



March 20, 2020

To: Georgia Animal Control Officers

In consultation with the Georgia Department of Public Health, the Georgia Department of Agriculture would like to provide the following guidance when performing official duties.

Guidance for Animal Control Officers during COVID-19

Animal Control Officers may come into contact with members of the general public while performing their normal duties, including patrols, special investigations of public complaints, commercial inspections, and impounding and releasing animals to the public. Animal Control Offices can consult some of the following information in their efforts to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission to employees and the public.

Occupational Safety and Health Act guidance for workplaces regarding COVID-19 has been linked below. This document can be used to assess and classify the level of risk associated with the normal operations of Animal Control Offices, and also includes steps that can be taken to lower exposure risk. These measures include but are not limited to:

- a) The promotion of frequent handwashing by providing areas and soap for handwashing
- b) Encouraging employees to stay home if they have a fever or feel sick
- c) Encouraging respiratory etiquette, such as covering coughs and sneezes
- d) Disinfecting frequently used surfaces and equipment often and thoroughly
- e) Considering strategies to minimize face-to-face contact, including limiting operations to only that which is determined to be essential

For more detailed information regarding exposure risk assessment and risk reducing strategies, please see the link below for the OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces.

For Animal Control Officers interacting with the public as a part of essential duties, CDC guidelines for prevention may be consulted for risk reduction. The CDC recommends frequent handwashing and maintaining 6 feet of distance from others.

An Animal Control Officer may need to interact with the pet of a person with respiratory illness. The American Veterinary Medical Association has also provided information regarding animal care during the COVID-19 response. As the role of animals as fomites for transmission of COVID-19 is not fully understood, the AVMA guidelines recommend using latex gloves and handwashing after handling the pet of sick person. See the AVMA links below for additional information regarding animals and COVID-19.

OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

CDC Interim guidelines for businesses and employers

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

CDC "How to Prepare"

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Fprevention.html

AVMA What Veterinarians Need to Know

https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/COVID-19-What-veterinarians-need-to-know_031520.pdf

AVMA Veterinarian and Veterinary Clinic FAQs

https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/covid-19-faq-vet-clinics_031520.pdf