

Department of Agriculture Issues Guidance to Ensure Continuity for Animal Shelters and Boarding Facilities,

Offers Advice for Pet Owners

Harrisburg, PA – In recognition of the critical role boarding kennels, doggie daycares, shelters, sanctuaries, and rescues play in ensuring essential workers and at-risk individuals have a safe place to house dogs and the need for continued care for Pennsylvania’s strays, the Department of Agriculture today issued guidance for protecting staff and volunteers of such facilities. Advice was also offered to pet owners to protect themselves and their furry friends during COVID-19 mitigation.

“Animal companions play a significant role for Pennsylvania’s families and communities,” said Secretary Redding. “It’s important that facilities are available to care for pets as healthcare workers and other essential employees work long hours on the frontlines of COVID-19 mitigation; and that strays waiting in shelters for a forever home can continue to have reliable safe havens.”

Boarding kennels, doggie daycares, shelters, sanctuaries, and rescue facilities are encouraged to continue operations, but the decision is a voluntary, business-by-business decision. Those that remain open should apply this guidance to their operations in an effort to minimize risk for exposure to COVID-19 for employees, volunteers, and Pennsylvanians using their services.

The [Guidance for Boarding Facilities and Shelters](#) includes procedures for preparing the employees and volunteers, preparing facilities, and how to intake animals being received from COVID-19 positive homes.

Pennsylvania pet owners were also [offered the following advice](#):

- Identify a family member or friend who can care for pets in case of illness.
- Have crates, food, and extra supplies on hand for quick movement of pets.
- Be sure all vaccines are up to date, in the event boarding becomes necessary.
 - Make sure you have proof of current vaccinations.
 - If you do not have paperwork, reach out to your veterinarian for a copy (a digital version on a mobile device is acceptable proof).
 - Failure to have proof of current vaccinations could result in your dog needing revaccinated.
- Ensure all medications are documented with dosages and administering directions, including the prescription and contact information for your veterinarian.
- Pets should have identification: collar with dog license and rabies tag, or any other vanity style tag with owner information. Information can also be placed on the pet’s cage depending on the type of pet.
- Place a list of pets in the home on your front door for emergency responders. Include a description of each animal, location in home or on the property, and any other pertinent information specific to each animal.

According to the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 is not zoonotic and cannot be contracted or transmitted by cats and dogs.

Additional resources:

- [Disaster Plan for Pets](#)
- [Pet Disaster Preparedness, CDC](#)
- [PA State Animal Response Team, on standby for emergency services](#)
- [Facts from the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association about COVID-19](#)
- [Steps to expand foster networks during this critical time](#)

For information as it relates to agriculture during COVID-19 mitigation in Pennsylvania visit agriculture.pa.gov/COVID. For the most accurate, timely information related to Health in Pennsylvania, visit on.pa.gov/coronavirus.

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