



## **COVID-19 GUIDANCE:** Kennels, Pet Shops, Dealers, Breeding

The PA Department of Agriculture has developed the following guidance and recommendations for pet shops, dealers, and breeders to limit exposure and risk related to COVID-19 (novel coronavirus). As always, it is critical to practice biosecurity for the safety of animals and the public. The Department of Health worker safety [order](#) makes mandatory many aspects of this guidance for all life sustaining businesses and those with a waiver to continue physical operations.

Life sustaining businesses and those with a waiver to be open should review and adjust operating procedures to minimize risk, take measures to protect their employees, send home sick employees, and minimize or eliminate group settings.

### **Prepare Workforce:**

- Provide guidance for hand washing and handling materials.
- Stagger lunch times or provide additional space to increase distancing of employees.
- All sick employees should stay home.
- Inform employees where they can find sanitizing materials.
- Provide [cloth face coverings](#) to all employees.
- Require customers and volunteers to wear cloth face coverings when in the business.
- Encourage employees to avoid large gatherings and practice social distancing during non-work hours to minimize exposure.
- Eliminate group settings of more than 10 people while maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet. This includes groups of employees and the public.
- Disinfect all door handles, knobs, latches, floor mats, leashes and other commonly contacted surfaces with an EPA-registered disinfectant.
- Sanitize common gathering places.
- Follow CDC [recommendations](#) for cleaning and disinfecting your facility.

### **Social distancing for pet shops, dealers, and breeders**

- Make appointments to see a puppy and limit the number of puppies shown.
- Only allow one customer at a time to participate in in-person visits to limit risk of exposure to staff, volunteers, and customers.
- Promote virtual meet and greets whenever possible to limit risk.
- Explain that the buyer's health and safety are as important as the health and well-being of your family and pets.
- Discuss what the customer should expect during the visit prior to arrival.

- Ask the client if they or anyone in their family has had a cold, flu, allergy symptoms, or been exposed to, contracted, or recovered from COVID-19.
- Inquire if anyone has recently traveled by air or left the country, or if anyone works in the medical field, first responder, or other high-risk profession.
- Ask that young, older, and immuno-compromised persons do not come to the appointment. Limit the number of visitors.
- Limit contact with customers. Do not shake hands and disinfect all touch points.
- Wash hands often with warm water and soap. Use plenty of hand sanitizer, if available, as well as keeping the proper social distance of at least 6 feet.
- Require visitors to wear a face mask.
- Consider doing all transactions outside the home. Do not restrict yourself to small, confined spaces.
- Provide puppy buyers with shoe covers and rubber gloves if available.
- Do not hand the puppy to the customer, this will put you too close to the customer. Set the puppy on the ground or floor and step away.
- Discourage face to face contact with the puppies and require customers to wash or sanitize their hands prior to petting the animal and in between touching different animals.
- If you do paperwork with your customers, give them a pen which they can keep.
- Keep the time spent with customers to an absolute minimum.
- If the customer does not take the puppy, immediately bathe the puppy or clean with canine disinfecting wipes.
- Consider printing and posting these guidelines in and around your home and kennel.
- After the visit disinfect all touch points, door handles and knobs, countertops, and other commonly contacted surfaces.
- Sanitize common gathering places - lobbies, office spaces, lunch rooms, locker facilities, etc.

Should your puppy buyers have questions about pet ownership during the COVID-19 pandemic please refer them to this [guidance](#) from the CDC for pet owners.

Organizations which typically utilize transports to move animals to and from their facility for any reason should refer to [guidance](#) from the University of Wisconsin - Madison School of Veterinary Medicine.

Breeders should be careful to ensure they have a market before breeding dogs given all of the uncertainty of COVID-19. Protecting yourself and your family should be of utmost importance during these uncertain times.

It is important to have written documentation of your business operations in case of illness, so that another family member, neighbor, or other person can step in to assist if you need to be isolated or treated due to COVID-19.

*Be sure to regularly check the resource sites as they are updated frequently.*