



MARYLAND STATE ANIMAL RESPONSE TEAM

Association Headquarters

8015 Corporate Drive • Suite A • Baltimore, MD 21236

Phone: 410-931-3332 • Fax: 410-931-2060

mdsart@managementalliance.com

www.mdsart.org

COUNTY ANIMAL RESPONSE TEAM (CART) PROGRAM

MDSART strongly recommends that each Maryland County form CARTS. Below is information on what they are and how to do that. (Reprinted with permission from the Colorado Veterinary Medical Foundation)

What is a County Animal Response Team (CART) program?

- A County Animal Response Team program is a network of animal and animal-agricultural resources that are available for planning, prevention, protection, mobilization, response, and recovery related to emergency incidents within their community.
- In some cases, CART programs may be tribal, regional or municipal based programs.

What agencies, organizations, and individuals should be part of the CART network?

1. Local Emergency Managers
 2. Animal care and control agencies
 3. Law enforcement
 4. Veterinary professionals
 5. Cooperative Extension
 6. Animal related industry
 7. Fairgrounds
 8. Local livestock associations
 9. Kennels & pet service providers
 10. Livestock producers
 11. Pet breed rescue & associations
 12. County public health
 13. Fire and EMS
 14. County mapping
 15. Wildlife agencies & zoos
 16. Concerned citizens/volunteers
- Professionals
 - Volunteers
 - Citizen preparedness and participation
 - Family and businesses
 - Citizen Corps/CERT affiliation possible

Missions that may be assigned to CART networks:

- Multi-agency coordination
 - Plan development
 - Communication
 - Local EOC support
- Resource development
 - Equipment & supplies
- Training & Credentialing

How would a community organize a CART program

There are seven key steps in organizing a CART program:

1. **Obtain support of emergency management and elected officials!**
 - CART programs must be organized with authorization and assistance from local emergency management! It is absolutely essential for emergency management to understand and support the CART building process! Emergency management can help determine if the CART process should be done at the local or at the regional level.
2. **Form a steering committee**
 - While it is essential for emergency management to play a leadership role, the community components of CART programs must be willing to provide the vast majority of work in the process. Emergency management agencies are typically overwhelmed with a myriad of tasks and often understaffed, increasing the need for community support in the CART building process.

Typical CART Steering Committee members might include representatives from

- Local emergency management
 - Law enforcement and/or animal control
 - Animal sheltering organizations
 - Veterinary professionals
 - Cooperative Extension
 - Livestock associations/producers
 - Other entities or individuals with the time and enthusiasm to support this process may be added to the steering committee.
3. **Define mission/strategies and set realistic goals**
 - While the entire process of building a CART, creating a plan, training the CART, gathering resources, and exercising the plan may seem daunting, some realistic goals should be set that are obtainable.
 - Goals may include:
 - Defining CART mission, key strategies, and essential member organizations
 - Creating a memorandum of understanding with the county or other such documentation as necessary to bring an official status to CART.
 - Developing a volunteer agreement and securing liability and injury insurance coverage as needed.
 - Selecting a committee to create a first draft for an animal emergency annex to the local emergency operations team.
 - Working with SART, Citizen Corps, local emergency management, and other partners to develop a training strategy to support that plan.
 4. **Involve all the stakeholders and volunteers**
 - While the steering committee may bring together the essential leadership components, the process will need to reach out to all stakeholder agencies and organizations. In addition, CART programs will need to recruit and train volunteers directly or through organizations to become part of the CART network. Local Citizen Corps program may be helpful in addressing this issue.

5. Create a risk assessment!

- CART programs should be leading elements in creating a local animal and agricultural risk assessment as the first step in the planning process. This assessment will help build the local plan and help local and state emergency management agencies in working to secure the appropriate resources for prevention, protection, response, and recovery.

6. Create a animal/agricultural emergency annex

- In cooperation with the local emergency management agency, the CART network needs to take a leadership role in working toward a written, all-hazards plan to address animal and animal-agricultural emergency issues in that community.

7. Train, practice the plan, review, revise

- Once the plan is in place, it must be periodically exercised.
 - Exercises of plans may be done in a “tabletop” exercise where participants work their way through an emergency scenario to help determine the effectiveness of their plan.
 - Another exercise is a field exercise or “hands-on” exercise. Typically, these exercises address a specific portion of the plan rather than trying to test the entire plan. An example of an animal exercise would be a joint exercise with the Red Cross and CART on housing animals in proximity to a temporary human shelter in a disaster.
- One key element of community animal emergency response is developing the ability to manage these resources within the incident management system. This could include the training of incident management teams with animal issues experience that could be used to support the management of animal issues during a large-scale event.

For information on MDSART or forming CARTS visit www.mdsart.org or contact Dr. Jacob Casper or Ron Sohn at mdsart@managementalliance.com OR 410-931-3332 X 109.