

Kennel Chain Donates Pet Oxygen Masks

Devices will be used to resuscitate cats and other pets suffering from smoke inhalation.

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Best Friends Pet Care, a national chain of boarding kennels, has donated 20 sets of animal oxygen masks to the San Diego Fire Department.

Each cone-shaped resuscitation mask fits tightly over a pet's snout and attaches to a tube that connects to an oxygen tank.

About 40,000 pets died in house fires in the U.S. in 2005, according to Best Friends Pet Care. Regular resuscitation masks have proven ineffective for pets because they don't fit properly over an animal's face.

In 2004, Best Friends Pet Care launched its national Cause for Paws fundraising campaign to raise money to buy pet oxygen masks. Since then, it has donated 2,250 sets of masks to fire departments in 20 states, it says.

The Oct. 3 donation to the San Diego Fire Department will provide pet oxygen masks for under half of the city's 46 fire stations, but according to Best Friends Pet Care's spokeswoman Dawn Garcia, the organization's goal is to equip them all.

For more information on the masks or to make a donation, visit the Best Friends Pet Care website.