



Virginia State Animal Response Team  
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## **HURRICANE SEASON IS APPROACHING. IS YOUR PET READY?**

The Atlantic hurricane season begins officially June 1. Many organizations are encouraging Virginians to prepare for the season by making a plan, creating an emergency supply kit and staying informed. The Virginia State Animal Response Team (VASART) has one more suggestion: make plans for your pets.

The national State Animal Response Team (SART) organization was created after 1999's Hurricane Floyd claimed the lives of millions of animals in North Carolina, with thousands more separated from their owners. Many of these animals could have been saved by a coordinated response plan. From this tragedy, SART was born. In 2006, Virginia adopted the concept to address its animal-related disaster response needs.

VASART serves as a unifying network of organizations, businesses, federal and state government agencies and individuals that supports the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery for emergencies affecting animals. VASART works with organizations like the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Virginia Veterinary Medical Association, Virginia Department of Emergency Management and others to coordinate assistance to pet-owning evacuees to find shelters and facilities that will accept pets in response to the Governor's declaration of a state of emergency.

Realizing that disaster assistance happens most effectively at the local level, VASART is building Community Animal Response Teams (CARTs) across the state. Community coordinators will lead the development of teams of volunteers who will be trained and certified to assist with emergency response.

VASART and its partners will do everything they can to provide pet assistance during an emergency, but it offers this advice now: Prepare your home, business or farm before an emergency occurs by creating disaster preparedness kits and emergency plans for your family, pets and other animals. SART offers the following tips for protecting your animals in a disaster:

- Prepare a Pet Emergency Kit ahead of time - The kit should include a few days worth of medication, your pet's medical and vaccination records, a leash, collar, identification, water, food, toys, a picture of you and your pet, and bedding.
- Make sure that your animals have some form of permanent identification such as a microchip, brand or tattoo.
- Purchase a pet carrier and label it with emergency contact information.
- Store water and pet food for emergencies.
- Create a contingency plan for animals including horses and livestock that addresses transportation, water and feed resources and areas for confinement if needed.
- Go to <http://www.vvma.org/sart.htm> for more information. For information on community level teams, go to [www.virginiasart.org/cart.html](http://www.virginiasart.org/cart.html).

For more information on VASART, contact Robin Schmitz, Executive Director, Virginia State Animal Response Team, 3801 Westerre Parkway, Suite D, Henrico, VA 23233; call 804-346-2611; fax 804-346-2655; or go to [www.virginiasart.org](http://www.virginiasart.org).