Disaster Plan and Emergency Care for the Division of Comparative Medicine

POLICY
In the event of an emergency or a disaster, the Division of Comparative Medicine (CompMed) is responsible for the care and support of the research animals housed at Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS). Good animal care is dependent upon a continuous supply of food and potable water, adequate personnel to care for the animals, environmental support, and security. The Attending Veterinarian (AV), the CompMed Program/Project Manager, and the CompMed Facility Manager may be contacted by office or cellular telephone during the week and on weekends. Daily work hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. The on-call veterinary technician (Vet Tech) is the first point of contact in the event of an animal-related emergency. Formal arrangements for backup veterinary care have been established for times when the AV is out of the area or incapacitated. Emergency contact numbers are posted throughout the animal facility and in the CompMed, Police and Public Safety, and Physical Facilities offices.

PROCEDURE
The following potential emergencies are addressed in this plan:

- Break-in
- Fire
- Flood
- Hurricane
- Protest by animal activists
- Physical facilities emergencies (i.e., power outage, interruption of water supply, breakdown of the air handling system)
- Biohazardous waste and biological material

A. Break-in
If a break-in of the animal facility is suspected, Police and Public Safety must be contacted immediately. Any USDA-regulated (i.e., non-rodent) species found loose in the facility will be captured, identified, and returned to its home cage. Any rodent that escapes out of its holding room into the hallway will be euthanized immediately per CompMed standard operating procedure. Medical treatment or euthanasia of an animal may be performed at the discretion of the AV. In all cases of escaped animals, every attempt will be made to contact the investigative staff prior to disposition. Any feed that has been destroyed will be replaced immediately. If the water supply is disrupted, fresh water will be brought into the facility from other areas until the necessary repairs have been made.

Physical Facilities is responsible for the operation of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems at EVMS. If vandalism disrupts these services, Physical Facilities will be contacted, and emergency generator power will be engaged. Research staff will be notified of the status of their animals as soon as possible.
B. Fire
In the event of a fire during normal working hours, all CompMed personnel are expected to leave the animal facility using the stairway and to meet at the pre-designated assembly area (i.e., the green space in front of ERB for the Lewis Hall/Jones Institute animal facility and Parking Lot 17 for the modular vivarium). Once it is safe to return to the animal facility, all animals will be checked immediately. If the fire occurs outside of normal working hours, the AV, the Program/Project Manager, or the Facility Manager will be notified immediately. Once it is safe to enter the premises, he/she will report to the animal facility to assess animal welfare and facility damage. Animals suffering from smoke inhalation will be examined, treated, or euthanized, as necessary. Any damage to feed or water will be handled as previously described under “Break-in.” Research staff will be notified of the status of their animals as soon as possible.

C. Flood
EVMS is located in an area that is prone to flood. The main animal facility is located on the fourth floor of Lewis Hall and Jones Institute; therefore, drowning due to rising flood water is not an issue. However, flooding may cause prolonged power outage and may affect water quality. If potable water is not available, automatic watering devices will be disconnected, and the animals will be provided water from alternative sources, such as bottled water, water gel packets, and/or fruits and vegetables. If the HVAC is disrupted, Physical Facilities will engage the backup generator. Research staff will be notified of the status of their animals as soon as possible.

D. Hurricane
If a Category 3 or greater hurricane is predicted to make landfall in the Hampton Roads area, all available personnel will report to work to prepare for the storm. The following preparations will be made:
- all caging and racks will be changed, if time permits.
- all food hoppers and water bottles will be filled.
- all extra water bottles and emergency water barrels will be filled with water. The CompMed personnel will make every effort to ensure that a sufficient amount of water is available to meet the needs of the current animal census.

Once the above-listed preparations have been made, personnel will return to their homes to secure their personal belongings. If warranted, CompMed personnel and volunteers (including family members, but excluding pets) may be asked to report to the animal facility to remain during the storm. CompMed will purchase supplies for their stay. Children will be restricted from entering animal rooms.

Feed is monitored routinely, and a two-week supply is on hand at all times. Physical Facilities maintains staff around the clock during anticipated natural disasters. In the event of a power outage, the emergency generator will supply power to air handlers and fans.
All possible water containers, including Rubbermaid barrels, sinks, and bathtubs, will be filled prior to the hurricane. In addition, a supply of apples and potatoes will be purchased as an alternative water source.

Following the hurricane, all animal care personnel not already at the animal facility will report to work as soon as possible to assist with the care of the animals, to secure the facility, and to assist with cleanup.

E. Protest against Animal Research/Animal Activist Threat
Police and Public Safety, the Office of Research, and the Office of Marketing and Communications (MarComm) will be notified as soon as information is received regarding animal activist activity which may pose a threat to CompMed. The notified parties will determine the appropriate course of action.

F. Physical Facilities Emergencies
In the event of a power outage, EVMS maintains two backup generators to provide emergency power to the animal facility. If the air handling system is disrupted for an extended period of time, animals will be monitored more frequently and steps will be taken to correct deviations in ambient temperature and relative humidity outside of the acceptable ranges. Feed will be monitored for spoilage and replaced, as needed. If the water supply is disrupted, fresh water will be purchased or brought into the facility from other areas until the necessary repairs have been made.

G. Biohazardous Waste and Biological Material
In cases of predicted emergencies, such as hurricanes, floods, and blizzards, all biohazardous waste will be shipped and disposed of by an off-site contractor no less than two days before the event. Waste collected from this point forward should be stored in designated walk-in freezers or autoclaved for disposal. Once the event has begun, the doors to the freezers should be opened as infrequently as possible.

When the power to the walk-in freezers is interrupted for more than 24 hours, relatively small amounts of biological materials may be kept in Styrofoam coolers using dry ice. Contact information for dry ice vendors will be posted in the CompMed Office and by the walk-in freezers. CompMed personnel will be made aware of the potential dangers of handling dry ice.