



DAS VALLEY CENTER DISASTER ANIMAL RESPONSE TEAM

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Would you like to be a DAS Valley Center Disaster Animal Response Team Volunteer?

Thank you for your interest becoming a County of San Diego Department of Animal Services (DAS) volunteer with the DAS Valley Center Disaster Animal Response Team! Our group is a vital part of the emergency response network in our community. Our special skills will be needed in the event of a local emergency situation.

In order to become a participating member of the DAS Valley Center Disaster Animal Response Team (DAS VC DART), you must fulfill the following requirements to ensure the proficiency and safety of everyone in the group. Now, let's get started:

1. **Application, Background Checks and Physical:** Members of the DAS Valley Center Disaster Animal Response Team are volunteers under the San Diego County Department of Animal Services. As part of our Community Response Plan, they may work with law enforcement, firefighting personnel, animal welfare agencies, VC CERT, and possibly other emergency responders. You will be moving throughout the community, visiting properties where owners may or may not be present, and will be assuming responsibility for the safety and care of other peoples' animals and property. If not in the field, you may be working with data containing confidential information. Therefore, all applicants must complete the DAS VC DART Application which, in addition to providing vital information, authorizes background checks and fingerprinting which may be conducted through law enforcement agencies and the Department of Animal Services. A basic physical examination is also required.
2. **FEMA Training:** The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers many opportunities for emergency preparedness and response training. Five courses listed below have been identified by the Department of Animal Services as offering critical knowledge for persons functioning in animal rescue and management. They will give you background information on how the Incident Command System works, disaster preparedness, and scenarios specific to the handling of animals in disaster situations. These free courses are offered on-line (we also have them printed), and can be found at www.training.fema.gov. After you register for a FEMA I.D. number, go to the course list. You will be issued a certificate after successfully passing the exam at the end of each course.
 - IS-10.a – Animals in Disaster: Awareness and Preparedness
 - IS-11.a – Animals in Disaster: Community Planning
 - IS-100.b – Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS)
 - IS-111 – Livestock in Disasters
 - IS-700.a – Introduction to the National Incident Management System (NIMS)

Continued on reverse

3. **MONTHLY TRAINING:** DAS VC Disaster Animal Response Team provides monthly training for our members to qualify for deployment. We learn disaster response protocols, scouting and evacuation procedures, trailer safety, safe animal handling and care, receiving, and shelter management. Volunteers are required to attend a minimum of six events in twelve months to maintain active, deployable status.
4. **WILDLAND FIRE SAFETY AND AWARENESS TRAINING:** This class is offered by the Department of Animal Services several times a year in different locations. All volunteers are required to complete this training every 24 months. This training is designed to give you the knowledge and skills needed to work safely and effectively as part of a team.
5. **FIRE SHELTER TRAINING:** All team members who will be working behind fire lines must carry, and be able to deploy, a fire shelter. DAS VC Disaster Animal Response Team provides fire shelters, and the shelter training is administered by the Department of Animal Services. This training must be renewed every 24 months.
6. **UNIFORM:** Our members have a DAS VC Disaster Animal Response Team uniform which clearly identifies them as community emergency responders. Members purchase their own basic uniform. The cotton logo shirt is required. Pants may be either olive drab green cotton 511 pants (preferred), or clean workman-like blue cotton denim jeans.
7. **SAFETY EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING:** In Valley Center and surrounding areas, our primary concern is fire. Team members working behind fire lines will be required to wear protective fire-safe clothing, including a hard hat, Nomex outer wear, goggles, leather gloves, and leather work boots and carry a fire shelter. DAS VC DART provides fire gear to field qualified personnel for deployment. All-cotton attire (long sleeve logo tee and cotton jeans) are worn under fire gear.

It really is not as daunting as it looks, and each step you take will bring Valley Center and surrounding communities closer to having local emergency response capability. We can help you through the FEMA classes, and you have six months from the date you join to complete them. The schedule for monthly training is published early in the year to help you plan to attend. Most events are local, and are usually on a weekend morning (about 4 hours).

DAS Valley Center Disaster Animal Response Team volunteers will respond only when deployed by the Department of Animal Services. You will always work in teams, and you will never be required to perform any activity you do not feel capable of handling safely. Visit our website at www.vcdart.org for more information.

Now that you know what is required, we would welcome the opportunity to talk to you. You may email us at vcdart@att.net or contact us through the information on this letterhead. We will be happy to answer any questions you have, and welcome you to the DAS Valley Center Disaster Animal Response Team!

DAS VC DART, WORKING WITH: County of San Diego Department of Animal Services, Valley Center Sheriff's Station, VC Fire Protection District, CAL FIRE, San Diego Humane Society and SPCA, VCFPD CERT