COVID-19 Animal Relocation Preparedness Guide

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Animal Relocation Preparedness Guide

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Introduction

As states and localities begin the process of reopening amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, adapting to meet evolving conditions will remain a challenge for animal welfare organizations seeking to resume all or part of their operations. Resumption of relocation programs may involve a higher level of complexity than most. For example, relocation often involves travel through multiple jurisdictions, each of which may be governed by an assortment of differing executive orders or other directives. There may also be significant differences in COVID-19 responses and preparedness between source and destination communities to be considered, including those that affect the availability of spay/neuter or other veterinary services.

The recommendations provided in this guidance document are not exhaustive, are solely advisory, and seek to highlight the numerous issues that should be considered by animal welfare organizations in their planning for resumption of relocation programs. Always consult Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance and state and local public health and veterinary experts for the most updated information related to social distancing, cleaning protocols, and other biosecurity measures. Always advise your staff to consult with medical health professionals for questions related to symptoms and potential disease exposure in people. For assistance navigating the various federal, state, and local laws and regulations and requirements imposed under state and local orders and directives, always consult with an attorney.

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Community Preparedness

The nature of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an assortment of stay-at-home executive orders that vary from state to state. Similarly, the reopening of individual state economies will also vary, requiring organizations to carefully understand and consider what types of services and operations are able to resume. Some geographically aligned states have entered into pacts to reopen in step with one another, which may result in more uniform openings in those specific geographies, but organizations can still expect a need to fully understand how individual states—and even some localities—plan to reopen. Additionally, some locations may find that they need to close again due to a new increase in cases. Assessing whether resumption of relocation programs is legally permissible is the first consideration.

Prior to engaging in a transport, relocation partners should consider the trajectory of COVID-19 cases to ensure the safest environment for program personnel and animals. Ideally, and in line with current CDC guidance on the reopening of business activities, there should be a decline in new COVID-19 cases in both the source and destination communities during the two-week period prior to the transport.

The next consideration when deciding to re-initiate relocation programs is to look at the current status of the local animal welfare environment. The need for relocation should be driven primarily by the needs of source communities, targeting those who have exhausted local outcome opportunities. Given the influx of animals who were placed in foster homes at the beginning of stay-at-home orders and the growing adoption wait lists that have emerged during quarantine, it is also important to ascertain whether there is an immediate need or desire to relocate animals into designated destination communities.

Since most states plan a phased reopening of their economies over a long period, and with an expectation that ongoing reassessment and shifts are likely to be necessary, some challenges to consider are:

- Does the destination state and locality currently allow transport of rescue animals into their jurisdiction?

- If transport into a destination state and locality is allowed, what is the availability of veterinary services?

  » Many states have prohibited, or issued guidance that limits, veterinarians from performing elective procedures like spay/neuter. When and how these restrictions are lifted will vary from one location to another so familiarity with the current situation in a destination jurisdiction is key.

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>> Additionally, some states have issued orders to inventory the amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) that exists within their jurisdiction, anticipating a possible need to repurpose that gear for human health care needs. These orders place limits on what veterinary services might be available for relocated animals.

- If transport is allowed, what is the status of shelter operations?

    >> Does the source have the ability to safely prepare animals for transport while adhering to social distancing recommendations?

    >> Does the destination have the ability to safely care for and rehome relocated animals while adhering to social distancing recommendations?

- To what extent does the destination state or locality, or those along the planned route, have orders in place banning visitors from particular states or localities or, in the case of destinations, requiring self-quarantine for a period of time for all visitors or those from particular states or localities?

- Are veterinary facilities and destination shelters sufficiently staffed to care for and rehome relocated animals in light of COVID-related impacts?

- To what extent will telemedicine laws influence the care of relocated animals?

    >> Each state has its own laws pertaining to the use of telemedicine by veterinarians. As the pandemic has worn on, many states have issued guidance indicating if and how telemedicine can be used. In many cases, states have relaxed existing prohibitions on the use of telemedicine by veterinarians.

