Sheltering Animals & Families Together™

SAF-T Program

Start-Up Manual

By Allie Phillips, J.D.

Founder of SAF-T

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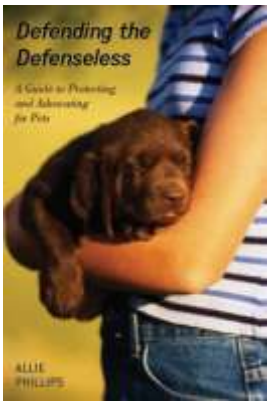
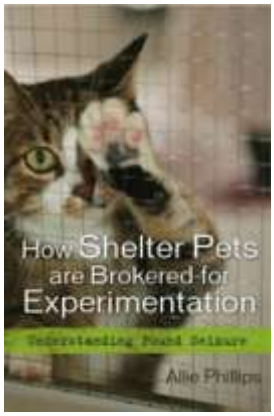
Founder of SAF-T

This manual was written by nationally-recognized animal and family advocate Allie Phillips. It contains the guidelines that she began developing in the mid-1990's as a prosecuting attorney. In response to seeing too many domestic violence victims return to their abuser in order to protect their pet, she knew that something needed to change in housing victimized families who have pets. While employed with the National District Attorneys Association (2003-2007) she trained child protection professionals on the concept. And when she joined the American Humane Association in 2007 as the vice president of public policy then as vice president of human-animal strategic initiatives, she launched the concept in February 2008 as the Pets and Women's Shelters (PAWS)® Program. Although American Humane discontinued the program in September 2010, this concept has saved too many lives to end. Now as *Sheltering Animals & Families Together (SAF-T)*™, her legacy continues in guiding and assisting family violence shelters on how to safely house family pets on-site.





Allie is currently director of the National District Attorneys Association's National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse, and a consultant for the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse where she spent over 3 years as the deputy director. She has conducted almost 300 trainings and authored over 50 publications on protecting animals and families. She has published *Understanding the Link between Violence to Animals and People* (2014), *Investigating and Prosecuting Animal Abuse (2013), Defending the Defenseless: A Guide to Protecting and Advocating for Pets* (2011), and *How Shelter Pets are Brokered for Experimentation: Understanding Pound Seizure* (2010), She has authored chapters in several books, including HANDBOOK ON ANIMAL-ASSISTED THERAPY: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICE (2010 & 2015), ANIMAL ABUSE—HELPING ANIMALS AND PEOPLE (2013), and INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF THEORY AND RESEARCH ON ANIMAL ABUSE AND CRUELTY (2008). She is a liaison to the ABA Commission on Domestic & Sexual Violence, advisory group member of the Association of Professional Humane Educators, advisory council member of Denver Pet Partners, council member of the Michigan State Bar Animal Law Section, co-founder of Michiganders for Shelter Pets, executive board member of the National Coalition on Violence Against Animals, steering committee member of the National Link Coalition, advisor to the White Coat Waste Movement, and created Manifested Harmony, a business that provides healing to people and pets, particularly those who have been victims of crime. Learn more about Allie's work at www.alliephillips.com and www.manifestedharmony.com.

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Harsh Reality — Facts and Figures

- Twelve independent surveys have reported that between 18 percent and 48 percent of battered women have delayed their decision to leave their batterer, or have returned to their batterer, out of fear for the welfare of their pets or livestock (Ascione, 2007).
- In 2010, females age 12 or older experienced about 407,700 nonfatal violent victimizations (rape/sexual assault, robbery, or aggravated or simple assault) by an intimate partner (a current or former spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend). Men experienced 101,530 nonfatal violent victimizations by an intimate partner. The percentage of female victims (22%) of intimate partner violence was about 4 times that of male victims (5%) (Truman 2011).
- Approximately 4.8 million intimate partner rapes and physical assaults are perpetrated against U.S. women annually, and approximately 2.9 million intimate partner physical assaults are committed against U.S. men annually (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).
- In 2008, approximately 772,000 children were abused or neglected (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2010).
- More than 72 million homes (62%) in the U.S. currently include companion animals (APPMA, 2011).
- Between 71-85 percent of women entering domestic violence shelters reported that their partner had threatened, injured or killed the family pet (Ascione, Weber, & Wood, 1997).
- One of the first studies to address the co-occurrence between child abuse and animal abuse discovered that 88 percent of homes with physically abused children also included abuse or neglect of the family pet (DeViney, Dickert, & Lockwood, 1983).
- In a nationwide study, more than 71 percent of battered women reported that their abusers had harmed, killed or threatened animals, and 32 percent reported that their children had harmed or killed animals (Ascione, 1997).
- In a study of battered women in several northeastern states, 48 percent of respondents reported that animal abuse had occurred “often” during the past 12 months, and another 30 percent reported that the abuse occurred “almost always.” Types of animal abuse reported included punching, hitting, choking, drowning, shooting, stabbing and throwing the animal against a wall or down stairs. Respondents reported that animal cruelty incidents coincided with violent outbursts against human family members 51 percent of the time (Carlisle-Frank, Frank, & Nielsen, 2006).
- A 2007 study found that women seeking refuge at a family violence shelter were nearly 11 times more likely to report that their partner had hurt/killed their pet and that shelter women were more than four times more likely to report that their pet had been threatened (Ascione et al., 2007; Volant, Johnson, Gullone & Coleman, 2008).
- "Batterers who also abuse their pets are both more controlling and use more dangerous forms of violence [sexual violence, marital rape, emotional violence and stalking] than batterers who do not." (Simmons & Lehmann, 2007).
- Research has shown that 62-76 percent of animal cruelty in the home occurs in front of children (Faver & Strand, 2003). Children often intervene to protect their mothers and pets from being battered. Some children may even allow themselves to be victimized to save their pets from being harmed or killed (Edelson et al., 2003). Tragically, this behavior is often symptomatic of children’s future abuse of people (Boat, 1999).
- Children who are exposed to domestic violence are nearly three times more likely to treat animals with cruelty than children who are not exposed to such violence (Currie, 2006).
- In one study of battered women with children who sought shelter in a safe house, 32 percent reported that their children had hurt or killed a family pet (Ascione, 1998).
- Animal cruelty committed by children is often symptomatic of future abuse toward other animals or people (Boat, 1999): 36.8 percent of boys and 29.4 percent of girls who were victims of physical and sexual abuse and domestic violence have been reported to abuse their family pet (Ascione, 2005).
- Significant research has documented a relationship between childhood histories of animal cruelty and patterns of chronic interpersonal aggression (Kellert & Felthous, 1985; Hensley & Tallichet, 2005; Merz-Perez, Heide, & Silverman, 2001; Becker & French, 2004).

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Introduction

Note: Different organizations use different terms for people who are or who were subjected to domestic abuse. In this manual, for the purposes of consistency and clarity for the reader, we use the term "victim" to describe a person who is in an abusive situation, "survivor" for a person who has left an abusive relationship, and "resident" to describe a person who has entered a shelter.

"Nearly 1 in 4 women are raped and/or physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabitating partner, or date at some time in their lifetime" (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). In one 24-hour period, 18,569 women, 1,054 men and 18 transgendered individuals received services from their local domestic violence provider. Given that more than 72 million U.S. households (62% of all homes) have companion animals as pets (APPMA, 2011), it is inevitable that some of those households will experience both domestic violence and animal abuse. In fact, in a 2009 study on the co-occurrence of domestic violence, child abuse and animal abuse, it was found that 17.8% of children were exposed to two forms of violence and 4.1% exposed to all three forms of violence in the home. A strong link was found between witnessing/perpetrating animal abuse and child physical abuse, emotional abuse, and severe domestic violence. Moreover, when witnessing animal cruelty interacted with child maltreatment or exposure to domestic violence, the risk of animal cruelty increased; and when domestic violence was limited to the most severe cases, exposed individuals were more likely to have witnessed animal abuse (DeGue and DiLillo, 2009).

When domestic violence victims with pets consider fleeing abusive homes and there is no safe place to house their pets, they have little choice but: (1) to remain in their homes and subject themselves, their children and their pets to continued violence, (2) to flee with children and pets and become homeless, or (3) to flee and leave their pets behind. Because victims understand the extent of the harm that their abusers will likely inflict upon their pets, if left behind, many victims simply remain in violent relationships.

There are an estimated 2,500 family violence shelters in the United States. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence's *2008 National Directory of Domestic Violence Programs*, approximately 900 shelters across the country provide some assistance or referrals for placement of pets; however, it is unknown specifically what those services entail. There are several hundred family violence shelters that have created safe housing for pets off-site, such as in animal shelters, veterinary clinics, boarding facilities, or in-home foster care programs (Ascione, 2000). These "safe haven" programs are collected by Ahimsa House in Atlanta, Georgia.

Recognizing both the urgent need to protect domestic violence victims from further abuse and the comfort that pets provide people, especially in times of stress and trauma, these guidelines were launched in trainings in 2004 and subsequently in a national initiative in 2008 to guide domestic and family violence emergency housing shelters toward permitting residents to bring their pets with them. *Sheltering Animals & Families Together (SAF-T)*™ acknowledges the richness of the bond between people and their pets, which often provide unconditional love and comfort to adult domestic violence victims and their children. For that reason — as well as for the safety of the pets — too many victims refuse to enter a shelter without their pet, even if their pet is at a safe off-site location. SAF-T strongly advocates keeping domestic violence victims and their pets together whenever possible.

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This manual provides simple, how-to methods for starting SAF-T at a domestic violence shelter. Until interpersonal violence ceases, SAF-T is available to encourage every domestic violence shelter throughout the United States and other countries to keep people and their pets safe.

The Co-Occurrence Between Violence to People and Animals

Research studies have clearly documented that when there is one form of violence in the home, everyone in the home is at risk. Domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse and animal cruelty may co-exist in violent homes, and all of these forms of violence are at national epidemic levels.

The co-occurrence between animal cruelty and human violence is an internationally recognized fact (Ascione, 2008). Each year, defenseless pets are victims of family violence. Not only are these pets in harm's way, but they may become helpless pawns in the power and control abusers use to hurt their victims. Abusers use the killing, torturing and beating of pets — or the threat of such actions — as a weapon to ensure submission and silence by their victims. This causes many victims — adults and children alike — to remain in violent households in order to ensure that their pets are not harmed (Jorgensen & Maloney, 1999; Lembke, 1999; Quinlisk, 1999).

Numerous studies in psychology, sociology and criminology have demonstrated that violent offenders frequently have childhood and adolescent histories of serious and repeated animal cruelty. The FBI has recognized the connection since the 1970s when its analysis of the lives of serial killers suggested that most had killed or tortured animals as children. Other research has shown consistent patterns of animal cruelty among perpetrators of more common forms of violence, including child abuse, spouse abuse and elder abuse. In fact, the American Psychiatric Association considers animal cruelty one of the earliest signs and an important diagnostic criterion of conduct disorder (APA, 2000). Children who grow up in an environment of animal cruelty live in constant fear that a beloved family member will be harmed. Children often intervene to protect their family members and pets from being battered. Some children may even allow themselves to be victimized to save their pets from being harmed or killed (Edelson, Mbilinyi, Beeman, & Hagemeister, 2003). Over time, these children may become desensitized to the inhumane treatment of animals and people.

In recent years, increased awareness of these linkages has resulted in many states enacting laws, and local agencies establishing policies, that coordinate domestic violence and animal protection efforts. These initiatives include cross-reporting laws, interdepartmental cross-training and establishment of protocols among first responders, and new laws that allow pets to be included in domestic violence protective orders. These efforts are providing more protection for victims of violence and their families. However, more can be done to help victims of violence leave abusive homes. Allowing them to leave home with their pets is essential. Pets provide emotional support to victims and children leaving their homes, and allowing them to take their pets with them eliminates their need to return to abusive homes to protect their pets from abusers' calculated retaliation. ***Failure to consider pets in emergency and temporary housing then becomes a barrier to safety for families.***

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The Need for SAF-T

"The most important fact is the ability to shelter pets because we know that domestic violence victims often won't leave their abusers because of fear of what might happen to their pets." – Sharon Youngerman, Executive Director of Quigley House (Clay County, Florida)

SAF-T enables more domestic violence victims to leave abusive households without leaving their pets behind and at risk. It also enables the comfort and reassurance that a family pet can provide to adult and child victims during stressful times.

