

Rabbit Care in a Disaster Shelter (i.e., Temporary Shelter), Summary

For full description, see: http://curiousbunny.com/disaster_shelter.pdf

Setup of Room

Rabbits should be in a quiet room, not shared with dogs, parrots or other noisy animals. They are sensitive to heat. If it is hot (over 80 deg F (27 C)), put them in an air-conditioned room, although not with cold air blowing directly on them. Make sure there is space between cages so rabbits cannot touch noses, or separate cages with cardboard (to prevent fighting).

Equipment

Straight-sided litter boxes, water bottles 1 quart (1 liter) (about 3"x8" (8x20 cm)) with hangers (or non-tip water bowls), non-tip food bowls. For food & water bowls, heavy ceramic crocks (4"-5" (10-13 cm) diameter) are best. Hidey box. Cages must have a solid floor. No wire mesh on the floor.

For toys, use cat toys that have only hard plastic, like balls with bells inside (no feathers, fabric or soft plastic that can be chewed). Can also use toilet paper & paper towel rolls, wooden chew toys & crumpled paper.

Consumables

Timothy hay (adults), alfalfa hay (rabbits under 8 months old, nursing females and pregnant females). For food pellets, use Oxbow adult rabbit food (adults) or Oxbow young rabbit food (under 8 months, pregnant, nursing).

Paper-based litter or wood stove pellets (not clay-based or wood shavings).

Greens: romaine lettuce, green leaf lettuce, red leaf lettuce, parsley, cilantro (no iceberg lettuce). Nothing in the cabbage family as it causes gas, which can kill a rabbit (e.g., no kale, broccoli). Wash all greens thoroughly.

Treats: very small treat, for example one baby carrot.

Tasks

Each morning:

Clean all rabbits, as follows. Dump litter from litter box into trash can, wipe down litter box (use water/vinegar 1:1 spray bottle), fill with new litter. Wipe down floor of cage (use water or water/vinegar spray bottle). Put litter box in back of cage.

After all rabbits have been cleaned, with clean hands, feed & water all rabbits, as follows. Put 1/2 cup (100 ml) (or unlimited for young) of food pellets into food bowl. Put food bowl away from water. Fill water bottle to the top. Tap end of water bottle tube to make sure it is functioning. For water bowls, dump water, wipe down, fill.

Put two large handfuls of hay onto the floor of the cage next to but outside of the litter box, away from water. Give enough to last 24 hours.

Give one treat & two handfuls of greens on floor of cage (not in food bowl).

Evening:

Same as morning, except without cleaning.

Other

On whiteboard, write down: emergency numbers, supervisor & rabbit specialists' names & numbers, animal number & cage number of each rabbit (update when rabbits come & go). Draw map of cages (showing cage #'s).

Rabbits can be severely injured if not handled properly. Do not pick up a rabbit unless you know how to do it properly.

When a cage is no longer needed (rabbit has left), put cage card (dirty) on clipboard. When have time, clean out all debris. Use water/vinegar solution to remove urine & poop. Spray with Rescue Solution, let sit for 5 minutes. For food & water bowls/bottles, then rinse with water. For all, air or wipe dry. Put cage card (clean) on clipboard.

Rabbits can have a bacterium that shows no symptoms in rabbits but can be fatal to guinea pigs so handle guinea pigs first.

If there is a rabbit with a medical issue (not eating/drinking, discharge from nose or eyes, fleas/ticks, etc.), mark on Animal Care Sheet (& highlight it), put cage card (medical) on clipboard and note on whiteboard.

When transporting a rabbit in a carrier, put a small blanket or pee pad on the floor so the rabbit does not slide around.

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