



# Mississippi Board of Animal Health

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**James A. Watson, D.V.M.**  
State Veterinarian

## Interim Guidance for Updated Executive Order April 20-27, 2020 Humane Organizations, Groomers, and Boarding Facilities

The goal of this document is to help the listed organizations address their mission while keeping employees, volunteers and the public safe from COVID-19 while meeting the intent of the Governor's Order. Intake, adoptions, boarding, grooming, and transports were stopped on April 4, 2020 in response to the Governor's Executive Order to shelter-in-place.

Based on the new order, after 8:00am on April 20, 2020, humane organizations, shelters, fosters, groomers, and boarding facilities may begin service if they are able to do so "curbside." In the process of returning to business, it should be kept in mind that *the risk of transmission of COVID-19 is still ongoing* and steps should be taken to minimize transmission of the virus between people. The steps outlined below are meant to provide guidance on how to successfully implement this phase.

### **Humane Organizations**

We recommend a three-tiered approach that each organization can address *at their own pace* when they are ready. It is recommended that organizations start with the first tier, then move to the second, and then the third as appropriate. The three tiers are adoption, transport and intake. **In all aspects the staff and volunteers should follow CDC/AVMA guidance, and make adjustments as the guidance changes.\*, \*\* (see links below)**

Some primary considerations are limiting gatherings of more than 10 people, keeping a social distance of at least 6 feet between people, utilizing cloth masks, and frequent handwashing of at least 20 seconds or use of at least 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

According to the CDC...

*By far, the greatest risk of COVID-19 exposure to staff, volunteers, and the public at animal shelters comes from person-to-person contact. Shelters should follow [CDC guidance](#) on preventing COVID-19 exposure in businesses to help you plan, prepare, and respond to COVID-19. In particular, staff and volunteers should not come to work if sick, and should take [steps](#) to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Interventions to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission are the same at an animal shelter or clinic as in other aspects of daily life; follow up to date information from the CDC on how to protect yourself.\*\*\**

\*According to the American Veterinary Medical Association:

Interim recommendations for intake of companion animals from households where humans with COVID-19 are present: <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19/interim-recommendations-intake-companion-animals-households-humans-COVID-19-are-present>

\*\*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: How to Protect Yourself and Others:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>



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## *Tier 1: Adoptions*

Adoptions can take place while following CDC guidance. All adoptions will be done by curbside service. Examples include:

- Adoption by appointment.
  - The potential adopter picks out an animal online. Many humane organizations have their adoptable animals listed on their website, Petfinder or Adopt-a-Pet.
  - They complete an adoption form online that is not accepted until the animal is adopted. The humane organization may have an adoption form on their website or they could email an adoption form to the potential adopter.
  - One family member schedules a time to meet the dog.
  - The dog is brought out to the car by one employee/volunteer/foster wearing a mask and gloves. Eye protection is optional, but encouraged. They adhere to social distancing and use a 6 foot leash.
  - If they decide to adopt, the adopter pays by Paypal/Venmo/credit card online. If they must write a check or pay with cash, the payment should be wiped down with a sanitizing wipe.
  - If the animal is a cat at a shelter or foster home, the cat could be placed in a carrier and put inside the car with the potential adopter for them to meet.
- Adoptions online.
  - The potential adopter is sent a video of the animal or they look at it on Zoom.
  - The adopter completes the adoption form and payment online. The humane organization may have an adoption form on their website or they could email an adoption form to the potential adopter.
  - The animal is put in a crate outside the shelter door or foster home for the adopter to pick up at a scheduled time.
  - There is no contact between the adopter or the employee/volunteer/foster.

## *Tier 2: Transport*

Make sure that sending animals to another state is in compliance with that state's current laws and regulations during the COVID-19 outbreak. An example of how transport could proceed:

- Employee/Volunteer/Foster (wearing masks, gloves, while following social distancing guidelines - eye protection is optional, but encouraged) at the Source Shelter or Foster Home place animals in sanitized crates.
- Crates are transported to vet's office for health certificates unless the Source Shelter has an on-site vet or a vet that visits the shelter. Make an appointment prior to taking the animals to the veterinarian's office. The veterinary practice should be doing curbside service as well.
- After the health certificate is completed the animal, in their crate, is returned to the shelter/foster home.



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- On transport day, Employee/Volunteer/Foster (wearing masks, gloves, while following social distancing guidelines - eye protection is optional, but encouraged) at the Source Shelter or Foster Home place animals in sanitized crates.
- Paperwork is taped to the top of crate.
- The crates are loaded on the transport vehicle.
- The driver takes the animals to the Destination Shelter.
- The animals are taken out of the crates by Destination Shelter employees/volunteers (wearing masks, gloves, while following social distancing guidelines - eye protection is optional, but encouraged). The crates are placed back in vehicle and sanitized when they return to Source Shelter.

If the animal is moved through a Hub Shelter, there are additional steps.

