

## Pet Evacuation Drill Planned

**Effort will focus on safely moving pets during an emergency.**

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To prepare for potential emergencies, a mock pet evacuation exercise is taking place in Louisiana this week, coordinated in part by the St. Tammany Department of Animal Services.

Also helping with the pet evacuation drill is the St. Tammany, Louisiana Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. The cooperative effort will focus on staging, loading and securing transport vehicles to ensure that pets can be safely moved to shelters in an emergency.

The pet evacuation drill will begin Oct. 10, when inmates from the Department of Corrections will assemble transport kennels and load them onto trucks, according to Patricia Jones, spokeswoman for Noah's Wish, a nonprofit animal welfare organization dedicated to keeping animals alive during natural disasters.

The trucks will then travel to the St. Tammany Parish pick-up point, a designated location where citizens requiring evacuation assistance can congregate.

About 50 adoptable pets from the St. Tammany animal shelter will be used during the mock pet evacuation drill. Upon arrival, the pets will be marked with a bar code tag, a copy of which will be given to their owners to help them find their pets after the drill.

Then, the animals will be loaded onto trucks and driven to a temporary shelter set up by Noah's Wish. Three Noah's Wish staff members and 26 trained volunteers will participate in the exercise.

"In the aftermath of (Hurricane) Katrina's devastation, it is truly inspiring to see the local and state government investing so much time and effort into planning for the safety of pets in future disasters," Jones said.