



Sheltering Pets

This information provides basic environmental guidelines to prevent disease transmission from animals to the shelter population. If the shelter chooses to accept pets (service animals are not considered pets), refer to the agency responsible for caring for shelter animals or to a veterinarian for more specific guidelines on providing proper animal care. More detailed information is also available at: [Best Practices for Pet-Friendly Shelters](#) and [Control of Animal Disease in Shelters](#).

KNOW WHAT ANIMALS YOU CAN AND CANNOT ACCEPT

- ☐ Dogs, cats, rabbits, and birds are permissible.
- ☐ Consult a veterinarian or animal care professional before accepting animals other than cats and dogs to ensure the shelter can meet their needs.
- ☐ Do not accept reptiles (except turtles), amphibians, fish, insects/spiders, farm animals (including horses), and animals kept for racing purposes.

CHOOSE A LOCATION

- ☐ If possible, locate animals in buildings separate from the shelter as:
 - o Animals are more likely to bite or scratch their owners, other people, or other pets in stressful situations such as an emergency event.
 - o Crowded conditions, physical stress, exposure to flood waters, and contaminated food and water can increase the probability of certain germs spreading between animals and people.
 - o There may be shelter residents who are allergic to pets with fur or feathers, some of whom may not have access to their usual allergy medications.
- ☐ To select a location for housing animals:
 - o Evaluate the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system to determine whether the possible spread of allergens and pathogens from animal to human areas of the facility must be addressed.
 - o House animals away from food or break areas.
 - o Establish animal housing in an area with:
 - Nonabsorbent flooring (concrete, tile, or vinyl) that is easy to clean and disinfect
 - OR**
 - Plastic sheeting over carpeting
 - Handwashing sink nearby
 - Water available for general cleaning and disinfection
 - Adequate lighting

REGISTER PETS

- ☐ Keep animals (and people) 6 feet apart during registration.
- ☐ When registering a pet, ask if the animal has been in contact with a resident with known or suspected COVID-19 within the last 14 days.

- Contact can be:
 - Being within approximately 6 feet of the person giving kisses or licks and/or sharing bedding or food with the person
 - Being snuggled, pet, coughed, sneezed, or spit on by the person
- If yes, place the animal in the animal isolation area.

☐ Limit access to animals to one healthy family member for the length of the stay.

ESTABLISH A PET ISOLATION AREA

- ☐ Provide an isolation area for pets with signs of or that had contact with a resident with known or suspected COVID-19 ([Signs of Covid-19 in Pets](#)).
- ☐ Ensure anyone feeding, walking, or exercising animals exposed to COVID-19 or showing signs of illness should wear a face mask and disposable gloves.
 - Dispose of gloves after each use.
- ☐ If the animal gets sick/sicker, notify:
 - A veterinarian of a possible exposure to COVID-19

AND

The City of Houston Bureau of Rabies and Animal Control (BARC) at (713) 827-0311

Do not put face masks on animals even if they appear sick.

ENSURE REGULAR CLEANING AND WASTE REMOVAL

- ☐ Clean and then disinfect cages thoroughly between animals. Cages must be clean in order for disinfectant to be effective.
- ☐ Remove and dispose of animal waste in a timely manner.
- ☐ Provide signage and designate a room or outdoor space as a "dog relief area."
 - Line indoor relief area with plastic and cover with newspapers.
 - Provide animal waste bags, special waste receptacles, and hand sanitizer in outdoor relief area.
- ☐ Clean and disinfect animal areas regularly even if pet owners are responsible for cleaning up after their own pets.

Quaternary ammonium compound (follow manufacturer's directions for disinfecting) and chlorine bleach (1/2 cup per 1 gallon water) are effective against most bacteria and some viruses found in animals.

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