

Local fire departments receive lifesaving donations to help pets in danger

By: LaSaundra Brown, Reporter



When Master Firefighter Vicki Cheeseman goes to a fire, her job often involves saving an animals life as well as a humans

It's very common," she says. "Almost every family has some sort of pet, and we understand pets are a part of the family."

That's why Cheeseman is all smiles about the Knoxville Fire Department's new pet oxygen masks. Pet Safe Village donated 32 pet oxygen masks kits to Knoxville and Rural Metro. That means each fire station in the city and county each have one. The kits actually contain three sizes of masks. One is for cats, and two others are for small or large dogs.

"In the past we've had to use human oxygen masks, which of course don't fit," Cheeseman says.

But pet oxygen masks fit perfectly around the snout of a dog, or the mouth cats and other pets.

"They provide the proper amount of oxygen to the dog, therefore there's a better chance or resuscitation," Cheeseman says. "They won't allow us to give too much oxygen due to the overflow vents on the side."

Right now, neither the K.F.D. or Rural Metro are required to carry life saving gear for pets, and there is no money in the budget for an animal rescue.

"Many departments around the country already have these, so we're looking forward to

being able to have this equipment on the truck," Cheeseman says.

An anonymous donor also gave 20 more pet oxygen masks to the K.F.D. The extra masks are a great help because that means each fire truck in the city will get one. K.F.D. will start using the new pet oxygen masks in August.