

Animals in Biohazard Situations

When Second Chance Animal Shelter in Selma faced permanent closure by December 31st, it was a race against time for all its 100+ furry residents. However, animal lovers and rescuers throughout the Central Valley came together and found them all new homes before the shelter's doors closed for good. The community was able to take every furry face shared across social media out of the danger zone just before New Year's Eve—and it was a celebratory feat to bring into 2024. But with one less shelter actively working to save lives, finding safe places for animals in need is becoming more difficult. California currently holds the highest euthanasia rate in the entire country due to overcrowding, and animal rescue has become everybody's problem—including Crime Scene Cleaners.

From owners who have passed away to extensive hoarding situations, technicians are prepared to advocate for the well-being of both people and animals after a tragedy. It is not uncommon for Crime Scene Cleaners to come across animals inside of a biohazard incident. Treats are usually already on the truck, along with a plan for safety in the event a dog or cat is discovered—especially since they may be afraid, dehydrated, or starving.

If a pet owner passes away at home alone, a pet must fend for itself until discovered. Sometimes they are found in time—but it all depends on access to food and water, and if there are any underlying health conditions. Just last month, Fresno's local Biohazard Remediation Service, Reaper Clean, responded to a difficult situation involving one deceased dog, a second dog that survived and was able to go home with extended family, and one cat that went undiscovered despite hours of searching. The team left out a can of tuna and a bowl of water before leaving, just in case. In this situation, there was a family member capable of taking them in, but it is also very common for animals that survive an unattended death to need rescue.

Hoarding is another situation where Crime Scene Cleaners find animals. If a person is hoarding animals, it will likely be a combination of biohazard cleaners, first responders, and animal rescue workers all collaborating together in order to retrieve all of the animals safely. If a person is hoarding items and simply has a normal number of pets living in this situation with them, it may be possible for the animals to be fostered while the home is being remediated. Once the home is restored and proper care is in place, the animals can return. If friendly enough, some pets can even remain on site while technicians are working, as long as there is a safe place to keep them out of the way.

In instances where animals are found deceased, Crime Scene Cleaners are often tasked with the removal as well as clean up. In California, it is legal to bury a pet in your own backyard as long as there is no health hazard or nuisance caused by it. However, it is illegal to bury animals on public property. In some California counties, deceased animals weighing less than 15 pounds may be disposed of in an outside trash receptacle as long as they are sealed in waste containers or bags prior to arriving at the landfill. Veterinarians, pet cemeteries, and city programs may also offer pick-up and/or cremation services.

Reaper Clean has assisted families in trauma situations with re-homing pets by sharing on social media, networking with legitimate rescues throughout the Central Valley, and even personally fostering while waiting for rescue. Helping animals in biohazard situations is just as important as helping families heal after tragedy—and Crime Scene Cleaners are trying to do their part in offering second chances.

For more information about Reaper Clean, go to www.reaperclean.com, email

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