    >> As states reopen, it will be important to understand whether telemedicine continues to be permitted in each jurisdiction.

- When will animals be spayed/neutered in relation to relocation?

    >> Some jurisdictions prohibit the adoption, fostering or keeping of any animal that has not been altered.

    >> Importation of intact animals should be reconsidered if there are limitations on elective procedures in the destination community.

- Can standard relocation guidelines and best practices (see Resources below) be followed after program resumption?

- Can the program comply with existing state import requirements?

In considering and understanding the legal and policy hurdles that exist with reinitiating animal transport, it will be important for relocation programs to also deliberate over the ramifications these challenges may have on the animals themselves as well as the source and destination partners and relocation staff. Further, relocation programs should establish directives that help guide decisions about whether transports into or out of certain communities make sense for the animals and the relocation staff. These should include whether the source, destination, waystations, or communities along the route are located in a "hot spot" of COVID-19 cases and how this impacts access to emergency services should the need arise.

Lastly, unlike natural disasters where relocation emergencies are necessary to move animals out of danger and state import laws are sometimes relaxed in order to help facilitate that movement, this is not the case for the current pandemic. State import laws are still in effect, which means at the very least, Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (CVIs or "health certificates") are required to conduct a legal transport into each state. Source partners and relocation programs should consider whether it is feasible to provide adequate CVIs in accordance with the timeframe mandated by the destination state before re-engaging in relocation. Additionally, prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, several states were already considering new laws or regulations aimed at reducing the occurrence of sick animals being transported into their states. If enacted, many of these proposals could result in new and difficult challenges for relocation programs beyond those brought on by the current pandemic. It is extremely important that relocation programs comply with existing animal import laws and demonstrate best practices in every transport (see Resources below).

The following resources may help communities assess and address the above challenges:

- Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center provides **county level COVID-19 case data**.

- The National Governor's Association has compiled **resources on limitations and restrictions for each state**.

- The American Association of Veterinary State Boards contains a **summary of veterinary board action in each state**. Review the guidance from each individual state board of veterinary medicine for specific prohibitions or recommendations.

- Animal welfare industry recommendations for assessing **COVID-19 Spay/Neuter and Wellness Clinic Preparedness** have been published.

- **ASPCA Statement of Support for Veterinary Telemedicine** during the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Guidelines for safe and successful animal relocation programs have been published by **The Association for Animal Welfare Advancement**, **Association of Shelter Veterinarians**, and **American Veterinary Medical Association**.

- Animal import requirement for each state can be accessed through the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service **Pet Travel** website.

- The **CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers** can help guide policies and protocols.

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Decision-Making To Control Disease Transmission

Each program should interpret these recommendations according to their own circumstances and plans.

Here is an overarching **hierarchy of needs** that includes assessment of safety, efficiency, and comfort that can be used for decision-making processes in other program operations and may also be helpful in decision-making related to animal relocation programs.

The CDC advises workplaces to use multiple methods from the **hierarchy of controls** to provide the greatest degree of protection. Engineering controls serve to isolate people from the hazard and, for animal relocation programs, may include alterations in relocation partners and transportation scheduling. Administrative controls change the way people work and may include adjustments in operational protocols to minimize exposure to SARS-CoV-2. Personal protective equipment (PPE) protocols should be re-evaluated with an eye to protecting the animals from diseases of veterinary concern (e.g., parvovirus, panleukopenia) as well as protecting relocation program personnel from inadvertent human-to-human exposure to SARS-CoV-2.

CDC guidance, applicable law (including Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidance), and public health information is changing rapidly, and this guidance is provided in accordance with guidelines from CDC and other public health and veterinary experts as of June 2020.

Phases of Resuming Program Operations

Phasing in program resumption based on availability of resources and risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 is recommended. The expected risk of infectious disease, including human-to-human exposure and continued transmission of SARS-CoV-2, increases within the geographic, population, and operational phases described below such that the first bullet in each list presents the least risk and the last bullet presents the greatest risk. In all relocation efforts, organizations should critically evaluate and weigh the need for longer interstate, air, and/or multi-organizational transports; risk; and opportunities for mitigation in deciding whether to proceed with these transports.

