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COVID-19 Health and Safety Recommendations for Veterinary Practices

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Providers are encouraged to check the Division of Consumer Affairs [website](#) for additional information.

**The State of New Jersey COVID-19 Information Hub is [here](#).
The NJ Department of Health COVID-19 Information Hub for Health Care Providers is [here](#).**

Coronavirus disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) is the disease caused by a new coronavirus first detected in humans in December 2019. Under Governor Philip D. Murphy, the State of New Jersey has implemented extraordinary measures to combat the spread of the disease, and now is taking action to return, where appropriate, to ordinary operations informed by the knowledge acquired through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Veterinarians now are authorized to provide the full scope of veterinary services, including all urgent, non-urgent and routine veterinary services, and including spays and neuters, in an office setting.

The Division recommends that veterinarians respond to the remaining challenges presented by COVID-19 by implementing the following best practices:

1. Avoid person-to-person contact with animal owners/clients who have COVID-19

- a. Utilize telemedicine to screen clients, triage patients and prioritize urgent visits.
- b. Tell clients who are COVID-19 positive or symptomatic that they should delay care, if appropriate, or have a friend or family member outside the client’s household who is neither COVID-19 positive nor symptomatic bring the animal to the office.

2. Adopt enhanced office cleaning and disinfection protocols

- a. Follow CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting all surfaces, including guidance found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/veterinarians.html> .
- b. Dispose of any medical waste produced during the care of animals that may be infected with SARS-CoV-2, consistent with CDC guidance at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/veterinarians.html>.
- c. Allow all staff to have break time for repeated hand washing throughout the day and after removing PPE.
- d. Provide supplies for regular hand washing with soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% to 95% alcohol or antiseptic hand wash and have staff practice respiratory hygiene (coughing and sneezing) and proper tissue usage etiquettes, and use no-touch receptacles for disposal.

3. Establish rigorous protections for staff

- a. Comply with all leave laws, require staff to stay home if they are sick, and isolate them and send them home if they become sick at work.
- b. Adopt a clear, written policy regarding the use of PPE, including masks. This policy should include, at a minimum, when and whether staff and clients must use PPE, including masks, and whether that masking requirement depends on the vaccination status of the staff member or client. Pursuant to Executive Order 242:

- i. Individuals who are not fully vaccinated should continue to wear masks and socially distance where possible;
- ii. Veterinary businesses may impose stricter requirements regarding mask-wearing in indoor settings for employees, customers, guests, and other individuals, where otherwise consistent with federal and State law;
- iii. Businesses may not prohibit individuals from wearing a mask, or penalize or retaliate against a staff member or client for electing to wear a mask.

For additional information, see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/veterinarians.html>; <https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-242.pdf>

- c. Train staff in the proper techniques for donning and doffing PPE and for disposal or laundering of PPE.

4. Stay Informed About Developments and Obligations

- a. Review guidance issued by the Department of Agriculture on testing animals for possible SARS-CoV-2 infection, located at <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/pdf/NJDA%20Testing%20Animals%20for%20SARS-Cov-2.pdf>, and monitor for updates on an ongoing basis.
- b. Review guidelines, directives and FAQs issued by the CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/veterinarians.html>; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>; and <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-after-vaccination.html>, and monitor for updates on an ongoing basis.
- c. Review guidelines, directives and FAQs issued by the New Jersey Department of Health at https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/covid2019_professionals.shtml, https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/COVID_Domestic_Companion_Animals.pdf, and https://www.state.nj.us/health/vph/documents/FAQ_Animal_Related.pdf; the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners; and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and monitor for updates on an ongoing basis.
- d. Record any instances of COVID-19 among staff and maintain an appointment book to facilitate contact tracing and submit such information to the Department of Health if requested.