Emotional Need

The human-animal bond is critical during times of stress and trauma. Studies reported by the American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Animal Hospital Association show the importance of pets in American households, as indicated by the following statistics:

- 62% of US households own at least one pet.
- 94% of dog owners and 89% of cat owners stated the primary benefit of a pet is companionship
- 51% of dog owners and 44% of cat owners buy holiday gifts for their pet
- 25% of dog owners and 12% of cat owners buy birthday gifts for their pet
- 75% of cat owners and 46% of dog owners said their pet sleeps in bed with them
- 40% of dog owners and 37% of cat owners have made provisions for their pet in their will
- In the event of a disaster, 73% of dog owners and 66% of cat owners will take their pet with them. (American Pet Products Association Pet Owner Survey, 2009-10)

The bond between animal and human begins very early in life. Animal images are printed on the bedroom walls, clothing, toys and books of babies and infants. Childhood entertainment and education portray pets and animals as friends, such as Big Bird, Blue's Clues, Clifford The Big Red Dog, Curious George, Garfield, and pet action heroes such as Lassie, Benji and Underdog. As part of healthy growth and development, bonding with animals and pets teaches children empathy and compassion for other living creatures early in life. Breaking this bond can cause serious emotional difficulties for children and adults, particularly during a time of crisis (Jalongo, 2004; Melson, 2001).

Studies have shown that there are significant similarities between the emotional closeness shared between people and their pets and that shared by people and their closest family members. In one study, 95% of those surveyed felt closer to their dog than to other family members (Pew Research Center, 2006). Another study found that children are more likely to have pets than they are to have siblings or fathers (Melson, 2001).

These studies begin to explain why people who are bonded to their companion animals may choose to remain in crisis situations or violent homes in order to keep their pets safe, or why victims delay leaving violent homes until they can take their pets with them.

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A 1997 survey of five Utah crisis shelters revealed that abused women will hesitate to leave their pets behind in violent homes (Ascione, 1997). The study showed that 25 percent of the women seeking shelter had chosen not to leave their abusive homes because they were concerned about leaving their pets behind. Other studies consistently report that as many as 48 percent of domestic violence victims delay leaving abusive relationships in part due to concern for their pets' welfare (Ascione, 2007).

Other studies show that pets support the physical and mental health of individuals, particularly during stressful times. Pets provide people with cardiovascular and other health benefits, such as: (1) lowering blood pressure, triglycerides and cholesterol; (2) achieving a higher survival rate after myocardial infarction, with pet owners 8.6 times more likely to be alive one year after the heart attack; (3) lowering stress; (4) improving weight control; (5) experiencing fewer minor health problems; (6) making fewer visits to a doctor; and (7) requiring less medication.

The benefits to mental health have been addressed in relation to childhood development and elderly citizens. For children, studies have shown that pets: (1) benefit childhood development by providing a sense of security and self-esteem to children; (2) allow children to develop trust due to constancy, security, reliability, love and affection; (3) facilitate play, exploration and independence; (4) promote responsibility and nurturing; (5) provide social and emotional support; and (6) provide a positive impact on the lonely, emotionally or physically impaired, and delinquent. For elderly citizens, studies have shown that pets fill a void for lost relationships and can transcend sensory deficits, mental changes and mobility restrictions that can impede human-human relationships (Barker, 1999).

A study in 2002 found that, during stressful situations, some people benefit more from a pet's companionship than from a human friend or a spouse. In the study, researchers documented that people see their pets as important sources of non-judgmental social support and significantly helpful in alleviating stress (Allen, Blascovich, & Mendes, 2002).

Local Need

Each shelter should assess whether allowing pets on-site would be beneficial to its residents and would assist victims in leaving abusive homes. Shelter staff should ask residents if they would have left their abusive homes sooner if they could bring their pets with them. In addition, shelter staff should ask shelter and emergency hotline staff, local law enforcement, animal welfare officers, and prosecuting attorneys whether they encounter women who wish to leave abusive homes but choose not to due to lack of safe placement for pets. These inquiries will help determine the need in the community and how frequently animals will require housing at the shelter. All agency protocols should include questions about pets in the home to assist with safety planning.

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SAF-T Housing Models

"In the over two years since starting this program [in Summer 2009], we have not had a single negative interaction with a pet." – Darryl Evey, High Desert Domestic Violence Program (Victorville, California)

Once you have acknowledged the need in your community to help families with pets, you should assess the appropriate housing system for your shelter. The costs of implementing and sustaining SAF-T will depend on how you accommodate the pets. We recommend three methods for housing pets on-site:

Option 1: Housing inside the Resident's Room

Allow residents to house pets within their rooms. Shelters currently allowing pets in the rooms primarily allow smaller and/or non-allergenic pets inside the rooms. Designating certain rooms as "pet friendly" or "no pets" will help with allergy concerns. Residents should be responsible for their own pets' care and keep their pet inside the room (unless taking the dog out for a walk). Each resident must agree to not let their pets roam free or disturb other residents and/or pets. Each pet in this situation must be in a carrier or on a leash when it is escorted in and out of the residential room. This option may be particularly well-suited for birds, fish, small "pocket pets" (hamsters, rabbits, gerbils, guinea pigs, etc.) and cats (depending on allergies) that do not need to leave the immediate area. This option can be used in combination with Options 2 or 3, for on-site housing of larger pets, or it can be used separately if larger pets will be housed off-site in a local animal protection organization.

High Desert Domestic Violence Program (Victorville, California)

HDDVP has had a successful on-site pet housing program since Summer 2009 because pets are in the rooms with their families. The primary expense for establishing their program was building a dog run on the side of the shelter with dog doors that connect to the pet-friendly rooms. The cost was approximately $4,000 for an outdoor concrete floor, chain link fencing on all sides and the top, and two lockable dog doors.

Darryl Evey explains, "The dog run is attached to the house with lockable dog doors into two bedrooms. There is also a gate in the middle of it. This allows for pets to be in two different rooms to be together if they want, or be separated if necessary. The dog run also opens to the back yard, which is also fenced, to get out and play when supervised. The pets and families really enjoy being able to sleep together. We normally have a pet or two. At one time, we had two dogs and three cats from three different families. They all got along fine with no problems. The children really enjoy having the pets around and the pets get lots of attention. Our shelter has an addition built on with these two bedrooms connected by a hallway to the rest of the house. The two pet friendly rooms and the attached hallway are the only parts of the shelter where the pets can go. This way, if a client is allergic to animals, they do not have to ever interact with them. By keeping the pets out of the rest of the house, if a new client

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with allergies enters the shelter, we do not have to do any additional cleaning. During the two years that we have accepted pets, we have helped over 500 people and not one person has had allergies and not one person has had any complaints. We have had a minimum of one pet almost continuously for the entire time. We are very excited about this program. We try to do anything we can to increase the comfort level of families already in a difficult situation."

High Desert Domestic Violence Program

The LeeShore Center (Kenai, Alaska)
The LeeShore Center shelter started housing pets on-site in 1985. Smaller pets stay indoors, and larger pets (when weather is appropriate) stay in the outdoor kennels.

The LeeShore Center

Arising Hope (Eastlake, Colorado)
Arising Hope has housed pets since early 2008. Angela McMahan explains that their program has been successful because "pets and people live side-by-side. The people help the pets and the pets help the people." Arising Hope houses up to 25 pets annually and doing so within the rooms of residents has not been an issue.

Women's Center of Mid-Minnesota (Brainerd, Minnesota)
The Women's Center opened their doors to animals in 1978 and they are the first-known domestic violence shelter to do so. Pets are housed in the individual resident rooms, but some rooms are designed as "pet-free" rooms to avoid issues with allergies. Although they have not had issues related to allergies or other residents being concerned about pets on-site, there was a situation late 2011 where a child had severe dog allergies and the dog of a resident was simply housed in a different part of the shelter to resolve the issue. This shelter, too, has a therapy dog available to help families through their transition to safe living.

> The most successful element of our pet program is that women and children are allowed to bring their animals and be reassured that their pets will not be victims of violence. They do not have to leave their animals behind and are able to have their animals, who are members of their families. The children are very comforted away from the familiarity of the homes they have left by having their pets with them."
>
> – Tonya Heldt – Executive Director, Women's Center of Mid-Minnesota

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Family Renewal Shelter (Tacoma, Washington)

The Family Renewal Shelter began housing pets on-site in 1996 and has done so within the resident's rooms as well as in an outdoor kennel. They also have two "K9 First Response Therapy Dogs" on-site to assist families with their transition out of abusive situations, including accompanying shelter staff at night to pick up a family in need when no police escort is available or wanted by the family. The shelter also has a cat, rabbits and 11 laying hens as part of their therapy animal program for families.

Option 2: Housing in an Indoor Kennel

Locate a separate room within the shelter that can safely house the animals in separate cages or crates, or turn a basement into a kennel. This indoor kennel option reduces potential issues with allergies and noise. Depending on the size of the shelter, the separate room should be placed far from resident rooms to reduce noise and allergy concerns. When housing pets confined together in a separate room, each pet must be contained in its own cage or crate unless they are from the same home. This is especially true if you are housing unrelated pets from different families. To avoid the possible transmission of disease and to avoid pets who may not get along, it is important to not mingle the pets. Ideally, there should be a separate room or partition to keep dogs and cats from different homes out of sight of each other. Allow for sufficient space in the room to accommodate three to four visitors, a table on which a veterinarian can examine an animal outside of the cage/crate, and storage cabinets for storing cleaning and medical supplies, food, bowls and litter. Your shelter should establish times and frequency that pets are removed from their crates for exercise and waste elimination.

Shelter for Abused Women & Children (Naples, Florida)

The Naples shelter's on-site kennel is in a room on the opposite side of the large shelter and away from any of the individual residential rooms; yet the kennel can be accessed by families with pets. The kennel room has its own air ventilation and filtration system to avoid allergy contamination outside of the room. It houses up to six animals and has a door to an outside area for a dog run. The shelter placed six extra-large plastic dog crates in its room by placing three crates side by side on the ground and stacking a second row of three crates on top of them. The crates were large enough to hold any pet up to approximately 50 pounds. Marci Sanders, Director of Operations shares, "Having a kennel for the pets of the women and children who come to The Shelter for safety is one of the most humane, thoughtful, and appreciated services we provide. Rather than disconnecting them totally from everything they know, they can cuddle and play with their pets for security and pure joy."

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Families First (Whiteville, North Carolina)

In addition to one dog kennel safely tucked into the backyard, Families First also has an indoor kennel. Created in March 2010, the indoor kennel is equipped to house a variety of family pets. The office staff at Families First even enjoys the company of their office cat, Sebastian.

Families First Indoor Kennel

Sebastian

Option 3: Housing in an Outdoor Kennel

Provide secure and sheltered housing directly on the shelter property. Back yard locations are the most popular for this option. Options can include: (1) an outdoor kennel which is comprised of building chain-link kennels with sheltering (roof and side-wall protection); (2) A small outdoor building or shed kennel on the shelter property; or (3) renovating a garage.

Care must be taken to provide sight barriers between the animals, unless they are from the same home. The building kennel must have adequate heating, cooling and ventilation, as well as facilities for daily cleaning and sanitation of the kennels by the residents or, in their absence, assigned staff or volunteers. Also consider having an outdoor dog run area that is fenced in for safety of the dogs and other residents. Consult with your local animal protection organization and state regulatory agency to ensure that each kennel is of sufficient height, width and length. Floors must be of concrete or dirt. A roof should also be included to prevent pets from escaping or being stolen, and to protect pets from the weather. Each kennel and building should have a secure lock to avoid theft or tampering with the animals. For dogs in outdoor kennels, each individual kennel should include a separate doghouse, airline crate or other enclosed area that the pet can enter for added security and shelter. For indoor kennels, providing sight/sound barriers between pets is important to reduce stress. For cats and other small pets, these pets should not be housed in an outdoor open -air kennel but would do well in an outdoor building. Whether in a building or outdoor kennel, heating and cooling dog mats, which can be purchased in many pet stores and on the Internet, also should be considered.

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Shelter housing may incorporate one or a combination of the three options depending on space allocated and needs from clients. Some larger shelters have gone as far as building a stand-alone animal shelter building on site. The Shade Tree in Las Vegas, Nevada built Noah's House in 2006.

The Shade Tree—Noah's House

The following section features some of the shelters who are utilizing Option 3 to provide on-site care for pets.

Safe and Fear-Free Environment shelter (Dillingham, Alaska)

SAFE launched their SAF-T program in October 2010. They have a successful program by housing some pets inside the rooms with their family while also having an outdoor dog kennel available.