A phased approach may best utilize program resources, ensure available animal care resources are location-matched with their need, and mitigate geographic disease exposure risk to personnel as follows:

- Local (intra-community or intra-state) relocation
- Regional (inter-state) relocation within ~8-hour drive or relocation utilizing direct flight
- Regional (inter-state) relocation requiring an overnight stop or relocation utilizing flight with multiple stops

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Within each phase, consideration should be given to the animal populations served and might progress as follows:

- Single source shelter to single destination organization

- Single hub/aggregator to single destination organization

- Single hub/aggregator to multiple destinations or single distributing destination

- *If part of normal, established program operations and steps are taken to minimize cross-exposure between different animal populations, multi-source transports to multi-destination distributor.*

Phases of operation should also include assessment of financial resources. Individual transportation costs are likely to progress as follows:

- Individual animal transport in personal vehicles

  NOTE: Animals should be secured in individual crates and follow standard relocation practices.

  SEE: Recommendations from **The Association for Animal Welfare Advancement**, **Association of Shelter Veterinarians**, *and* **American Veterinary Medical Association**.

- Volume ground transport in purpose-built vehicles
  - » Local ground transport
  - » Long-distance ground transport

- Individual animal transport via commercial airlines

- Volume, private air transports

It may also be possible to utilize volunteers (versus staff) for some components of the relocation program depending on the geographic area covered, animal population served, role to be completed, and transportation model selected as described above.

Personnel Safety and Support

- Programs should follow federal, state and/or local guidelines for testing and/or self-quarantine of employees exposed to someone with SARS-CoV-2.

- Ask employees to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19, including temperature monitoring at home before coming to work each day and not to report to work if they are sick. Asymptomatic employees who have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 should also stay home.
  - » There are federal and state laws that protect the personal health information of employees. Any information about employees' medical conditions must be maintained as an employee health record that is kept separately from the employee file.

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- Provide team check-ins upon assignment to a relocation route, immediately prior to transport, and post-transport. Be sure to cover roles, concerns, strategies, and challenges.

  SEE: Relocation Team Check-in located in the Samples section at the end of this document.

- Have a back-up driver team on call and an animal care contingency plan in the event that a driver becomes ill mid-transport.

- Stagger schedules for personnel and work within assigned teams with minimal cross-over to minimize impact should a person be diagnosed with COVID-19.

- Ensure source shelter has an animal care contingency and communication plan if there is a need to abruptly cancel a scheduled transport.

- Provide training and updates to staff as well as general workplace support. Maintain honest but positive communication.

Handling SARS-CoV-2 Positive Staff and Volunteers

- Develop a protocol for the organization before positive cases occur and share with staff. Be sure to include whether staff will be paid or need to use PTO, when they can return to work, and what is required for them to return.

- Review this **guidance summary** developed by the authors of the COVID-19 Spay/Neuter and Wellness Clinic Preparedness Guide and based on CDC recommendations, to help with protocol writing.

- Respect patient privacy and always follow applicable laws.

- Identify and inform potentially exposed individuals of potential exposure, in accordance with CDC guidelines and applicable law. Never share the identity of an employee who is sick or who has tested positive for SARS-CoV-2.

- Reassess available team and individual risks.

- Determine new capacity and staff roles and adjust the workload.

- Review and understand the CARES Act passed by Congress, which outlines that many employers are required to provide paid sick leave, or family or medical leave for eligible staff who experience a qualifying event, including for those employees who test positive for SARS-CoV-2, who are caring for someone who tests positive for SARS-CoV-2, or who are caring for children and who do not have alternative childcare due to pandemic-related school or daycare closures. The employer may be eligible for a payroll tax credit to offset these costs. A human resource professional, attorney, CPA, or payroll service may be able to provide guidance. Employers with fewer than 50 employees may qualify for an exemption.

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Handling COVID-Exposed Animals

- Review these Interim recommendations for intake of companion animals from households where humans with COVID-19 are present created by a collaborative group of subject matter experts.

