

Guidance for Animal Shelters Regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Protect Employees and Volunteers

There is no evidence that companion animals can spread COVID-19 or that infection would be serious for them. The virus spreads primarily from person to person. The health and safety of employees and volunteers should be the focus of every animal shelter.

- Employees and volunteers who are sick or show signs of respiratory illness should not work.
- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water before eating, after using the bathroom, coughing or sneezing, and touching surfaces. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available and there is no visible dirt on your hands.
- Frequently sanitize common areas with EPA-registered antimicrobial products for use against COVID-19 that are safe to use in and around the animals and shelter.

Support and Inform Your Community

- Remind community members to have a plan in place for pets.
- Identify a family member/friend who can care for pets if needed.
- Have crates, food, and extra supplies on hand for quick movement of pets.
- Keep all animal vaccines up to date and document all medications and dosing
- Pets should have ID: collar with ID tag and microchip (best practice is microchipping).

Prepare Shelter for Increased Intake

While mass intake is not likely, people who contract the virus and are hospitalized may not have someone to care for their pets. Steps to prepare include:

- Free up shelter capacity with increased adoption effort, rescue partners, and foster homes for animals already at the shelter.
- Prepare a facility plan with your shelter veterinarian on intake and isolation protocols.
- Be prepared to identify, isolate, or divert animals that may have been exposed to COVID-19. This includes securing disinfectants and personal protective equipment that may be used safely around animals. Identify locations available for fostering, identify capacity needs, and maintain an updated list.
- Have a written protocol in place to follow and provide regular staff updates to staff.
- Secure additional food/supplies for increased intake, including foster network needs.

Prepare for Staff Illness:

- Strongly encourage your employees and volunteers to stay home when sick.
- Check availability of volunteers who can assist in a staff shortage.
- Connect with local boarding facilities, surrounding shelters and rescues and communicate plans.

For more information about COVID-19, go to: www.kdhe.ks.gov/coronavirus.