SAFE shelter

Mt. Graham Safe House (Safford, Arizona)

Mt. Graham Safe House built an outdoor kennel that is completely enclosed and tucked up against the main shelter building. Launched in December 2009, the outdoor kennel can house any family pet safely and securely from the elements.

Mt. Graham Safe House

Mt. Graham Safe House

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Mountain Peace Shelter (Bailey, Colorado)

Mountain Peace began housing pets on-site in 2006. They have a Cat Cabin and four large dog runs in a heated garage, as well as a dog play area.

Cat Cabin

Dog Kennels

Quigley House (Clay County, Florida)

Quigley House opened its doors to pets in 2007. They have a Cat Room and a sheltered dog run. In the first four years, they housed 18 dogs, 10 cats and 2 birds. Executive Director Sharon Youngerman shared that while there is not a lot of usage of their pet facilities, "it is vitally necessary when needed."

Outdoor Dog Play Area

Cat Room

Dog Kennels

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"We had a woman in the shelter who had three dogs. She had been staying with an abuser for several years and said that the only thing that kept her waking up every morning was her three smallish dogs. She wouldn't leave him because she was afraid of what he would do to her dogs. She was overjoyed and able to leave her abuser when she found she could take her dogs with her."

— Sharon Youngerman, Executive Director of Quigley House (Clay County, Florida)

Faith House

Faith House (Lafayette, Louisiana)
Faith House has a simple outdoor housing method for dogs. They have three outdoor kennels available.

Calcasieu Women's Shelter (Lake Charles, Louisiana)
Calcasieu Women's Shelter has two outdoor kennels available for dogs.

Calcasieu Women's Shelter

LACASA (Howell, Michigan)
LACASA built an animal shelter to connect with their shelter in 2003. There is a large kennel that connects to a dog run, while cats and smaller pets are housed in the basement.

LACASA

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My Sister's Place (Newport, Oregon)
Implemented in August 2010, My Sister's Place built a small animal house next to their shelter. It is named Lily's Pad after a donor's dog. Lily's Pad has four rooms, a dog washing area, and a laundry area.

My Sister's Place—Lily's Pad

My Sister's Place—Lily's Pad

Monika's House (Washington County, Oregon)
Monika's House offers a simplistic dog kennel in their backyard.

Monika's House

AWARE (Hermitage, Pennsylvania)
AWARE built their outdoor kennel in April 2011 and allows smaller pets to reside in crates in their walk-out basement.

AWARE, Inc.

AWARE, Inc.

"The most successful element of our on-site pet program is that we are now able to house victims and their pets. Before our program we had to tell victims that they could not bring their animals and therefore they would choose not to come into our shelter. Through this program we have eliminated one more barrier for victims to escape domestic violence." — Jackie Fazio (AWARE, Inc., Hermitage, PA)

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Meg's Place (Greenwood, South Carolina)
Meg's Place created an outdoor building that can house two pets at a time. It has a heating element and an exhaust fan for ventilation. The opened their doors to pets in October 2009.

Meg's Place

Meg's Place ventilation system

Meg's Place heating element

Midcoast Family Shelter (Victoria, Texas)
Midcoast is scheduled to open their doors to pets in February 2012. The newly-built shelter consists of two separate buildings, one of which contains the pet housing.

Midcoast Shelter—animal facility

Midcoast shelter—dog runs being built

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Doorways for Women & Children (Arlington, Virginia)

Doorways opened their backyard kennel in May 2009. Their facility houses two animals (or two families of animals) in separate cages and one cage has a door to a secured open-air kennel.

Doorways shelter

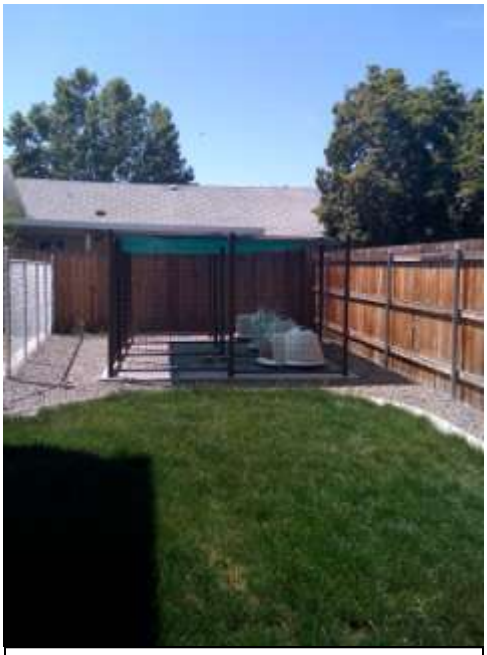
Doorways shelter

Doorways shelter

Domestic Violence Services of Benton & Franklin Counties (Kennewick, Washington)

Pet accommodations include an outdoor kennel with three dog units, along with a dog exercise area. Smaller pets go inside the room with the families and pets stay in carriers.

Kennewick shelter



Kennewick shelter

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Community Safety Network (Jackson, Wyoming)

The outdoor kennel was built in less than two months and opened in October 2009.

Community Safety Network

Community Safety Network

Regardless of the type of on-site program instituted, shelters should require residents to provide all care for their own pets, including feeding, exercise, cleaning, allocation of medications and TLC. An area where food and water bowls and crates may be washed, and where pets may be groomed, should also be available. Each program should also provide a safe path to walk a dog or an outdoor "run" area that allows for dogs to urinate and defecate in a specified area to avoid complications with animal waste. Additionally, this area can be covered with pebble-like material that can be sanitized using a bleach solution.

Locations: Emergency, Long-term and Transitional Housing

The life-saving mission of SAF-T is to allow families with pets to safely flee their abusive environment and to remain safe in the long term. Therefore, if your shelter has different programs to accommodate the housing of your clients, it is important to incorporate SAF-T throughout the process. For example, if you have an emergency shelter that can house a family with pets for only a few days, but then long-term or transitional sheltering will not accept the pets, the family will be in the position of potentially returning to the abusive home in order to keep their pet. The Mid-Minnesota Women's Center in Brainerd, Minnesota has found this to be their most difficult struggle. Tonya Heldt shares, "It's difficult for women to turn down housing because most landlords or housing programs will not allow pets." The High Desert Domestic Violence Program in Victorville, California and AWARE, Inc. in Hermitage, Pennsylvania struggle with the same issue. Jackie Fazio with AWARE explains, "The only issue that we have encountered thus far is that we have a transitional housing program that is run by HUD and pets are not allowed to live in those apartments. One of our client's came into our shelter with her cat and then she went into the transitional housing program. The client had to find somewhere for her cat to go."

The on-site SAF-T pet housing system can be implemented in temporary emergency shelters, long-term shelters, or in transitional housing. It is essential that your shelter consider all housing phases for families with

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pets and not create a situation several weeks or months into the safety plan where the family pet is no longer allowed accommodations. These guidelines can also be implemented at shelters where space is rented. The Domestic Violence Advocacy Center in Mt. Holly, New Jersey has implemented SAF-T in their rental facility. It is important to discuss on-site pet housing with the landlord and explain that it is a barrier to safety to not include pets in housing plans. Providing "pet letters of reference" that the client and pet(s) are good tenants will help with transitional housing and other landlord situations. And be sure to ask the landlord to incorporate into the lease that family pets are welcome on-site.

Successful SAF-T Shelters and Their Stories

When this concept of on-site housing of pets was first launched nationally in February 2008, we were only aware of four shelters that housed pets on-site. More shelters implement this program each year. A listing of current SAF-T shelters can be found at www.animalsandfamilies.net. The remainder of this manual details the successful stories and pieces of advice from some of the current SAF-T shelters.

As of December 2011, there are 65 SAF-T shelters covering 29 states and 5 more in-progress of implementing the program.

If you are interested in starting SAF-T at your shelter, contact Allie Phillips at allie@alliephillips.com to receive free guidance and technical assistance and visit www.animalsandfamilies.net for more information.

Getting Started

The goal of encouraging SAF-T across the country is to enhance the safety of as many victims, children and pets as possible by helping them more easily leave abusive homes. Some shelters are reluctant to allow on-site housing of pets because they fear the process is complicated and costly. Acknowledging that shelter resources are often strained, this manual is intended to alleviate that fear and demonstrate the simplicity of establishing SAF-T.

Work Together

When establishing SAF-T, it is important to bring other professionals together to support your program. As discussed below, it is essential to partner with a local animal protection organization, as well as a veterinarian. But it is also important to seek the support of those that you work with on a daily basis: the prosecuting attorney, judges, domestic violence advocates, court personnel, law enforcement, and others who are involved in the safety of families fleeing abusive homes.

Your shelter should also provide information regarding the existence of SAF-T in a timely manner to local law enforcement officers, child protection investigators, animal welfare investigators, health care providers (medical and psychological), counseling centers and hotlines, prosecuting attorneys and veterinarians. This will allow for greater dissemination of information about your program throughout the community and will allow victims to make informed decisions regarding leaving abusive homes if they know their pets will be safely accommodated at your shelter.

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Identify a SAF-T Director

Each SAF-T shelter should have one person in charge of overseeing its operation (with delegation of authority, as necessary) to ensure that pet care is maintained on weekends, at night, during holidays and when the pets' owners are not on-site. The SAF-T Director should keep an inventory of incoming and outgoing pets, manage the kennel or location where pets are housed, ensure that veterinary care is provided when needed, and maintain appropriate supplies and medications for the pets.

The SAF-T Director should prepare a short list of policies and expectations for each resident who enters the shelter with a pet. The list of rules can be taken from the information contained in this manual, including the Procedures for Residents With Pets, located in the Forms section.

Three Essential Policies

There are three key components to successfully launching and sustaining a SAF-T program: (1) partnering with an animal protection organization; (2) having the services of a veterinarian; and (3) only allowing the family and designated shelter staff to interact with each pet. By following these three rules, in particular, it may assist your shelter in expanding insurance coverage for your SAF-T program, as well as insure that staff, residents and pets remain safe.

Partner with an Animal Protection Organization

The purpose of SAF-T is to house family pets on-site at your shelter in order to maintain the human-animal bond during a time of crisis. However, it is important to partner with a local animal protection organization such as a shelter or animal foster care organization. This partner can provide guidance on animal housing issues, local regulations and ordinances impacting housing animals, and can assist when difficult animal issues arise. Your animal protection organization partner may also need to house pets if certain situations arise. It is important to find a partner organization that is in a position to house pet(s) should a long-term situation arise with the family. Since animal protection organizations may have no vacancies during certain times of the year, it is advisable to have a MOU with two or more animal protection organizations that can provide housing.

The High Desert Domestic Violence Program in Victorville, California partners with several local animal protection organizations. Darryl Evey explains, "They invite us to their events to hand out flyers. Two organizations have put on fundraisers for us. A veterinarian has offered to proved free services as long as we don't take advantage of them. Overall, this has proven to be a good avenue for building better relationships and good will in the community."

Excess Animals

There may be times when a resident has more pets than can be safely housed on-site, or your shelter is at maximum pet capacity and cannot accommodate new arrivals. In these situations, it is best to work with the resident to determine which pets would do best in off-site housing with your animal protection organization or in foster care, and which pets need to stay on-site with the resident due to fright or attachment issues.

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Noisy Animals

If an animal becomes too vocal and disruptive through excessive barking, meowing, chirping, etc., and the family is unable to calm the pet, you should contact your animal protection organization to provide temporary housing for the pet.

Large/Exotic Animals

As discussed under *Types of Pets*, you should determine the maximum size animal that can be accommodated on-site, as well as which species you will allow. Your SAF-T program may be unable to properly house and care for exotic pets, such as reptiles and snakes, or large animals, such as goats, pigs and horses. For animals that are not suitable for housing on-site, make sure you have alternative housing predetermined.

Aggressive or Stressed Animals

If an animal that is aggressive or stressed (due to the change in environment or possible abuse) arrives at your shelter, you should ask your partner animal protection organization to assist with housing and care while the animal transitions out of the abusive environment. Shelter and rescue group personnel are trained to effectively handle and work with these pets to ensure their comfort. Similarly, long-term confinement in small quarters can induce stress in pets, and these personnel may recommend behavior counselors who can assist in addressing the problem.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) is recommended when establishing a relationship with an animal protection organization to house large pets, exotic animals or excess pets that cannot be housed on-site. For a sample MOU, please see the Forms section.

