

CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) AND ANIMALS

Dear Fellow Animal Control Officer, Animal Welfare Friend,

Over the past few weeks, the corona virus pandemic has greatly affected our lives, and I recognize that this is a challenging time. I want to assure you that **The Animal Control Officers Association of Mass (ACOAM) Board of Directors continues to prioritize the health and safety of our Animal Control Officers, Constituents, and the animals in our care.** We want to stress there is **no current evidence** that suggests the corona virus can be transmitted to or from companion animals. We have been taking necessary measures to mitigate concerns around public interaction with ACOAM's Disaster Committee we have gathered some information that may be helpful below as always your safety should come first Stay Safe and Healthy.

Interim Guidance for Public Health Professionals Managing People With COVID-19 in Home Care and Isolation Who Have Pets or Other Animals

Purpose:

This interim guidance is for public health professionals managing the [home care and isolation of people with COVID-19](#) who have pets or other animals (including service or working animals) in the same home. The intent of this guidance is to facilitate preparedness and establish practices that can help people and animals stay safe and healthy. **At this time, there is no evidence that companion animals, including pets, can spread COVID-19.** States may have their own specific requirements for these circumstances; this guidance provides recommendations for a conservative approach due to the unknown risks to pets and other animals. Guidance is based on the limited available data and general recommendations for zoonotic disease infection prevention and control. This is a rapidly evolving situation. Guidance will be updated as new information becomes available.

Considerations for COVID-19 patients under home care and isolation who have pets or other animals:

People with COVID-19 should be advised to tell their public health point of contact that they have pets or other animals in their home.

[In addition to other prevention measures](#), people with COVID-19 who are identified by public health officials as requiring home care and isolation should be advised to limit interaction with pets and other animals. Specifically, while these people are [symptomatic](#), they should maintain

separation from pets [as they would with other household members](#), and avoid direct contact with pets, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food. Service animals should be permitted to remain with their handlers.

If possible, a household member should be designated to care for pets in the home. If the individual in home care and isolation must care for pet(s), including service animals, they should ensure they wash their hands before and after caring for pets and wear a facemask while interacting with pets, until they are medically cleared to return to normal activities.

At this point there is no evidence that companion animals, including pets, can spread COVID-19.

When a public health professional is notified of a pet, or other animal, in the home of a person with COVID-19, they should notify the [state public health veterinarian.pdf icon external icon](#) or other designated animal health professional.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available

Infectious disease experts and multiple international and domestic human and animal health organizations agree there is no evidence at this point to indicate that pets become ill with COVID-19 or that they spread it to other animals, including people.

If you are not ill with COVID-19, you can interact with your pet as you normally would, including walking, feeding, and playing. You should continue to practice good hygiene during those interactions (e.g., wash hands before and after interacting with your pet; ensure your pet is kept well-groomed; regularly clean your pet's food and water bowls, bedding material, and toys).

Out of an abundance of caution, it is recommended that those ill with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus. Have another member of your household take care of walking, feeding, and playing with your pet. If you have a service animal or you must care for your pet, then wear a facemask; don't share food, kiss, or hug them; and wash your hands before and after any contact with them.

As always, careful hand washing and other infection control practices can greatly reduce the chance of spreading any disease.

At this time, there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19.

Decontamination is mandatory for all animals that have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus. Clean animal coat thoroughly, removing matted hair as needed, following current best practices for animal decontamination. Please reach out to ACOAM for De-con protocol or CODE THREE Associates <http://code3associates.org> NACA <https://www.nacanet.org> NARSC <http://thenarsc.org> our local NGO IFAW www.ifaw.org

Should I be concerned about pets or other animals and COVID – 19?

While this virus seems to have emerged from an animal source, it is now spreading from person-to-person in China. There is no reason to think that any animals including pets in the United States might be a source of infection with this new coronavirus. To date, CDC has not received any reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19. At this time, there is no evidence that companion animals including pets can spread COVID-19. However, since animals can spread other diseases to people, it's always a good idea to wash your hands after being around animals.

Should I avoid contact with pets or other animals if I am sick with COVID -19?

You should restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick with COVID-19, just like you would around other people. Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people sick with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus. When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick. If you are sick with COVID-19, avoid contact with your pet, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food. If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with pets and wear a facemask.

Q: If you have people in the same house—some quarantined, some not—can the pet visit both?


A: No. Out of an abundance of caution, the answer should be no.

Q: What should we be doing right now to protect our pets?

A: It is important to include pets in your family's preparedness planning. If you get sick and are quarantined, you should make sure you have extra pet food on hand. And you should make your neighbors aware of any feeding, walking, or medications that your pets need in case you can't make it back home. Get prepared now. I live alone with my cat. I have extra food on hand. Even if he doesn't need it [soon], he's going to eat it eventually.

COVID-19 FAQs

Q: WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PREPARE FOR MY PET'S CARE IN THE EVENT I CONTRACT COVID-19?



A: Identify another person in your household who is willing and able to care for your pet. Make sure you have an emergency kit prepared, with at least two weeks' worth of your pet's food and any needed medications.

#COVID19

AVMA