- Animals who are eligible for adoption, foster or relocation should be held for 14 days out of an abundance of caution.

  NOTE: There is no evidence that companion animals play a meaningful role in the spread of COVID-19.

Training Staff and Volunteers

- Utilize video conferencing software to provide for consistent training and messaging across staffing teams and shelter partners.

- Include a virtual tour of vehicles and demonstration of equipment and protocol adjustments. Training videos can be made on personal cell phones or by recording video conferencing.

- Consider aspects of animal selection (for personnel entering source shelters), loading, driver protocols, waystation operations, unloading, and cleaning and disinfection, as applicable for the relocation program model.

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Program Readiness

Once the decision has been made to reinitiate relocation and the phase of operation has been selected (see *Phases of Resuming Program Operations* above), an assessment of program readiness should be undertaken. For source partners, this may include enhanced protocols for medical monitoring and health surveillance to ensure prompt recognition of any indications of illness, including infectious disease, in individual animals or the larger population. For destination partners, this may include consideration of space and resources to care for animals upon arrival, including any quarantine periods that may be required as well as the presence of protocols to manage illnesses that may develop.

> **SEE:** *Section on **Post-Transport Concerns** below for more information.*

Relocation programs should re-evaluate existing program criteria in light of necessary adjustments in operations, to include:

- Frequency of transports

- Number of animals per transport

- Sourcing of animals, including numbers and types of organizations, and housing of animals prior to transport

- Non-contagious medical cases accepted (e.g., heartworm disease, dental disease)

- Personnel considerations, including

  » Advising staff with underlying health considerations to consult with their medical providers

  » Ensuring staff are not exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 and have not tested positive for SARS-CoV-2

  » Utilizing staff who have low risk of exposure to COVID-19 based on known factors

  » Comfort and compliance with new protocols, including use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

  » Confidence in ability and willingness to complete the transport

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Prioritizing Relocation Candidates

Prior to considering relocation, partnering organizations should ensure that efforts are made to exhaust all local resources to support animals within a community prior to considering relocation to another geographic area. For destinations, if local animals are not available, and there is available space and resources to assist with relocation, the organization may decide to accept animals from other locations. Careful consideration of selection criteria for both partners and animals should be a part of any program that involves animal movement.

When the relocation program is re-initiated, the following criteria may help determine the scope and extent of re-entry:

- Priority Partners

  » Known/established partner; operational protocols align with standard practices

  » Location based on proximity to shelter (e.g., local to regional to national partners)

  » Source partner has exhausted local outcome opportunities

  » Transparency regarding known risks to human health

  » Honest discussion regarding risk-benefit analysis

  » Operations remain consistent (i.e., partners can perform at expected level, able to adhere to new guidelines)

- Priority Animals

  » Local outcome opportunities exhausted

  » Preventive physical and behavioral healthcare protocols align with standard practices

  SEE: Recommendations from The Association for Animal Welfare Advancement, Association of Shelter Veterinarians, and American Veterinary Medical Association.

  » Meet legal requirements for relocation

  » Meet placement criteria agreed upon with destination partner

- Exclusion Criteria

  » Animals exposed to COVID-19 should not be relocated unless they have been in foster/quarantine for 14 days (since last exposure) prior to transport.

  » Multi-species transports must be avoided while COVID-19 impacts shelter operations.

  » Animals with signs of infectious diseases are generally ineligible for interstate transport. An evaluation of risk, assessment of likely pathogens, and the availability of appropriate housing and veterinary attention should be conducted prior to the local or intra-state movement of animals with any signs of contagious illness (unless traveling to a veterinary hospital for medical care).

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Capacity for Care

Physical Capacity

- Transporters should assess relocation vehicles for availability. Many vehicles have been re-purposed for COVID-19 response efforts and may be needed for services and functions the organization considers higher priority.

- Transporters should assess relocation vehicles for proper functioning. Many vehicles have been temporarily out of commission during stay-at-home emergency orders. Standard vehicle maintenance inspection and servicing should be performed prior to resuming relocation.

