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Welcome to this issue of the Washington State Animal Response Team's monthly newsletter! Find out what the President has to say, what deployments we've been on, where the next meetings will be, and where we'll be with upcoming events. [View this email in your browser](#)


[www.washingtonsart.org](http://www.washingtonsart.org)

Helping Animals &amp; Their Owners in Disasters

- [Finding Humanity in Disasters](#)
- [Mock Shelter Exercise Prepares for a Disaster](#)
- [Charitable Deductions for Animal Rescue Volunteers](#)
- [2018 Training Dates](#)

In a large animal rescue, much of the more expensive equipment needs to be replaced for safety reasons.

It's only possible because of you.

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### General Meetings

**December 13, 2017**

[King County Office of Emergency Management](#)

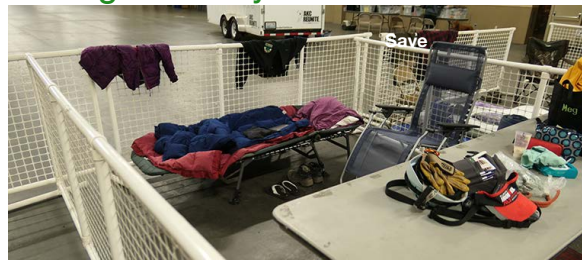
3511 NE 2nd Street  
Renton, WA 98056

The General Meetings are held from **7 p.m. - 9 p.m.** The first hour is spent on WASART business and the final hour is a mini-training or discussion session on a subject of interest to members. And, of course, some social time, too. All General Meetings are open to the public and everyone is invited to attend.

**Upcoming training**  
Register at

### From The President

## Finding Humanity in Disasters



*Part of WASART's prep for disasters includes mock shelter scenarios. The set up from October's included sleeping on site the night before.*

All of the recent natural and man-made disasters have reinforced for me what really matters in life. It's also reinforced the goodness of humans. I've seen again and again, that so many humans really are capable of doing great and compassionate things. All the 'stuff' seems to become insignificant when faced with the choice of helping people and animals around them, or not. I do know that there's still the element of humans that I'd rather not associate with – those that loot, price gouge, cause harm, etc., but thankfully, they are in the minority. As disheartening as the devastation is to observe, seeing humans at their most authentic and compassionate selves does give me hope. Sometimes in the most trying and terrifying of times, hope is all we have to hold on to. I'm thankful that we still have that, and that WASART can be a source of hope for those that need it.

*Shawndra Michell*  
President

## Mock Shelter Exercise Prepares for a Disaster

<http://bit.ly/WASART2017>

**January 6, 2018**  
**Open House (free)**  
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Location TBD

**February 10, 2018**  
**Base Support (f/k/a**  
**Fundamentals)**  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Location TBD

**March 3, 2018**  
**Operations Support (f/k/a**  
**Animal Handling &**  
**Assessment)**  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Location TBD

**April 7, 2018**  
**Emergency Animal**  
**Sheltering**  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Location TBD

**June 2, 2018**  
**Transport**  
9:00 a.m. 5:00 p.m.  
Enumclaw Expo Center  
45224 284th Avenue SE  
Enumclaw, WA 98022

**August 27, 2018**  
**Open House (repeat)**  
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Location TBD)

**September 16, 2018**  
**Base Support (f/k/a**  
**Fundamentals) (repeat)**  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Location TBD

**September 30, 2018**  
**Operations Support (f/k/a**  
**Animal Handling &**  
**Assessment) (repeat)**  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Location TBD

**October 20, 2018**  
**Annual Exercise (free)**  
9:00 a.m. 5:00 p.m.  
Enumclaw Expo Center  
45224 284th Avenue SE  
Enumclaw, WA 98022

### Outreach Events

No registration required.  
Stop by and say hello!



*A volunteer in the role of Intake Supervisor (blue vest) takes photos of an animal and its owner so they can be correctly matched up when the owner returns for her animal during this year's sheltering practice exercise.*

For six participants, WASART's Annual Exercise began on the evening of Friday the 13th with set-up and a sleepover in the Exhibit Hall of the Enumclaw Expo Center. The rest of us (for a total of 20) showed up on a nice, but somewhat chilly, Sunday morning.

The aim of this year's Annual Exercise was to focus more on WASART's emergency sheltering program. Some of the participants had sheltering experience, while others had none. I was one of the "nones", and honestly, I'd never considered getting involved with the sheltering side of WASART. But the more I learned during Greta's presentation, the more interested I became. I never realized the amount of organization, cooperation, hard work, and time that emergency sheltering requires, and how rewarding it would be.

After the classroom portion, we were each assigned roles, and we got to work setting up a mock shelter in the Horse Barn. Everybody worked efficiently, the set-up was done, and we broke for lunch - hot pizza courtesy of WASART!

After lunch, a mock Enumclaw wildfire scenario arose, and we opened our shelter to the "public". We received several dogs, horses, and cats. Shortly after our shelter closed for the day, our trouble-prone horse "Joey" somehow cast himself in his stall, necessitating a callout for all available hands. Joey needed to be rolled onto the glide, "taco'd",

Did you know we're often available to talk to your group about WASART or disaster prep?

### Mission Statement

To help animals and their owners through disaster preparedness, education, and emergency response.



and hauled to a safe place in the barn where he would be allowed to re-gain his footing.

All-in-all, we had a great day of learning and experience. Everyone worked well together, and I think we will each feel more comfortable volunteering to help when there is a real call-out for emergency sheltering.

Submitted by Jeff Dahl, DVM

## Charitable Deductions for Animal Rescue Volunteers



Volunteer stats from [WASART's 2016 Annual Report](#). Some aspects of volunteer work, like mileage, may be deducted, while others such as hours worked, may not.

Many of you volunteer to help raise funds or perform other tasks on behalf of animal-rescue groups and other charitable organizations. When the annual reckoning with the Internal Revenue Service rolls around, the reward for your willingness to help out can take the form of write-offs for unreimbursed expenses incurred while you do volunteer work for rescue groups. To qualify as charitable deductions, the expenses in question must further the groups' missions, such as foster care for stray animals.

As an animal-rescue volunteer, you need to be mindful of tricky rules for donations, whether they take the form of gifts of cash or property or volunteer expenses. What follows is a summary of the many possibilities.

Remember, however, that if you are a WASART volunteer and you respond to a deployment that has been issued an Incident/DEM number by the State Emergency Management Department, you

can put in a claim with the State EMD for lodging, meals, ferry and fuel expenses through a process and specialized forms that were discussed during the Legalities onsite segment of your Fundamentals' training. Washington State Search & Rescue volunteers follow the same process and use the same forms. More information and the forms are available from your Team Leads.

### **Only Out-of-Pocket Outlays Count**

The law allows volunteers to claim itemized deductions on Schedule A of Form 1040 only for what you spend to cover unreimbursed expenses—for instance, telephone calls, postage stamps and stationery, as well as other materials (say, to prepare posters or other forms of advertising for fund-raising campaigns).

What kinds of expenses can rescue workers write off at tax time? Some examples of qualifying outlays that are frequently overlooked: animal feed, medicines, cat litter, litter boxes, pet dishes, cleaning supplies, garbage bags, paper towels, laundry detergent and dish detergent; animal bedding, animal toys, fees paid to veterinarians and trainers, and food for volunteers building temporary shelters for pets evacuated from flood zones in hurricanes.

### **Forget About Deducting Your Time**

While deductions are allowed for gifts of property, the IRS doesn't consider your services to qualify as "property." Nor does the law allow you to claim anything for the use of your home or office to conduct meetings: that, too, isn't a contribution of "property."

### **Uniforms**

Some organizations require volunteers to wear uniforms. Because these uniforms aren't adaptable to ordinary wear, deductions are allowed for their cost and cleaning.

### **Travel**

An often missed outlay begins the moment that you leave your home. Your allowable deductions include travel expenses to and from animal shelters, veterinarians, committee meetings, fundraising events, and so on. If you travel to and from your volunteer work by planes, trains, buses, or taxis, just make sure to keep track of your fares and claim them as travel expenses.

If you use your own auto, you have two options for handling the expenses: The first option is to deduct the actual cost of gas and oil. Unlike write-offs for business driving, you can't claim depreciation because that isn't an actual cash payment. Nor can you claim insurance and repairs unless you use the car only for charitable driving or the repairs are directly attributable to that use.

The second option is to make the paperwork simpler by claiming a standard mileage rate. The standard rate is 14 cents a mile for tax year 2016, unchanged since 1997, as set by law.

Whether you use the mileage allowance or drive a gas guzzler and claim actual costs, remember to deduct parking fees and bridge or highway tolls, as well. It's a good idea, in case an IRS examiner questions your charitable travel, to be able to support your deductions with a glove compartment diary in which you record why and how far you went, as well as what you spend on parking. You don't have to use the same car each time and can use more than one car at the same time. If you rent an auto and drive it only for charitable travel, include the entire rental charge with your other charitable expenses.

### **Overnight Expenses**

When volunteer work requires that you be away from home overnight, your deductions also include lodgings and meals as long as they're "reasonable," as opposed to "lavish or extravagant." Note that these meals are 100 percent deductible, unlike business meals, which are only 50 percent deductible.

An example: You can deduct these expenses when you attend an organization's convention as a duly appointed delegate. But you can't deduct for such personal expenses as sightseeing or movie tickets. Nor are you allowed to deduct travel or other expenses incurred by your spouse or children.

To back up your deductions in the event of an IRS audit, save a copy of the convention program and check off the sessions that you attend as a delegate. Sign an attendance book for any sessions that provide one. Keep a diary of your convention related expenses, along with hotel and restaurant bills.

### **IRS Paperwork**

Strict rules apply when a volunteer incurs an unreimbursed expense of \$250 or more, such as an airline ticket. No deduction for the outlay is permitted unless you obtain and keep for your records a written statement from the charity. The statement needs to describe the type of services you performed for the charity and whether you received any benefits in return. The charity needn't list the expenses you pay as a volunteer.

### Audits

Rescue workers might avoid the bother of audits by including brief explanations with their returns. Their statements should explain how deduction amounts were arrived at.

They shouldn't over-explain, cautions the IRS. It wants them to be concise and attach some supporting evidence, but not every receipt. They should attach copies, not originals, because the documents may become separated from their returns. Hold off on submitting originals until the agency actually asks for proof of deductions. The IRS doesn't allow electronic filing of Form 1040s with attachments. Submit paper 1040s.

### Help from the IRS

For more information, take a look at [IRS Publication 526, Charitable Contributions](#), or telephone 800-TAX-FORM.

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## 2018 Training Dates



**Technical Rescue** – Monthly, contact the [Technical Rescue Chair](#) for info

## Register for 2018

Coming soon!

P.S. We have exemptions for veterinarians and search and rescue members. Check with

the [Training Director](#) for details.

WASART NEWS is a publication of the Washington State Animal Response Team (WASART) published on or about the 15th of each month. WASART is an all-volunteer, 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization. Mail us at: WASART, P.O. Box 21, Enumclaw, WA 98022.

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