Evacuation Loading Zones

When disasters or emergencies require evacuating large animals, having a designated loading zone can help make the process safer and more efficient.

Preparing your property in advance can help ensure animals, trailers, and emergency responders have adequate space to maneuver. Here are a few tips to get started:

Location & Accessibility

- Choose a level, non-slip gravel surface with adequate turning radius.
- Ensure vehicles and/or trailers have sufficient room to enter, turn around, and exit.
- Locate the loading zone adjacent to holding paddocks or pens.
- Maintain clear access to the loading zone and surrounding areas.

Clearance & Safety

- Keep the loading area free of debris, sharp edges, and other obstacles, ideally with 20 to 30 feet of clearance.
- Clear surrounding branches and potential wind-driven debris.
- Keep nearby pathways and access routes clear.
- Ensure animals can be safely moved from holding areas to trailers.

Lighting & Equipment

- Install an electric or solar light source to illuminate the loading area.
- Ensure hoses are connected to nearby spigots and accessible when needed.
- Provide access to water to wet down bedding when appropriate.
- Inspect the loading area regularly to ensure it remains safe and accessible.

Evacuation Planning

- Create an evacuation plan that identifies your designated loading zone.
- Post evacuation plans and emergency contact information in an accessible location.
- Practice your evacuation plan during Red Flag Warnings.
- Ensure everyone responsible for your animals knows the loading procedures and evacuation routes.

During a disaster, call the Sonoma CART hotline at 707-861-0699 or Sonoma County Animal Services at 707-565-7100.
Learn more at SonomaCart.org or theAnimalShelter.org.

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