- The physical capacity of the destination organization(s) should be assessed in light of any operational changes (e.g., reserved quarantine space for COVID-19 exposed intakes) prior to determining the number of animals accepted for relocation.

- Some states may require quarantine of imported animals during normal operations in addition to spaces designated by the shelter for COVID-19 response efforts.

- Re-evaluate standard procedures for loading and unloading animals. Mark off one-way traffic patterns wherever possible to discourage personnel from crossing paths in close proximity.

- Mark off six-foot distances on the floor in key areas to act as visual reminders.

- Consider whether there are ways to relocate or open new loading and unloading areas or add workstations to use space outside of the partnering organizations if spaces are tight.

Staff Capacity

- Reduce the number of personnel to the minimum necessary for loading and unloading animals in a timely and efficient manner. This may involve doubling the number of tasks typically performed by one person.

  » Reallocate tasks, such as animal selection and preparation of medical records, to remote workers whenever possible.

- Ensure that 2 drivers—no more and no less—are assigned to each transport. Drivers should be paired for the duration of transport and follow social distancing and general biosecurity protocols as described below.

  » Consider assigning one driver to handle any needed in-person interactions with shelter personnel for the duration of the transport. For example, this driver may check paperwork and receive animals from shelter personnel for loading while the other remains inside the vehicle.

The above capacity assessment recommendations may apply to source organizations, waystations, and destination organizations as dictated by program model.

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Veterinary Capacity

- Prior to committing to an individual transport, source organizations should ensure that they have the veterinary capacity to issue CVIs ("health certificates") within the appropriate time frame.

- Transporters should assess the availability of emergency veterinary care along the transportation route, as many veterinary practices are offering limited hours and services.

- Destination organizations should assure availability of veterinarians to provide timely assessment of animals upon arrival as well as management of illnesses or other medical conditions that may arise.

  » Destination organizations should evaluate the number and types of medical cases they are able to handle while still adhering to social distancing recommendations, conserving PPE, and adjusting to reduced staffing levels (if applicable).

  » The risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection and illness in companion animals is believed to be low. Organizations should consider an assessment of animals' COVID-19 exposure risk as part of disease management strategies and follow current SARS-CoV-2 **testing recommendations**.

  NOTE: *Routine testing of companion animals for SARC-CoV-2 is NOT recommended. Prior to testing animals, veterinarians should contact their state public health veterinarian or designated health official. Ensure that the implications of any positive test results in a shelter animal are understood and verified with your state public health official(s) in advance of testing animal(s) in your shelter population.*

Supplies and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Inventory supplies and calculate how many transports the program can perform with what is currently on hand, and how use of such supplies may impact the delivery of other animal care and/or veterinary services.

- Expect ongoing shortages to include face masks and shields.

- Consider opening accounts with multiple suppliers to increase access to supplies.

- Order additional supplies, but do not schedule transports until those supplies are on hand.

Sanitation Supplies

- Soap or detergent and water

- Hand sanitizer

- Disinfecting wipes

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- Disinfectant
    - » SARS-CoV-2 on surfaces and objects is naturally inactivated within hours to days and is susceptible to a wide variety of disinfectants when used appropriately.
    - » A variety of commercial and household disinfecting wipes can be effective against coronavirus when used according to the manufacturer's instructions. In the absence of manufactured disinfectant wipes, commercial or household disinfectants containing both a detergent and disinfectant (generally an accelerated hydrogen peroxide product or quaternary ammonium compound) can be applied to a clean rag and used to sanitize environmental surfaces.