Identify a Veterinarian

Veterinary Services

Your shelter should establish a relationship with a licensed veterinarian to help establish and maintain the program, to serve as a resource, and to provide routine and emergency medical care to any pets housed on-site. When examinations or treatments are needed, allow the veterinarian to visit your shelter and provide treatment on-site, or make arrangements to transport pets to the veterinarian's office. The veterinarian must be apprised not only of the pets' medical conditions and histories, but also of the need to keep your shelter's location and the names of its residents confidential.

The reasons for having a veterinarian available include: (1) to provide an initial examination of each pet to determine whether the animal has been abused or neglected (even if the injuries are in the healing process); (2) to provide general medical care to the pets, including updating vaccinations, providing flea/parasite treatments and spaying/neutering; (3) to provide emergency care to pets suffering from illness or injury that may require surgery or other immediate attention; and (4) to provide an expert opinion in court should the need arise to verify animal cruelty.

When conducting outreach to veterinarians in your community, first attempt to locate a veterinarian who will provide on-site pro-bono services to the pets. This may include a basic physical examination,

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parasite treatment, vaccinations, grooming, nail clippings, and simple medications. For more extensive care requiring the pet to be treated at the veterinary clinic, ask the veterinarian if you can receive a discount for the services since your clients with pets may not have funds to pay for services. These services may include repairing injuries, treating illnesses, x-rays, and spay/neuter services. Ask the veterinarian to assist your program as a way of giving back to the community and keeping pets safe and healthy. Providing the veterinarian a copy of this manual will help educate him or her regarding the importance of SAF-T in saving lives.

The Shelter for Abused Women and Children in Naples, Florida located a volunteer veterinarian through a fundraising event. The veterinarian is on call to visit the shelter if a pet needs immediate care. Otherwise, the veterinarian visits the shelter at least once a week to examine each pet and to provide basic vaccinations. The services provided on-site at the Naples shelter are free of charge, including supplies used (vaccines, medicine, etc.). Those services can include a medical examination, vaccinations, flea/parasite treatment, cleaning and grooming. If a pet needs spaying or neutering, which is highly recommended, it is transported to the veterinarian's office, and the shelter pays a small fee for the procedure. If a pet requires immediate attention for injuries or ill health, it is transported to the veterinarian's office, and the resident is charged a reduced rate for the services. The Naples shelter pays for these additional expenses, on behalf of the shelter resident, through money donated or raised specifically to support its program of housing animals.

Veterinary Records

Your shelter's SAF-T program should request that each resident provide a current set of veterinary records for each pet prior to or shortly after moving in, to verify the health and vaccinations of all pets. If the resident is unable to provide veterinary records, ask permission to obtain the records from the veterinarian once the family has entered your shelter. If veterinary records are not available, ask your client to obtain a veterinary examination prior to entering the shelter or haveg your SAF-T veterinarian provide a basic examination, vaccinations and parasite treatment for each pet. This is important not only for the well-being of the pet, but having veterinary records listing your client as the caretaker and paying for the services can be beneficial if a custody dispute arises over the animal.

If an animal enters your shelter, you should have a policy in place as to whether any veterinary records (past and present) should be provided to law enforcement investigators or the prosecutor's office. This may assist in proving the evidence in cases where animal cruelty charges are being considered against the abusive person. Your shelter should decide if this protocol is in the best interest of the families and in compliance with state laws and confidentiality agreements with the residents and balance it against holding the batterer responsible for harming a pet. It is the recommendation of SAF-T that animal cruelty incidents be reported to law enforcement and be presented to the prosecutor for charges. Ignoring animal cruelty, regardless of the reasons, will create a danger for the next family with pets that the abuser targets.

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Interacting with Pet Residents

Some shelter staff and other residents may be excited to hear that a family has arrived with cat, dog or other family pet(s). It is important to keep family pets solely within the care of their family and/or the SAF-T Director and designated staff. Although a pet may appear calm on the exterior, a change in environment can be stressful. If the pet has been abused or neglected, this could also impact its behavior in a new environment. For the well being of the pet, as well as for the safety of the family, shelter staff and shelter residents, it is important for pets to not free-roam or interact unsupervised with others. Because some families may not understand their pet's behavior or how the pet will react to meeting new people, the best practice is to minimize outside interaction with the pet. This rule may be important when seeking insurance coverage for housing pets on-site.

Policies and Procedures

Based on the uniqueness of your shelter and the needs of the residents entering the shelter, preparing your own policies and procedures is recommended for a smoothly operating SAF-T program. This manual will help you prepare simple, effective procedures. Your shelter should establish a policy of formally welcoming pets to the facility when space is available, but retaining the right to deny pets, when necessary, due to overcrowded conditions or if the animal's condition, temperament, behavior or other factors would compromise the health, safety or well-being of the residents or other animals. The following procedures address key issues related to housing pets:

Types of Pets

Each SAF-T program should decide what types, sizes and number of pets can be accommodated safely on-site, since that decision will determine the types of accommodations required. Existing SAF-T programs are housing various animals. Most house traditional pets, such as cats and dogs, but some are housing reptiles, fish, hamsters and gerbils and finding off-site placement for livestock and horses. The Women's Center of Mid-Minnesota in Brainerd will house all types of animals on-site but is not equipped for farm animals. The Families First shelter in Whiteville, North Carolina and Mt. Graham Safe House in Safford, Arizona can house all indoor family pets, including ferrets, fish, and reptiles.

For animals that cannot be accommodated in the on-site SAF-T program, your shelter should establish a relationship with a local animal protection organization to provide temporary housing. Such agencies need to be prepared for housing scenarios that could last many months, depending on how long it takes to place the pet(s)' owner in permanent or long-term housing that can accept pets. A sample MOU is located in the Forms section of this manual to assist in establishing an off-site housing agreement. Other options include creating or finding a pet foster care program or partnering with farms.

To date, the Shelter for Abused Women and Children in Naples, Florida has accepted all animals that arrive, including large dogs, cats, rabbits, birds and reptiles. If a pet's care requirements exceed the shelter staff's abilities, or if the pet is aggressive or frightened, the local animal protection organization is on standby to accept the animal and provide care. Marci Sanders shared, "At one time in 2011, we had 16 pets in our kennel! Most of them were cats; but we also had two turtles and a lizard. We try to keep as many of them as possible outside,

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depending on the weather and their personality, since the indoor crates are small and confining." The Doorways for Women and Families shelter has a MOU with the Animal Welfare League of Arlington to provide housing, if space is available, for any pets that cannot be accommodated at the shelter.

If you are housing horses or livestock and are not equipped to house those animals on-site, it is wise to coordinate with organizations or farms that are in a position to house these animals safely for the duration of the family's stay at your shelter. The Family Safety Network in Driggs, Idaho has an arrangement with a local horse rescue organization to assist when a family is seeking shelter with horses. And Little Grass Ranch shelter in Comfort, Texas is able to house horses and livestock on its property.

Abused, Aggressive or Stressed Pets

Any pet arriving at a shelter may be under stress from living in an abusive home. Moving the pet out of its abusive environment is certainly beneficial for the pet's wellbeing, but it may cause the animal some initial stress. In addition, some pets may be conditioned to behave more aggressively based on an abusive partner's cruel treatment or the home environment. When taking in pets, your shelter should ask the residents to provide detailed information regarding all of their pets, including behavior, temperament and how the pets may react to being at the shelter. (See the SAF-T Intake Form in the *Forms Section*). This information will be helpful in determining whether a pet will be better cared for at a partner animal protection organization where the staff is trained to handle stressed and/or aggressive pets and can work to calm the pet.

If a pet is checked into SAF-T and subsequently is determined to be too stressed or upset for safe handling, then a transfer to a partner animal protection organization may be in the best interests of the pet. At no time should a staff member attempt to calm a stressed pet unless the staff member is trained in animal handling and/or attempts this through a kennel or cage door that provides protection from bites and scratches. When in doubt, contact the resident owner of the pet and your partner animal protection organization for assistance.

Caring for the Pets

It is important that residents provide the day-to-day care for their own pets. They know their pets and can provide greater comfort and stability to confused or stressed pets during the transition to a new home. Whether the pets are housed inside or outside the shelter, each resident should be given guidelines on what is expected of them in order for their pets to remain on-site. These guidelines and responsibilities should include: providing food and water, cleaning the cage or kennel daily, providing any medication, cleaning the litter box daily, walking the dog in a safe area designated by shelter staff and cleaning up after it, and notifying shelter staff if a pet needs veterinary care. These procedures should be provided and agreed to by each resident upon intake with the understanding that it is a privilege for them to have their pet with them on-site. A sample Procedure for Residents With Pets is provided in the Forms section. In addition, the Appendix contains Animal Handling and Safety Tips for shelter staff and residents.

> "Maintaining the kennel is simple since the floor and walls can be hosed down. The crates are taken outside and pressure washed every couple months. The outside grassy areas are mowed and trimmed regularly. The owners are responsible for picking up after their pets, as well as feeding and walking them."
> – Marci Sanders, Shelter for Abused Women & Children (Naples, Florida)

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Noise

When housing pets on-site at a shelter, whether inside or outside, there are bound to be instances of barking, meowing, chirping or other natural noises. If pets stay in their families' room (Option 1), advise the families to do their best to calm their pets and reduce noise. If the pets are kept in a separate room within the shelter (Option 2), choosing a room that is the farthest away from the sleeping quarters will help reduce noise. And for pets housed outdoors (Option 3), placing the outdoor kennels or shed in a location farthest away from the residences on the property will help in reducing noise from stressed pets. However, if an animal becomes too vocal and disruptive to other residents, and the family is unable to calm the pet, it is recommended that your shelter contact its partner animal protection organization to provide housing for the pet, or contact your veterinarian for advice.

It may be necessary to discuss SAF-T with neighbors who may be adversely affected by animal noises (and odors and waste), and with municipal zoning officials to determine whether special kennel permits are required. If you are a confidential shelter in a residential neighborhood and neighbors are unaware of your facility, discuss internally how to approach neighbors about pets on-site without compromising the confidential nature of your location.

Allergies/Odors

Pet-related allergies are common, and you should anticipate that some residents may have allergies to a variety of pets. Pet-related odors may also cause issues with some staff and residents. The shelter intake form should ask every resident to identify any pet allergies they have. This may help with placement of pet-allergy residents in rooms farthest away from rooms with pets. Housing Option 3 is the best ways to avoid allergy issues. If housing pets in a separate room inside the shelter (Option 2), having a separate heating/cooling/ventilation system so that pet hair and dander do not enter the main residential ventilation system is helpful. If housing pets in the residents' room (Option 1), hard floor surfaces (hardwood, vinyl, tile) and/or non-centralized heating/cooling will help in containing pet-allergens and allow for easier clean up. The designation of "pet friendly" or "no pet" rooms will also help. Also consider using an air purifier in these rooms.

The High Desert Domestic Violence Program in Victorville, California installed rubberized wood-type flooring which is waterproof and added no additional expense from traditional flooring. Whereas the Mid-Minnesota Women's Center in Brainerd, Minnesota conducts a thorough shampooing of carpet in the "pet-friendly" rooms in between residents to avoid allergy concerns.

> "Depending on the type and size of the pet, we anticipate that the woman bringing in their animal(s) will care from them in a manner that is respectful to the animal and to the other residents in the shelter. They sign a pet contract to make sure they understand they are responsible for the care of their pet which includes cleaning up after the pet in case of accidents or sickness, and upon their departure. We have had little issue with litter box odor as we have pretty good staff who is encouraging of residents to make sure the rooms stay clean and fresh. We haven't had too many negative issues surrounding our pet policy and if we have, they have been minor incidents that we have been able to remedy as quickly as possible. I think as far as damage due to animals or lingering pet odors, we have been fortunate to get those issues resolved immediately which has kept the problems to a minimal." - Tonya Heldt, Mid-Minnesota Women's Center (Brainerd, Minnesota)

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Fear of Animals

Some staff or residents may be fearful around certain animals and this fear should be respected. If following these guidelines, only the pets' family and SAF-T Director will come in to contact with the pet, thus alleviating fear of other staff or residents about encountering the pet.

Pet Grief Counseling

Shelter staff may encounter residents who have witnessed animals being abused, tortured or killed by an abusive partner or other party. Witnessing such acts against helpless animals can cause significant trauma and psychological damage to both adults and children. Even residents who were able to rescue their pets from abusive homes may have residual emotional trauma from having witnessed past abuse. This is especially true for children. With mounting research confirming that witnessing animal abuse can lead to becoming an offender, it is important to offer appropriate counseling for families and children. In addition, we recommend that a trained pet bereavement counselor be available to provide support for families as necessary. Ask your partner animal organization for assistance in locating a pet bereavement counselor. Any counseling services provided to residents should incorporate sensitivity to the human-animal bond.