- The Source Shelter moves the animals to the Hub Shelter. (This is typically a larger, regional shelter that receives animals from smaller shelters in their area.)
- The Hub Shelter Employees/Volunteers (wearing masks, while following social distancing guidelines - eye protection is optional, but encouraged) remove animals from crates in an isolation room and do a basic health check.
- Animals are placed back in their original crate.
- Crates are loaded onto the Hub Shelter transport vehicle and driven to the Destination Shelter.
- The animals are taken out of the crates by the Destination Shelter employees/volunteers (wearing masks, gloves, while following social distancing guidelines - eye protection is optional, but encouraged.). The crates are placed back in transport vehicle and sanitized when they return to Hub Shelter.
- The Hub Shelter sends crates back to the Source Shelter when they receive new animals from that shelter.

## *Tier 3: Intake*

Intake at shelters will be done curb-side. No visitors will enter the shelter.

- Shelter/Foster Organizations should follow their Capacity for Care guidelines as to how many animals they can take in.
- Intake should be done by appointment.
  - The person relinquishing an animal makes an appointment at the shelter or with the foster organization coordinator. The person is told they must wear a mask to relinquish the animal.
  - The person completes a relinquishment form online, if possible. If not, the relinquishment form is emailed to them and they should email it back to the shelter/foster organization, or take it with them to the shelter or designated meeting spot for foster organization. If they take the paperwork with them, the paperwork should be wiped down with a sanitizing wipe upon receipt.
  - If there is a relinquishment fee, that should be paid online, if possible. If they must pay with cash or a check, that should be wiped down with a sanitizing wipe upon receipt.
  - The person (wearing a mask) takes the animal to the shelter or designated meeting spot for foster organizations.
  - One Employee/Volunteer (wearing a mask, gloves, following social distancing guidelines - eye protection is optional, but encouraged) meets the person outside the shelter or at the designated meeting spot for foster organizations to receive the animal.



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- The Employee/Volunteer places animal in kennel/cage.
- The Employee/Volunteer washes their hands.

## **Sanitation guidance:**

- Cleaning and disinfection procedures should be strictly adhered to during this time. COVID-19 and other coronaviruses are destroyed by most of the common agents used for sanitation in an animal shelter.
- Remember to clean High Touch Surfaces such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, sinks, etc.
- Launder items according to the manufacturer's instruction. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely. Wear gloves when touching dirty laundry.

## **Groomers**

- Intake should be done by appointment and curbside.
  - The owner bringing in an animal makes an appointment at the facility. The owner is told they must wear a mask to bring in the animal.
  - The owner is emailed any forms that must be filled out. If they take the paperwork with them to the facility, the paperwork should be wiped down with a sanitizing wipe upon receipt.
- Employees should wear a cloth mask and gloves -eye protection is optional but encouraged.
- Limit the number of persons grooming so that groomers can maintain social distancing of 6 feet or more between stations.
- Have one table tether and loop per pet per day.
- Disinfect tables and cages according to label directions in between each animal.
- Avoid high velocity drying if possible.
- Fees should be paid online if possible. If paid onsite, wipe down any cash, checks or credit cards with sanitizing wipes or use a glove to handle payment. Use one glove per owner.
- At animal pickup, one Employee (wearing a mask, gloves, following social distancing guidelines - eye protection is optional, but encouraged) meets the owner outside the facility to transfer the animal. Place the animal in the car maintaining social distancing.

## **Boarding Facilities**

- Intake should be done by appointment and curbside.
  - The owner bringing in an animal makes an appointment at the facility. The owner is told they must wear a mask to bring in the animal.
  - The owner is emailed any forms that must be filled out. If they take the paperwork with them, the paperwork should be wiped down with a sanitizing wipe upon receipt.
  - The boarding fee should be paid online, if possible. If they must pay with cash, credit card or a check at curbside, that should be wiped down with a sanitizing wipe upon receipt or the person handling the money can use a glove to handle it. Use one glove per person per transaction.



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- The Employee (wearing a mask) takes the animal to the designated boarding area.
- The Employee places animal in kennel/cage.
- The Employee washes their hands.
- At animal pickup, one Employee (wearing a mask, gloves, following social distancing guidelines - eye protection is optional, but encouraged) meets the owner outside the facility to transfer the animal. Place the animal in the car maintaining social distancing.

## **CDC guidance:**

- Employees can [take steps to protect themselves](#) at work and at home. Older people and people with serious chronic medical conditions are at [higher risk for complications](#).
- Follow the policies and procedures of your employer related to illness, cleaning and disinfecting, and work meetings and travel.
- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care. Learn [what to do if you are sick](#).
- Inform your supervisor if you have a sick family member at home with COVID-19. Learn what to do [if someone in your house is sick](#).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash and immediately wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Learn more about [coughing and sneezing](#) etiquette on the CDC website.
- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs. Dirty surfaces can be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection. To disinfect, use [products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2external icon](#), the cause of COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface.
- Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.
- Practice social distancing by avoiding [large gatherings](#) and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible.