contingent funding, if necessary

VII. Terms & Conditions: This section may include expectations and important dates and timelines pertaining to the MOU. You may want to denote:

- a. The effective date of the MOU
- b. Timeframe of MOU
- c. Renewal requirements
- d. Termination reference: This section spells out how termination will proceed for each group, whether termination is immediate, whether notice of termination will be written versus verbal, etc.

VIII. Severability Clause: Severability is a provision that allows a component of a legal document such as an MOU to be voided if said component is found to be illegal or if certain terms are violated by involved parties while the remainder of the document remains intact and effective. This is also sometimes known as a separability clause. You may want to include a statement that the terms of the agreement are independent of one another. If there is a provision that is void or declared to be unenforceable, the rest of the contract endures.

IX. Termination Clause: Unlike severability, terminating an MOU involves legally dissolving the contract before involved parties have fulfilled their obligations as denoted. There are a variety of reasons why you may choose to terminate an MOU. You may want to consider including:

- a. Which agencies or parties have the right to terminate

- b. Terms of written notice to end services
 - c. Ramifications for each involved party in the event of termination
- X. Confidentiality Clause:** If confidential information will be shared amongst involved parties, it is important to include in the MOU what information will be shared, how that information will be shared, and the consequences of leaking confidential information. You may want to include:
- a. ALL items deemed to be held in confidence
 - b. An outline of what IS and IS NOT confidential as agreed upon by all involved parties
 - c. Limits of confidentiality clause
 - d. Consequences for sharing information deemed to be held in confidence
- XI. Nondiscrimination Clause:** This is a standard - but important - clause to include in many types of business contracts, including MOUs. List all nondiscrimination rules and requirements that apply. List any nondiscrimination rules that may apply to your MOU and consult a legal professional to determine any other clauses that will be necessary for your agreement.
- XII. Amendments:** Your needs and relationship with involved parties may change over time; therefore, your MOU may need some changes, too. You can plan for this by allowing amendments to be added to your MOU in the future and making these amendments as your situation evolves. You may want to include:
- a. Statement of agreement that amendments must have mutual consent of the signatories or parties.
 - b. Statement on which individuals/agencies/involved parties may propose amendments
- XIII. Certification of Authority to Sign the Agreement**
- XIV. Signature and date lines for signatories**