Safety and Security

Your shelter should take into consideration the safety of its residents who may have to walk, exercise or otherwise leave the property with their pets. Safety plans and protocols should be implemented to make sure that all shelter staff, residents and pets are safe during those times. This is especially important for facilities located in urban areas where an on-site yard may not be available for a dog to receive exercise. Your shelter also should establish security protocols to limit access to the on-site animal room or animal-sheltering facility to only those residents who have pets there. Placing a padlock on the door to an outside kennel, on the fenced-in dog play area, and even adding security cameras will provide you the extra peace of mind that an intruder or abuser will not find their way onto your property and harm the animals in your care.

Materials and Supplies

Regardless of which option you choose for housing the pets, the following supplies should be kept in stock for the most common pet residents (cats and dogs):

* Dry and canned dog and puppy food
* Kitten and puppy formula
* Formula bottles
* Metal food and water bowls
* Collars and leashes
* Chew toys
* Dry and canned cat and kitten food
* Cat litter
* Litter boxes and scoopers
* Cat toys
* ID tags
* Towels and blankets for pets to lay on
* Cleaning solution for the cages, crates or kennels. Trifectant or a 1/32 ratio of bleach and water should be used to clean pet areas. Please check with your local veterinarian or animal protection organization on their recommendation for safe cleaning solutions.
* Medical supplies (as recommended by a veterinarian) such as flea and parasite medicine and grooming products.

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Depending on your chosen Housing Option, you may need to obtain these additional start-up supplies:

- Crates
- Transportation carriers
- Bulk food containers (food should be stored in sealed, dry containers or on elevated pallets to prevent infestation by vermin)

Seek to obtain these items through donations from community residents, your partner animal protection organization, your partner veterinarian, and pet stores. Be sure to add pet-related items to your shelters wish list so that people know what items to donate. Also check out Rescue Bank at http://rescuebank.org/ that may be able to help provide pet food to your program. See the Fundraising section of this manual for additional information.

Abandoned Animals

There may be situations where a resident with a pet is unable to take their pet with them when leaving the shelter. The resident may be arrested, hospitalized, enter transitional housing that prohibits pets, or may simply leave and abandon their pet. Each state has animal abandonment laws and you should consult with your partner animal protection organization on your governing law. However, you can avoid this issue by requiring each resident sign and understand the SAF-T Agreement Between Resident and Shelter (found in the Forms section). This form will allow you to legally obtain ownership of the pet(s) should the resident abandon or be in a position where s/he cannot care for their pet(s). This will allow you and/or your partner animal protection organization to place the pet(s) for adoption, rescue or other disposition.

The Safe and Fear-Free Environment Shelter in Dillingham, Alaska encountered a situation where a woman and her Siamese cat were on-site residents. During her stay, the woman was arrested on an outstanding warrant. The shelter made an agreement with the woman that they would continue to care for her cat, knowing that the situation would not be long term and likely only a few weeks or months. Eventually, the woman returned to the shelter and was reunited with her cat.

Leaving the Shelter

When a resident's permitted stay at your shelter has ended, or when the resident is ready to leave, the goal is to have the resident find long-term, safe housing. Since some shelters provide long-term or transitional housing assistance, your shelter should also identify available pet-friendly housing so that outgoing residents can continue to be with and care for their pets. Developing a list of potential pet-friendly housing options in the community is an excellent partnering opportunity for shelters and animal protection organizations. Or check out http://www.myapartmentmap.com/pet_friendly/.

However, situations arise where a resident returns to an abusive partner. Given that children and pets may be returned to an environment known to be abusive, your shelter should follow existing protocols in this regard. Some protocols or state laws may call for notifying child protective services that a child may be returning to a dangerous home. If that is the case, then local animal protection agencies should be notified if a pet is being returned to an abusive home. An option to consider is asking the resident if she will sign over ownership of the pet to your SAF-T program, which then allows you place the pet with your partner animal protection

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organization for placement in a new home. Seek guidance from your animal protection partner in this regard.

One unintended consequence of having pets on-site, and allowing those pets to interact with other residents, is that children of other families may bond to a pet. Darryl Evey with the High Desert Domestic Violence Program in Victorville, California has encountered this issue. “This can bring some tears when it is time for either the child or the pet to leave the shelter.” So keeping pets away from other residents will help to resolve this concern.

Objections From Other Residents or Staff

If a shelter resident or staff objects to having other residents’ pets located on-site, even with the above safeguards in place, inquiring into the reasons for the objection may allow for a discussion to address and ease the concerns. Advising the resident and staff of the importance of keeping pets safe from an abusive partner may provide for education on the co-occurrence of family and animal abuse and gain acceptance by the resident. The discussion may also reveal that the resident or staff had a beloved pet threatened, killed or harmed in the past. Obtaining this information may allow for a referral to appropriate counseling services.
It is important that the SAF-T Director obtain agreement or understanding from all staff about the importance of the program before implementing it.

Foster Care “Safe Haven” Programs

In addition to working with your partner animal organization to help with pet placement when needed, some shelters have created a foster care program where pets go to the home of a staff person or volunteer. For more information on creating a foster care program, contact SAF-T or check out Dr. Frank Ascione’s Safe Haven’s Manual (Ascione, 2000). For a listing of off-site safe havens programs, visit www.safeplaceforpets.org and www.awionline.org/safe-havens.

Pet Safety Planning

Pets are part of the family and therefore can be victims of family violence or caught in the cross fire of abuse. Your shelter’s safety planning resources need to address pets. SAF-T has a Pet Safety Planning Brochure that is available for download at www.animalsandfamilies.net. Please download and repost the brochure on your website as a resource for families with pets as they prepare to leave an abusive home.

If you are in an abusive situation and have pets, please read this to keep you and your pets safe

Sheltering Animals & Families Together™

Did you know that up to 48% of abused women will not leave an abusive situation out of fear of leaving their pet behind? Abusers know that targeting your pet for abuse will keep you silent, compliant and in their control. Before leaving an abusive situation, make sure you have made these arrangements for your pet(s).

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Financial Considerations

Cost of Set Up and Maintenance

> Jo Janssen, Director of Development for the Midcoast Family Shelter in Victoria, Texas explains that their set up had some challenges, yet was worth all of the effort. “Getting this shelter built has been a challenge that has moved past frustrating to infuriating at times, due to contractor/ builder issues, economic climate (the "fall" hit 2 weeks after we announced our Capital Campaign!), and other drama (like the attempted theft of all the copper which left tens of thousands of dollars in damage). Everyone in our community supports us as much as they can. The shelter is anticipated to open February 2012 and I will probably collapse and dissolve into tears of joy and pain mingled together, much as a mother who has just given birth (and I will likely also mutter, "I am never doing that again!"). But for today, every time I feel discouraged or frustrated, I stand in that soon-to-be-born building and remember the pain reflected in the voices of our hotline workers when they tell me about some tragic woman whose situation was critical, but she wouldn't leave because there was no place to take her dog. Or cat. Or both. And I imagine the sounds of purring, I see the wagging tails of happy dogs in the dog-run, and I hear children's voices as they talk to their furry families. And I know we WILL do this, we WILL save lives, and we WILL help heal *all* these victims of abuse, and yes, if we ever have to do it again, I will be on board!”

The cost of establishing your on-site SAF-T shelter will depend on which housing model you adopt. The initial start-up costs will likely be more than the maintenance. Many of the existing shelters indicate that they do not have to take funds from their general operating budget to house pets on-site and are funded by community support.

For Housing Option 1, there is very little, if any, set up cost since the pets are housed in the rooms with their families. Arising Hope in Eastlake, Colorado houses pets within the rooms and there was no cost to establishing their program. However, there are monthly expenses for the care of the pets that can range from $200-500 per month depending on how many pets are being housed and their medical needs. These costs cover pet supplies, veterinary care and are generally on the low end of the range each month.

Expenses for Housing Option 2 can also be minimal depending on how many cages, crates or other housing units you desire in your indoor kennel. This option can be set up with a few hundred dollars. The Shelter for Abused Women and Children in Naples, Florida established an indoor kennel with very little start-up costs. Marci Sanders, the director of the shelter, estimates that the total cost of housing pets on-site is no more than $1,000 per year. She explains, “It is so easy and inexpensive to operate the kennel. Most items like food and litter are donated by the community. We even have a veterinarian who donates his services and provides medications at no cost, so all of our animals are healthy and happy.” The shelter uses a “Giving Tree” fundraiser — the tree is adorned with paper ornaments listing small items that can be purchased with a donation. The tree is taken to various fundraising and outreach events, including schools, which gets students involved.

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Housing Option 3 will cost more to set up since it requires building an outdoor kennel or refurbishing an existing outdoor building, a possibly including a dog exercise area. The High Desert Domestic Violence Program in Victorville, California spent approximately $4,000 to create an outdoor dog run, complete with concrete flooring, chain linked fence surrounding the area and a chain linked roof, and two lockable dog doors. This area connects with the side of the shelter that has two pet-friendly rooms. So the pets can be inside the rooms with their families and also go outdoors to enjoy some fresh air, sunshine and exercise. Darryl Evey explains, "These have been the only expenses. Annually, there are no expenses. Food and toys are donated by the local pet rescue groups whenever we need them. Veterinary services are donated. Even our insurance company, which was very impressed with the policies that Allie Phillips wrote, did not increase our premium because they felt the additional liability was negligible."

The cost of building the dog kennel, dog runs and feline house for Quigley House in Clay County, Florida was approximately $12,000. However, all of the supplies and labor were donated and the upkeep has been minimal. Since opening in 2007, Quigley House has opened its doors to 18 dogs, 10 cats and 2 birds. And while this is not a large number of animals, it was important for those families that needed housing for their pet.

The Safe and Fear-Free Environment shelter in Dillingham, Alaska spent $2,500 to build their outdoor kennel. Their money came from a grant. AWARE, Inc. in Hermitage, Pennsylvania spent approximately $6,700 for their outdoor facility and to provide housing in their basement for pets. To raise money to implement their program, they engaged in numerous fundraising activities, including: having the local Eagle Scouts help construct their outdoor building kennel, dine and donate at Applebee's, proceeds from a Zumba class, candy bar sales, celebrity autograph auction, autographed books from famous authors like John Grisham, speaking at the local hospital and Rotary club about the program, and local church did a pet drive for supplies.

Duration and Cost of Housing Pets

We encourage shelters to provide on-site housing of pets at no cost to residents. The SAF-T Director should coordinate the pets' length of stay with the length of stay for the family members. Assisting families in transitioning to pet-friendly housing will help them keep their pets with them after leaving the shelter. The costs for housing pets on-site vary by shelter, according to your chosen Housing Option, and according to the number of pets you assist. Most shelters have shared that they are able to raise funds for their SAF-T program to sustain their program without needing to access the shelter's general operating funds.

For the Mid-Minnesota Women's Center in Brainerd, Minnesota, the cost of housing animals is a standard budgetary item. Tonya Heldt, Executive Director, explains, "We would also take into consideration pets needs as part of our costs since we believe it is so important for people to leave a violent home and not stay due to worrying about their pets."

Situations in which families leave your shelter but request that their pets remain behind should be handled on a case-by-case basis, since numerous factors may be involved. In such cases, you should have the outgoing residents sign an Extended Care Contract (see the Forms section) that outlines their obligations and specifies the extended length of stay for their pets. Generally, extended care should be provided only in situations where families have moved to temporary housing that does not allow pets, while the families receive assistance in

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finding pet-friendly housing. Be sure to follow the policy on abandoned pets should the family fail to return to retrieve their pet.

Insurance

It is recommended that you consult with your shelter's insurance carrier about whether a rider is required with your existing policy that addresses the on-site housing of pets. There may be an additional yearly fee for this service. Quigley House in Clay County, Florida was not assessed an additional premium for their on-site pet housing program and Arising Hope in Eastlake, Colorado was not required to add a rider to their policy.

If your current insurance carrier is unwilling to allow pets on-site, we recommend that you search for other insurance carriers that are more pet-friendly so that you can provide this life-saving service to your clients. Be aware that some insurance carriers may refuse to provide insurance for certain pets. In recent years, there has been an increase in legislative efforts by insurance companies to require families with certain dog breeds to pay higher insurance premiums. Be sure to address this issue with your insurance carrier and if the carrier will require a higher premium for certain dog breeds, considering placing your insurance needs with another carrier that will not discriminate. This type of "breed-specific" policy punishes the breed rather than focusing on the deed of specific dangerous dogs. A good policy to remember is that dogs are not born vicious; they are made vicious by people.

