

## Guidance for Animal Shelters During Re-Opening

The state's framework to resume business operations — “Ad Astra: A Plan to Re-Open Kansas” — provides guidance for businesses statewide as they resume operations. As of Tuesday, May 26, 2020, these are no longer enforceable under a statewide executive order, but they remain in place as **recommendations only** for individuals and businesses across Kansas. Statewide travel-related quarantines established by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) are still in effect.

It is important to note that **local governments retain the authority to impose more restrictive orders or provisions**, and there no longer exists a statewide protection for those businesses performing essential functions as previously identified in the Kansas Essential Functions Framework (KEFF).

**We strongly encourage facilities to exercise ongoing safety measures** to ensure that their employees remain healthy and they can continue to function, and also to assure their customers and community that the facility provides a safe, reliable environment.

### What should animal shelters be doing during Re-Opening?

- Managers of animal shelters should continue to implement operational changes to protect their employees.
- The following best practices have been developed to ensure continuity of operations and protection of animal health and welfare while also safeguarding the health of your workers and their families.
- Central to the efforts to protect public health within your organization are these principles:
  - Maintain at least six feet of distance between individuals, be they customers or employees, as much as possible.
  - Follow fundamental cleaning and public health practices detailed on [coronavirus.kdheks.gov](https://www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus).
  - Avoid instances in which large groups of individuals are in one location and unable to maintain a six-foot distance with only infrequent or incidental moments of closer proximity. This includes limiting areas and instances in which physical distancing is not maintained, such as in entrances, lobbies, break rooms, etc.

## **Best Practices to Protect Employees and Volunteers**

There is no evidence that companion animals, including pets, can spread COVID-19 to people or that they might be a source of infection. The virus spreads primarily from person to person. The health and safety of employees and volunteers should be the focus of every animal shelter.

- Limit staff to essential employees as much as possible, to minimize human-to-human interaction.
- Employees and volunteers who are sick or who have been exposed to COVID-19 should not work.
- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water before eating, after using the bathroom, coughing or sneezing, and touching surfaces. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available and there is no visible dirt on your hands.
- Frequently sanitize common areas with EPA-registered antimicrobial products for use against COVID-19 that are safe to use in and around the animals and shelter.

## **Prepare Shelter for Increased Intake**

In emergency situations, animal shelters are often called upon to provide additional assistance for the community. Steps to prepare can include:

- Free up shelter capacity with increased adoption effort, rescue partners, and foster homes for animals already at the shelter.
- Prepare a facility plan with your shelter veterinarian on intake and isolation protocols.
- Be prepared to identify, isolate, or divert animals that may have been exposed to COVID-19. This includes securing disinfectants and personal protective equipment that may be used safely around animals. Identify locations available for fostering, identify capacity needs, and maintain an updated list.
- Have a written protocol in place to follow and provide regular staff updates to staff.
- Secure additional food/supplies for increased intake, including foster network needs.
- Check availability of volunteers who can assist in a staff shortage.
- Connect with local boarding facilities, surrounding shelters and rescues and communicate plans.

## **Support and Inform Your Community**

- Remind community members to have a plan in place for pets.
- Identify a family member/friend who can care for pets if needed.
- Have crates, food, and extra supplies on hand for quick movement of pets.
- Keep all animal vaccines up to date and document all medications and dosing
- Pets should have ID: collar with ID tag and microchip (best practice is microchipping).

For current information about Kansas' response to COVID-19, go to the Kansas COVID-19 Resource Center at [www.covid.ks.gov](http://www.covid.ks.gov).