



Guidance for Facilities Handling Animals and Interacting with the Public

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COVID-19 is currently circulating in Iowa communities. All Iowa businesses have a responsibility to take measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is critical that any business that interacts with people and animals institute immediate changes to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among staff and people that enter the facility. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) and the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) strongly recommend that all businesses that handle animals and interact with the public adhere to the following guidance.

Critically evaluate each function of the business, eliminate interactions between people, and incorporate social distancing. The following protective measures should be incorporated into daily business activities:

- Sick employees and volunteers should stay home.
- Screen all persons entering the business by asking if they have a fever or respiratory illness. If anyone indicates that they have been ill or is visibly showing signs of illness (i.e., coughing and sneezing), deny entry into the facility.
- Restrict or minimize public access to the facility. Put into place practices to eliminate or minimize staff and public interactions (i.e. meet people at car side, close waiting rooms, accept electronic payments, etc.).
- Implement internal business practices to eliminate or minimize interactions between employees (i.e. stagger shifts, clean and disinfect stations during and between shifts, separate work stations, stagger breaks, schedule drop off appointments).
- Create backup plans with employees/volunteers and check availability to see who can assist during a potential staff shortage. This could include:
 - Prioritize critical functions and develop plans to operate at reduced staff numbers.
 - Cross train employees/volunteers to backfill vacancies caused by illness.
 - Identify additional employees/volunteers that could help fill vacancies.
- Implement biosecurity practices that include frequent **hand washing**, frequent sanitizing of common areas, and no shared items between people.
 - **Wash hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects, surfaces, and common areas with a EPA-registered [disinfectant](#) effective against COVID-19.

All Iowans have a responsibility to mitigate the impact of this public health crisis.

Resources:

- EPA-registered COVID-19 disinfectants: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- IDPH Novel Coronavirus: <https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus>
- American Veterinary Medical Association: <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19> and <https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/covid-19-faq-pet-owners.pdf>
- Iowa Veterinary Medical Association: <https://www.iowavma.org/content.asp?contentid=326>