> When negotiating insurance coverage, two SAF-T policies should be beneficial to adding a pet rider to your existing policy: (1) only the family and designated shelter staff will interact with the pets; and (2) if a pet arrives that is aggressive or too stressed, your partner animal protection organization is on standby to take the pet.

Darryl Evey with the High Desert Domestic Violence Program in Victorville, California shared their insurance experience with housing pets on-site. "We sent all the manuals and liability waivers provided to us by Allie Phillips. Their underwriters were very impressed with how well laid out the plan was and how safe the program is. They felt that the additional liability was negligible so did not raise our premium. When we asked about breeds, they did not feel that this should be an issue. The underwriter stated that since these pets would be sleeping with the family in their bedroom, the family would not bring a dangerous pet with them. Dangerous pets are the ones locked in a cage or in the back yard and not given any attention."

Fundraising

The best way to fund your SAF-T program is to engage your community, especially those who love animals. People who love animals and donate to animal causes will be a new donor opportunity for your shelter and should not be viewed as "taking away" from donors to animal shelters. People who donate to animal causes are generous and will embrace that you are helping to keep pets with their families and avoiding pets from being surrendered to an animal shelter. So be sure to advertise that your shelter is pet-friendly and provide a wish list of what you need to house pets.

There are two funding options available to help with veterinary and other costs. Red Rover has a small grant available through shelters for specific residents looking to pay for veterinary care, boarding fees or transportation costs. And the Veterinary Care Foundation provides funds to its veterinary members to assist pet owners with veterinary costs during a crisis.

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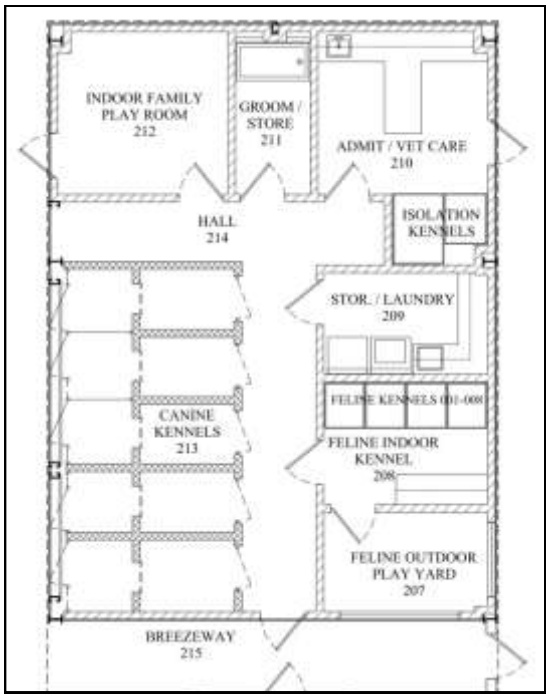
You may need to raise funds for these costs. First aim to receive donated items and services initially and then request items at "cost":

* Set-up costs (including outdoor or building kennel set-up, crates, carriers)
* Outdoor dog run (fencing and ground cover)
* Pet-related materials (see list under Materials & Supplies)
* Security system features (locks, security camera, alarm)
* Funds to provide emergency and basic veterinary care for animals entering the shelter

The Midcoast Family shelter in Victoria, Texas started building their shelter and SAF-T facility in 2011. To raise money for the project, Jo Janssen explains their success. "We had a wonderful event on October 29, 2011 … The Victory Yap! It was a combination of weenie dog races, costume contest, and talent contest, and the 'entry fee' was any pet item (food, toy, litter, etc.). It wasn't a fundraiser, but rather an awareness event. Because of its success, we've decided to make this an annual event to help gather supplies for the pet shelter as well as pet 'fun day'." Their new facility is scheduled to open in February 2012! The floor plans to the pet-housing area is shown to the right.



Here are just a few fundraising options to consider:

* Join in with your partner animal protection organization for a fundraiser for SAF-T and consider splitting the proceeds. Your partner animal protection organization should understand that your program is reducing the number of pets of domestic violence from entering their over-crowded shelter for adoption. Ask to join in on long-standing fundraisers that your animal protection organization has scheduled, or work to create new fundraising opportunities.
* Reach out to community groups and classrooms and ask them to "adopt" your SAF-T program. Be sure to provide a list of items that you need, or a fundraising goal, so that these groups and classrooms know what type of support you need. Consider having these groups host a pet food, toy or blanket drive.
* Place donation canisters and drop boxes for pet-related items at local stores.
* Ask local businesses to become a corporate sponsor of your SAF-T program and include their store name/ logo on materials related to SAF-T.
* Ask for gift cards to purchase pet food.
* Visit www.rescuebank.org to see if your shelter qualifies for free pet food.

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In all of your shelter's fundraising activities, be sure to include information about SAF-T so that you can draw in support from the animal community. Quigley House in Clay County, Florida places donation jars at local veterinary clinics and receives donation checks from private individuals.

Darryl Evey with the High Desert Domestic Violence Program in Victorville, California says, "Our Dog Walk is tremendously successful. People love to take their pets for a walk and love to interact with other animal friendly people. There are a lot of walks and runs in our community, but ours is the only one that is pet friendly. The local animal shelters, pet rescue groups and dog clubs have embraced our program. Anything our shelter needs, these organizations have been happy to donate them."

Angela McMahan with Arising Hope in Eastlake, Colorado says that her shelter is supported by the community. "We are extremely lucky that Colorado is so pet friendly … we actually receive more funding for that from private donors than being a battered woman's shelter."

National SAF-T Day

Established in 2010, the first Saturday of each October (annually) is designated as National SAF-T Day. The purpose of this day is to encourage SAF-T shelters, on the same day, to host a dog walk fundraiser to earn money for their SAF-T program. The event will also to promote awareness of the co-occurrence and the need for SAF-T in your community. In 2010, 17 SAF-T shelters participated and 7 in 2011. Whether you are already housing pets on-site or want to participate to raise funds to create a SAF-T program, please mark your calendar for the first Saturday in October each year and register to participate in National SAF-T Day!

Harriet's House (Demopolis, Alabama)

In 2010, Harriet's House Harriet's House partnered with the Bigbee Humane Society. Activities included the Pet Walk, Blessing of the Pets, Costume Contest, and Tip Table featuring an obedience instructor and groomers. Participants included 30 canines, 2 felines and lots and lots of humans! All participants received a goody bag that included a leash, dog toy, and treats.

Harriet's House 2010 Event

Families First (Whiteville, North Carolina)

Families First participated in both the 2010 and 2011 National events. Each time, they had approximately 60 supporters participate in the dog walk event. In 2010, the shelter secured sponsorships from local businesses so that each participant could receive a t-shirt. The local humane society shelter even brought out some

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shelter dogs and puppies to promote them for adoption. They raised approximately $3,500. In 2011 they raised about $1,200.00, enough to last them through their fiscal year (June 30, 2012). For the 2011 event, they held a blessing of the animals prior to the walk. The money raised will be used to provide emergency medical care and food for pets who come into the shelter as well as flea control. We also had an individual in the community volunteer to provide pet food when needed so that will save us some money.

2010—Columbus Humane Society participated

2010—SAF-T Founder Allie Phillips and Vickie Pait, Families First Director

Little Grass Ranch (Comfort, Texas)

In 2011, Little Grass Ranch joined National SAF-T Day and placed their own style on the event. As a family violence shelter that is able to house horses and farm animals, they chose to host pony rides for children in the community. They had approximately 60 people attend the event and raised $650.00.

2011—Little Grass Ranch pony ride event

2011—Little Grass Ranch pony ride event

Getting the Word Out

Advising the public of SAF-T, without revealing the location, will make more people aware of your program and may result in empowering them to leave abusive homes due to the on-site pet policy. It will also encourage your community to donate and support your efforts.

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Information regarding the existence of SAF-T should be provided to local law enforcement, social workers, domestic violence professionals, animal welfare investigators, prosecuting attorneys and veterinarians, who can assist in informing victims who need help leaving abusive homes. Many shelters have a brochure or resource card that law enforcement and other first responders can give to victims who are considering leaving abusive homes. If your shelter has such a brochure, placing information about SAF-T in it will ensure that information regarding pet-friendly shelter policies is provided to victims who have been hesitant to leave abusive homes for fear of leaving their pets behind. If you have a website, please list prominently that you accept pets.

Legal Issues

Before accepting pets on-site, your shelter should be aware of some legal issues that may arise. We recommend that your SAF-T Director consult with an attorney regarding your state and local laws; however, no legal issue is insurmountable, and it should not create apprehension in starting SAF-T.

Confidentiality of Location and Identity

A shelter's location is generally kept confidential to prevent batterers from locating the residents. Accepting a family pet on-site as part of SAF-T should not impact that confidentiality. The location of the entire family, including the pet, should never be disclosed to outside sources. If a pet must be transferred to an animal protection organization for off-site housing, or has been seen by your partner veterinarian, the family's identity and location should also be kept confidential. An agreement to protect that information can be formalized in a MOU or confidentiality agreement with the animal protection organization and/or veterinarian since there may be no legal duty to disclose the presence of a pet that is under the protection of a family violence shelter.

Court Orders and Pet Protection Orders

If a court has included a pet in a domestic violence protection order or in a divorce or separation agreement, your shelter should ask the resident to provide a copy of the order. This will help alleviate any issues concerning custody of the pet. This information should be made available to all professionals who come in contact with the pet.

For guidelines regarding pets in domestic violence protection orders, contact SAF-T to request a copy of *Expanding Protective Orders to Include Companion Animals* by Phil Arkow and Tracy Coppola.

Custody and Ownership Issues

A concern of shelter staff and residents may involve the true ownership or custody of a family pet. When a pet has resided in the home of the victim and the abuser, how can you determine who should legally have possession of the pet? In all states, pets are deemed property under the law. This issue should only arise when the batterer demands the return of the pet before a judge. If a batterer finds the location of the pet and demands the pet be returned, it is advised to not do so unless a court orders the return of the pet to the batterer. Each state's laws are different, and it can be difficult to determine the ownership of a pet. But here are a few guidelines to help determine ownership:

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- Is there a pet protection order, divorce/separation order or other court order that designates ownership and custody of the pet? Some initial separation orders prohibit the parties from moving any family members or assets (which could include children and pets) until final settlement.
- Ask the shelter resident to bring any evidence of pet ownership and care when entering the shelter. For instance, an adoption or purchase bill of sale, veterinary records listing the resident as the primary caretaker and/or individual who paid veterinary bills, adoption paperwork listing the resident as the adopter, and licensing paperwork (such as dog or cat licenses, rabies vaccination certificates, microchip registration, etc.) in the name of the resident.
- Check with the family veterinarian to determine who brought the pet for checkups and treatment. This information helps demonstrate the primary caretaker of the pet.
- A novel legal argument that has been used is the "possessory interest" or "right of possession" argument. The resident who currently has the pet can argue the present right to control the property (i.e., the pet) in spite of a claim of ownership by the abuser. In support of this, at least one court has held that one party of a divorcing couple cannot ask a court to enforce a contract regarding shared possession of a dog, since pets are property and property cannot be the subject of joint possession (DeSanctis v. Pritchard, 2002).

If a scenario occurs where the true ownership is in dispute, we recommend consulting with a local attorney before returning the pet to an alleged batterer. There have been instances where the shelter resident took the alleged batterer's pet but had no legal claim to the pet, the pet was a valuable breeding pet and both parties had joint commercial interest in the pet, or some other claim was made by the alleged batterer. However, remember that pets can be pawns and targets in the struggle of family violence and be used to lure family members back home. It is advisable to air on the side of caution before relinquishing a pet to an alleged batterer and to seek an order from a judge which will help to reveal the facts surrounding appropriate ownership and care of the pet.

Insurance/Liability for Bites and Other Injuries

As previously discussed, consult with your shelter's liability insurance carrier to determine if the existing policy will cover residents and staff who are injured by pets housed on-site. Your shelter may need to add an insurance rider to the policy to address pets on the property. However, if you follow SAF-T policy and do not allow on-site pets to interact with anyone other than their family and designated shelter staff, this will significantly reduce and possibly eliminate liability for bites or other injuries. Another option is to have residents with pets sign a waiver of liability for any injuries received at your shelter, and a waiver absolving your shelter from claims should the pet escape or inadvertently be harmed.

Kennel License, Code Enforcement and Special Permits

It is important to consult with your local zoning, licensing, code enforcement, and health departments to determine if a special license is needed to house pets on-site. It is advisable to determine beforehand whether a special permit is needed to build outdoor kennels, if that option is preferred. Doorways for Women and Children in Arlington, Virginia was not required to obtain a kennel license provided no more than three dogs are housed on-site at any time. There was no limit on the number of cats. If more than three dogs need to be housed, the shelter has an agreement with the Animal Welfare League of Arlington animal shelter to see if it can accommodate the extra dogs. If your shelter has an on-site kitchen for residents, you should check with your

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health department to make sure that having pets on-site does not violate health regulations. Following SAF-T policies by keeping pets in the resident rooms, indoor kennel or outdoor kennel will insure that pets are not in food preparation areas. Be sure to check state and local regulations on housing pets on-site before starting the implementation process for SAF-T.

Assessing SAF-T

To ensure ongoing success, your staff should continually evaluate your shelter's SAF-T program, including its successes and struggles, as well as seek feedback from residents who participated in it. Factors to consider might include:

- How many pets participated in SAF-T (both on-site and off-site)?
- How many total days did you house pets?
- Were there sufficient supplies for the pets?
- What obstacles were encountered?
- Were the residents satisfied with SAF-T?
- Were there any problems with off-site placement of pets with your partner animal protection organization?
- What, if any, legal issues arose?
- How does the shelter staff feel about SAF-T?
- What is the community reaction to SAF-T?
- Are there sufficient funds to maintain SAF-T?

June 17, 2009

"I will be moving to my new apartment Friday. There are no words to explain the freedom I am feeling. Before I came here the only joy I had in life was my precious little dog, Star. She just turned ten a few months ago. If [the shelter] wouldn't have let me keep her inside the shelter, I would either be on the streets or worse, I might have gone back to my abuser. The last thing he did to me as I was sitting on the curb waiting for the cab was spit on me, repeatedly, like I was a piece of garbage. Well I'm not! I haven't felt this wonderful in fifteen years.

-- Resident at an Arizona shelter

Conclusion

SAF-T acknowledges the tragic co-occurrence between human violence and animal cruelty, as well as the therapeutic bond pets can provide to people who have endured trauma and violence. SAF-T is an innovative national initiative that encourages all domestic and family violence shelters across the country to review this manual and give serious consideration towards implementing SAF-T. Without a plan to house family pets, shelters are not in a position to assist many families in their community. Implementing SAF-T will save lives. **Contact SAF-T for no cost technical assistance and guidance to help implement SAF-T.**

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Forms

The following forms have been prepared as guidance to help your shelter establish SAF-T. These forms should be tailored to comply with your state/local laws and to complement procedures in place at your shelter. You may wish to remove specific sections that are irrelevant to your shelter's practices, and add provisions to help your shelter implement an effective SAF-T program. Some forms and questions may be more suited for subsequent interactions outside the shelter intake process. Please follow your shelter's established documentation procedures in regard to these forms. Contact SAF-T if you wish to receive these forms in a Word-formatted document.

- Memorandum of Understanding Between Animal Protection Organization and SAF-T
- Shelter Supply Checklist for SAF-T
- SAF-T Intake Form
- SAF-T Agreement Between Resident and Shelter
- Procedures for Residents With Pets
- Consent and Release for Boarding at Animal Protection Organization
- SAF-T Extended Care Contract
- SAF-T Resident Evaluation

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Memorandum of Understanding Between Animal Protection Organization and [Domestic Violence Shelter]

[Animal Protection Organization] ("APO") and **[Domestic Violence Shelter]** *Sheltering Animals & Families Together* (SAF-T) program ("SAF-T") enter into this memorandum of understanding (MOU) concerning the boarding of companion animals of residents currently staying at **[Domestic Violence Shelter]**. This agreement is contingent on available space at APO.

APO agrees to care for pets that SAF-T is unable to house on-site. SAF-T may transfer animals to APO due to lack of space in SAF-T, and for specialized care of frightened/aggressive or larger animals. During the pets' stay at APO, the following care will be provided at no cost to SAF-T:

* Clean cage and fresh water daily or as needed.
* Feed major-brand pet food as provided to other shelter animals. Provide a special diet on request and at the expense of the owner (or food provided by the owner).
* Dog walking when APO staff is available.

These additional services will be offered that may require funding or reimbursement to APO:

* If the pet requires emergency medical care, such as casting broken bones, X-rays, treatment of burns or lacerations, etc., the services will be provided and billed by the attending veterinarian to the owner or SAF-T program according to a pre-determined fee schedule.
* Preventive vaccinations if the pet is not up-to-date, including:
* Dogs and cats 4 months of age and older must be current on a rabies inoculation and, if not current, the owner or SAF-T program is responsible for APO's actual cost of providing the inoculation.
* Dogs must be current on their distemper, parvovirus and coronavirus vaccination and kennel cough vaccination and, if not current, the owner or SAF-T program is responsible for APO's actual cost of providing the vaccinations.
* Cats 8 weeks of age and older must be current on their FVCRP vaccination and, if not current, the owner or SAF-T program is responsible for APO's actual cost of providing the vaccination.

To insure the safety of APO staff and animals, the pet(s)' owner (circle one) may/may not visit their pets at APO. If visitation is allowed, it will be coordinated by the SAF-T Director with APO staff. If visitations are not allowed, the pet(s)' owner may call to check on their pets during APO office hours.

SAF-T will have the pet owner execute a Consent and Release form before the pet is transferred to APO. The original will be kept on file at APO with a copy on file at **[Domestic Violence Shelter]**. While the pet is in the care of APO under this agreement, the confidentiality terms of the pet owner's location at **[Domestic Violence Shelter]** will remain in effect and such confidentiality will also remain with the pet(s) in the care of APO. APO is, therefore, not permitted to disclose to anyone that it is caring for a pet under this agreement.

This MOU will continue at the agreement of both parties and may be cancelled by either party in writing at any time.

[Animal Protection Organization]	[Domestic Violence Shelter]
_____	_____
Animal Protection Organization staff signature and date	SAF-T Director signature and date

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Shelter Supply Checklist for SAF-T

* Cat litter
* Litter boxes
* Litter scoopers
* Litter disposal bags
* Dog food
* Puppy food
* Cat food
* Kitten food
* Puppy and kitten formula
* Dog leashes
* Dog toys (Kong toys, chew toys, balls)
* Cat toys (catnip bags, balls, mice)
* Crates and portable carriers
* Towels and/or blankets for crates
* Cleaning supplies (check with your local veterinarian or animal protection organization on what types of cleaning solutions are safe to use)
* Emergency medical supply kit

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[Domestic Violence Shelter] SAF-T Intake Form

The questions on this Intake Form are intended to help us better care for you and your pets while you reside at the shelter. This information is not intended to be shared with outside individuals.

Name of Resident:_____

Date of Admission: _____

Name of Pet Species Breed Gender Spayed/Neutered? Age

_____

Emergency Contact Name/Phone: _____

Veterinarian Name/Phone: _____

Is it safe for [Domestic Violence Shelter] staff to contact your veterinary to obtain records on your pet(s)?

Yes No

Are you arriving at the shelter with any children? Yes No

Did your abusive partner threaten your pets? Yes No

If yes, please describe:_____

_____

_____

If yes, how has this impacted your pets' behavior?_____

_____

_____

Did your abusive partner harm your pets? Yes No

If yes, please describe:_____

_____

If yes, how has this impacted your pets' behavior?_____

_____

Did your children see or hear your pet(s) being harmed? Yes No

Are your pets' vaccinations current? Yes No

If no, list the vaccinations that need updating:_____

_____

Have your cats been tested for feline leukemia and FIV? Yes No

Results and date:_____

Have your dogs been tested for heartworm? Yes No

Results and date:_____

List any behavior issues with your pets (i.e., excessive noise, aggression, fearful of strangers, separation anxiety, etc.): _____

_____

Do your pets have any medical conditions? Yes No

If yes, please describe the ailments and current treatment:_____

_____

How have your pets been housed at your home (i.e., crate-trained, indoor/outdoor pets, outdoor only pets, etc.)?

_____

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[Domestic Violence Shelter] SAF-T Intake Form (cont.)

Have your pets received flea/tick/parasite prevention treatment? Yes No
Are your pets house-trained/litter-box trained? Yes No
If no, describe what accommodations are needed:_____
_____
_____

Have your pets bitten anyone? Yes No
If yes, describe the circumstances:_____
_____
_____

Have you brought your pets' food, collars, litter box and/or medication with you? Yes No
If no, what supplies can we provide during your stay?_____
_____
_____

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SAF-T Agreement Between Resident and Shelter

Name of Resident:_____
Emergency Contact Name/Phone:_____
Veterinarian Name/Phone: _____
Date of Admission:_____
Anticipated Length of Housing of Pets:_____

The **[Domestic Violence Shelter]** SAF-T program ("Shelter") agrees to accept from the above-named shelter resident ("Resident") the following pets into the Shelter for safe housing:

Pet Name	Species/Breed	Age	Gender	Vaccinated?

The pets listed above are allowed to stay at no cost at the shelter for _____ days or until Resident has obtained pet-friendly housing. Vaccinations and a medical examination will be provided to Resident's pets free of charge during Resident's stay. If Resident's pets require immediate medical care upon entry to the Shelter, or during their stay, due to injury or illness, Resident will be responsible for the cost of services that the Shelter veterinarian will provide. ***Please be advised that Shelter may be required to report animal abuse to the appropriate law enforcement authorities, including providing any veterinary records supplied or produced as a result of Resident's pet staying at the Shelter. These records may be provided to law enforcement or to the prosecutor's office for use in court, if animal cruelty charges arise.***

In exchange for Shelter providing care to Resident's pet, Resident agrees to release and discharge Shelter and SAF-T, its successors and assigns from any and all actions, causes of action, claims and demands for, upon or by reason of any damages, loss or injury which may be sustained in consequence of the receipt of boarding and medical services under this program. This release extends and applies to all unknown, unforeseen, unanticipated and unsuspected injuries, damages, loss and liability and the consequences of them. This release, however, does not extend to violations of the law and any injuries or suffering Resident's pet receives as a direct consequence of a violation of law.

Resident has received, read and agreed to comply with Shelter's "Procedures for Residents with Pets."

_____
Shelter Resident signature Date

_____
SAF-T Director signature Date

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Procedures for Residents With Pets

Please remember that the safe housing of your pet through SAF-T is a privilege, and not a right, so please adhere to these procedures during your stay:

* Be respectful of other residents who may not welcome the presence of a family pet or may have allergies to your pet. Therefore, please keep your pet in your designated room or designated kennel area in the shelter.
* Attend to the care of your pet each day. This includes providing appropriate food, water, exercise, scooping/changing of litter, and playtime.
* If your pet frequently barks, meows, chirps, etc., at a noise level that can be heard outside your room, please advise staff upon your entry to the shelter so that appropriate accommodations can be made to avoid disturbing other residents.
* Clean up any messes or accidents that your pet has while inside the shelter.
* If your pet requires immediate medical care upon entry to the shelter or during your pet's stay at the shelter, notify a staff member immediately. You may be responsible for the cost of any extraordinary medical care that the shelter veterinarian provides. We have secured low-cost and reasonable rates from our veterinarian to help reduce your financial burden during transition.
* Supervise your children around all pets housed at the shelter.
* Provide a copy of each pet's current vaccination records when checking in to the shelter or within 48 hours of arrival. If your pet is not current on vaccinations, the shelter veterinarian will provide vaccinations at no cost or for a reduced fee.

Upon ending your stay at the shelter, you must take your pet with you or sign a SAF-T Program Extended Care Contract for the continued boarding of your pet at the shelter while you locate pet-friendly housing. If you leave your pet behind and fail to make arrangements with the SAF-T program for extended care, you agree that the pet has been relinquished and the SAF-T program may place the pet for adoption or other disposition with a local animal protection organization and that you forfeit all legal rights to the pet.

If you violate any of these procedures during your stay, the shelter has the right to require you to find alternative placement for your pet.

_____ _____

Resident Date

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Consent and Release for Boarding at [Animal Protection Organization]

Name:_____
Phone Number Where We Can Contact You:_____
Emergency Contact Name/Phone Number:_____
Pet Name:_____
Gender:: _____Species/Breed: _____Color:_____Age:_____Weight:_____
Special Needs:_____
Date of Last Vaccinations:_____
Current Veterinarian Name/Phone:_____
Date That Pet Will Be Retrieved by the Owner:_____

I am the owner, or agent for the owner, of the animal listed above and have the authority to give this consent. I understand that my pet will be cared for at **[Animal Protection Organization]** so long as I am a resident at **[Domestic Violence Shelter]**. When I leave **[Domestic Violence Shelter]**, I must make arrangements within 24 hours to retrieve my pet. If I fail to retrieve my pet by the date established in this contract and have failed to make arrangements for an extended stay, then I agree that the pet has been relinquished to **[Animal Protection Organization]** and that **[Animal Protection Organization]** may place my pet for adoption or rescue, or other disposition (which may include humane euthanasia).

I agree that **[Animal Protection Organization]** will update any vaccinations for my pet, at my cost, and that if unforeseen emergency medical care is required, my pet will receive that treatment and I will be responsible for the costs. If my pet is on medication for an existing condition, I agree to provide the medication to **[Animal Protection Organization]**.

In exchange for **[Animal Protection Organization]** providing care to my pet, I agree to release and discharge the **[Animal Protection Organization]**, **[Domestic Violence Shelter]** and SAF-T program, its successors and assigns from any and all actions, causes of action, claims and demands for, upon or by reason of any damages, loss or injury which may be sustained in consequence of the receipt of boarding and medical services under this program. This release extends and applies to all unknown, unforeseen, unanticipated and unsuspected injuries, damages, loss and liability and the consequences of them. This release, however, does not extend to violations of the law and any injuries or suffering my pet receives as a direct consequence of a violation of law.

_____ _____

Pet Owner's Signature Date

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SAF-T Extended Care Contract

Name of Shelter Resident:_____
New Address/Phone:_____
Emergency Contact Name/Phone:_____
Veterinarian Name/Phone:_____
Date Leaving the Shelter:_____
Anticipated Length of Extended Care Housing of Pets:_____

The **[Domestic Violence Shelter]** SAF-T program ("Shelter") agrees to continue housing the following pets at the shelter as part of the Extended Care program:

Pet Name	Species/Breed	Age	Gender

The pets listed above are allowed to stay at the above-named Shelter at no cost for an extended period of _____ days while the above-named Shelter Resident ("Resident") locates permanent or transitional pet-friendly housing. If the pet(s) require immediate medical care during their stay, Resident will be responsible for the financial costs that the Shelter veterinarian will provide. If Resident's pets are on medication or special food, she will leave those provisions behind when she leaves the Shelter and/or will provide a sufficient quantity of those items before leaving. If Resident fails to retrieve her pets by the expiration of this Contract, she agrees that the pets have been relinquished and Shelter may place the pets for adoption or other disposition with a local animal protection organization and that Resident forfeits all legal rights to the pets.

In exchange for Shelter's providing care to Resident's pets, Resident agrees to release and discharge Shelter and SAF-T Program, its successors and assigns from any and all actions, causes of action, claims and demands for, upon or by reason of any damages, loss or injury which may be sustained in consequence of the receipt of boarding and medical services under this program. This release extends and applies to all unknown, unforeseen, unanticipated and unsuspected injuries, damages, loss and liability and the consequences of them. This release, however, does not extend to violations of the law and any injuries or suffering Resident's pets receive as a direct consequence of a violation of law.

Shelter Resident signature _____ Date _____

SAF-T Director signature _____ Date _____

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Resident Evaluation

As a resident of the shelter, whether you arrived with a pet or not, we would appreciate your input on our SAF-T program, which allows pets to reside with their families at our shelter. Your honest opinions and helpful feedback will assist us in making this program a success for everyone.

1. Being allowed to bring my pet(s) to the shelter through SAF-T was influential in my decision to leave my abusive home: (circle one)

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Applicable

2. I am satisfied with the services provided by SAF-T: (circle one)

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Applicable

3. What was the most helpful thing about SAF-T?

4. What can we do to make SAF-T better?

5. If you were a resident without a pet, please provide any feedback or suggestions about pets being at the shelter.

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Resources

Sheltering Animals & Families Together (SAF-T)™ (http://www.animalsandfamilies.net)

Animal Welfare Institute's Safe Havens Listing (http://www.awionline.org/safe-havens)

Grant opportunities (veterinary, boarding, and/or transportation costs)

- AKC Humane Fund (http://www.akc.org/humane_fund/grants.html)
- American Veterinary Charitable Fund (http://www.avcfund.org)
- RedRover Safe Escape Grants (http://redrover.org/index.cfm?navid=167)
- RedRover SAF-T Start-Up Grants (http://redrover.org/index.cfm?navid=1068)
- Veterinary Care Foundation (http://www.vetcarefoundation.org)

Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters (http://www.sheltervet.org)

National District Attorneys Association (http://www.ndaa.org)

National Link Coalition (http://www.nationallinkcoalition.org)

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (http://www.ncadv.org)

Pet bereavement counseling programs

- Association of Pet Loss and Bereavement (http://www.aplb.org)
- State-by-state pet loss support groups (http://www.petloss.com/groups.htm)

Pet-friendly apartments (http://www.myapartmentmap.com/pet_friendly/)

Pets of the Homeless (http://www.petsofthehomeless.org)

RedRover (http://www.redrover.org)

Rescue Bank (http://www.rescuebank.org)

Safe Haven for Pets: Guidelines for Programs Sheltering Pets for Women Who Are Battered (http://www.humananimalconnection.org/PDF/ascione_safe_havens.pdf)

Safe Place for Pets (http://safeplaceforpets.org)

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Appendix

Animal Handling and Safety Tips

Note: These tips address some basic animal handling and safety issues, to assist shelter staff in interacting with residents' pets and to assist shelter residents in staying safe around animals. They are not comprehensive instructions for animal handling and safety. For detailed information and instruction on animal handling and safety, consult your partner animal protection organization.

Animal Safety Tips for Shelter Staff

* Place copies of the Animal Safety Tips for Parents and Children around your shelter to educate residents.
* Ask pet-owning residents to supervise their pets' interaction with other people at all times.
* Ask residents to not interact with another resident's pet unless the pet's owner is present.
* Carefully assess a pet's demeanor before handling it. (See Animal Handling Tips for Shelter Staff, below.)
* Don't allow children to play rough games with the animals.
* If a situation appears unsafe, don't wait for a child's mother to intervene; she may not understand how dangerous the situation is or that her child is doing something inappropriate.
* If you are unsure of what to do, or if a pet appears overly agitated or stressed, immediately contact your partner animal protection organization for assistance.
* Keep litter boxes out of reach of children and away from pregnant women.

Animal Handling Tips for Shelter Staff

Animal behavior can be unpredictable, especially in the stressful process of leaving a home (particularly for cats). So be sure to move slowly and in a gentle manner around any potentially stressed animals.
You should remain constantly alert when interacting with or handling any animal. Always ask permission from the animal's owner before interacting with the animal, and be sure to understand each animal's personality and history.

Safe, effective animal handling demands total concentration on the animal you are working with and your ability to read the body language the animal is displaying. Watch animals for warning signs of stress and fear, which can quickly lead to aggression. If you are unsure of an animal's state, you should avoid handling the animal until it is noticeably calmer, or only handle it when its owner is present and you have her permission. But don't rely on the owner to recognize the signs of potential aggression in her own animal.

Signs that a DOG may be uncomfortable or afraid:

* stiffening, freezing or trembling
* standing or lying tensely at the rear of its cage
* staring, avoiding eye contact; wide eyes with white rims
* flattening or pinning back its ears
* growling, excessive deep barking or excessive whining
* panting, drooling or lip licking
* tucked or rigid tail
* lack of appetite
* sweating foot pads
* showing teeth or snapping in the air
* raising hair on its back

* *Note: A wagging tail is not always a sign that the dog is being friendly; it may merely mean the dog is assessing the situation.*

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Signs that a CAT may be uncomfortable or afraid:

* ears flattened
* curled up in a ball or body turned sideways to face you
* facing the back of the carrier or cage
* fast-swishing tail
* growling, hissing, spitting or excessive meowing
* raising hair on its back

If you must handle a potentially stressed animal, remember the following:

* Never lean directly over an animal; instead stand sideways in front of the cage with your chin down and gaze averted.
* Speak in a soft, soothing, upbeat tone while you reach your hand out, and allow the animal to sniff it thoroughly.
* If the animal backs away, it needs more time to adjust.
* If the animal approaches and sniffs your hand, gently scratch it under the chin. The animal may be receptive to handling.
* Allow the animal to come to you, rather than entering the cage or reaching in to grab it.
* To remove a cat from a carrier into a cage, open the carrier and tilt it into the new cage. Or, if possible, simply leave the cat in its carrier and place it into the new cage with the carrier door open.
* To handle a very fearful cat, cover its head with a large, thick towel or blanket and wrap it around the cat as you pick up the cat.

Animal Safety Tips for Parents and Children

Supervision and Safety

* Never leave a child alone with any animal.
* Teach children how to pay attention to warning signs — an animal that is growling or hissing wants to be left alone!
* Teach children to never approach or pet any dog unless the owner gives permission, even if they have met the dog before.
* Children should never approach an animal they do not know, especially strays or animals in vehicles, tied up or behind a fence.
* Teach children to never try to stop a fight between two animals — the children could get seriously injured.
* Be careful of an animal's claws — especially a cat's — when playing with an animal. Trim cat nails regularly.
* Keep litter boxes out of reach of children and away from pregnant women (or use gloves if pregnant).

Petting Animals

* Show your children how to safely pet an animal:
* Avoid the face and head area.
* Stroke the animal on the chin or along the neck and back. Many animals do not like being rubbed on the belly.

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Testimonials

“We have had many pets at the Mid-Minnesota Women's Center. One particular story was a woman who had a fantastic dog. He was such an extremely well trained dog and this woman would have never left her abuser if she had to leave this wonderful dog because he would abuse the dog when she was away from the house at work. He was a black lab mix, very good with everyone, and was her companion throughout her ordeal. The dog was shy as he had been abused by this woman's partner, but was very well-behaved, and I believe helped this woman get through a very difficult time in her life. He became everyone's favorite 'mascot' at the time because he was so good and seemed to understand the pain that everyone in house was experiencing. This woman was able to find housing that allowed her to have her dog and they successfully moved out to a house where the landlord thought people should absolutely have their pets and was supportive of this woman and her dog. It was probably one of the most amazing relationships between pet and owner that I have seen because it truly demonstrated and reminded me as to why women and children should have the opportunity to escape domestic violence with their pets.” – Tonya Heldt, Executive Director, Mid-Minnesota Women’s Center, Inc. (Brainerd, Minnesota)

“A lady with her 15 year old son and 6 year old lab came to our shelter. The mother was rather high strung, and the boy had some behavioral problems. At one point, after a long day of everything going wrong, the mother became very upset at the boy and yelled at him in front of everyone. He was hurt and embarrassed, so he went to his room. A few hours later I came to the shelter to talk with him about the rules. When I went into the room, he was curled up on the bed with his dog. As we talked, he stated, “everything in my life sucks - expect for (my dog)”. If we did not allow pets at our shelter, we would have taken away the only good thing in this boy’s life. At that moment, I knew this is the right thing to do and I will do everything I can to help other shelters accept pets.” – Darryl Evey, Family Assistance Program (Victorville, California)

“Zelda had to flee her abusive partner’s home 130 airplane miles from the nearest shelter, leaving her two cats behind. We shipped one of the newly purchased airline crates 200 airplane miles to where the cats were so Zelda’s friend there could ship her cats. One cat had already died, a victim of roaming dogs, after the abuser intentionally let it outside. The second cat was flown to Zelda, then they arrived at the shelter together. They were housed together in the same room. When Zelda later left, she was able to take her cat with her in her airline crate, which was hers to keep.” – Lisa Haggblom, Safe and Fear-Free Environment (Dillingham, Alaska)

“Abby had been living in an abusive relationship for 15 years. She detailed how her boyfriend had been verbally, emotionally and sometimes physically abusive towards her. Even though she knew that his behavior was wrong, she was still uncertain about leaving home. She was reluctant to leave her cat. She had this cat for many years and he had become an important aspect of her life. She feared that if she left her cat at the home, her boyfriend would somehow cause harm as payback for her leaving him. She also felt that if she was unable to have her cat with her, she would become depressed. Fortunately, Abby and her cat both entered AWARE’s shelter. She was very grateful to be able to bring her cat into the shelter with her and be able to take care of him on a daily basis. Today, both are doing very well and Abby has moved to her own place. — Jackie Fazio, AWARE, Inc. (Hermitage, Pennsylvania)

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SAF-T Program

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