For a list of quaternary ammonium compounds noted to be effective against a wide variety of pathogens, including coronavirus, see **list of disinfectants used against SARS-CoV-2**. Utilize these **techniques to extend your supply of disinfectant** if your supply is running low.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

In addition to standard PPE utilized during normal operations, consideration should be given to the use of additional **PPE based on animal history** and likelihood of both animal and human exposure to SARS-CoV-2, noting that such exposure is most likely to occur from contact with other people:

- Face masks (**cloth face coverings** are acceptable)
- Eye protection (face shield, goggles)
- Disposable gloves
- Protective outerwear (e.g., grooming gowns, coveralls)

Staff should follow these recommendations for PPE and hand hygiene:

- Hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) should be available, though handwashing is preferred.
- Staff should be trained to avoid touching their face or each other, to consistently and frequently disinfect any shared equipment (or avoid sharing it), and to be attuned to interactions that increase risk.
- Ensure all staff have PPE and that masks/face coverings are always worn around others.
- Staff members should have a minimum of two masks/face coverings per shift. They should only be worn when dry, changed whenever wet or soiled, washed daily, and dried completely.

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- The **CDC** advises staff to wear goggles or a face shield in addition to a mask, gown and gloves when handling any animals with respiratory disease.

  » Face shields should be available for staff to wear if needed while performing pre-load medical checks or transporting large dogs, as these require multiple staff members working together within close range.

  SEE: Animal Loading and Unloading Protocol and General Biosecurity Protocol located in the Samples section at the end of this document.

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Communication Considerations

Partner Communications

Communication with relocation program partnering organizations (e.g., source shelters, transporters, destination shelters) should focus on changes in operations and protocols and may include:

- Emails, internet postings, talking points, FAQs

- Key messaging and continual updates

- Connection to timely, accurate information (e.g., CDC, AVMA, State and County Health Departments, State Veterinarians' offices, Department of Agriculture)

Personnel Communications

Communication with program staff and volunteers should be transparent and focus on changes in operations and protocols as well as describe the impact on the organization. Communication plans should:

- Communicate effectively, quickly, and often.

- Be the source of information to help mitigate rumors.

- Utilize electronic notification systems and other technology (e.g., email, internet postings, text) to minimize use of signage in the facility and reduce congregation of staff.

- Connect staff to timely, accurate information and credible sources (e.g., CDC, AVMA, State and County Health Departments, State Veterinarians' offices, Department of Agriculture).

- Promote safe travel policies.

- Articulate work-from-home policies to promote social distancing and limit on-site staff.

Public Communications

Communication with the public should be transparent and focus on availability of animals:

- Describe the impact on the organization, including efforts to prioritize intake of emergency cases, keep shelter populations low, and reduce the overall need for relocation.

- Describe changes in process and emphasize the "why."

  » PPE and social distancing requirements and protocols

- Provide clear instructions on website, social media, facility entrances, and phone messaging.

- Promote virtual adoptions.

  » Pet availability, pre-application, pre-scheduling, virtual meet-and-greets

- Connect public to timely, accurate information (e.g., CDC, AVMA, State and County Health Departments, State Veterinarians' offices, Department of Agriculture).

- Provide information about COVID-19 exposure risk and reference current and credible sources (e.g., CDC, AVMA, State and County Health Departments, State Veterinarians' offices, Department of Agriculture).

  NOTE: *There is no evidence that companion animals, including pets, can spread SARS-CoV-2 to people.*

  » Emphasize efforts to **keep people and pets together**.

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Operational Protocols and Social Distancing

Operational protocols that involve the interaction of program personnel and thus carry a risk of exposure to COVID-19 should be assessed for measures to increase social distancing and reduce opportunities for direct contact between individuals. Key protocols to review and some of their social distancing considerations are described below:

- In-person animal selection at a source shelter

  - Perform animal selection virtually whenever possible.

  - Ensure that the source shelter is adhering to social distancing practices prior to entering, including the use of face masks or coverings for all individuals in the facility.

  - Avoid entering shelters with known cases of COVID-19 positive personnel.

  - Visit the shelter at a time when low traffic is expected, if open to the public.

  - Wear a face mask and refrain from touching anything inside the shelter facility, including animals.

  - Wear disposable gloves and a gown or dedicated clothing if directly handling animals in accordance with general biosecurity precautions.

  - Thoroughly wash and dry hands after discarding gloves.

- Animal loading and examination

  SEE: Animal Loading and Unloading Protocol located in the Samples section at the end of this document.

- Waystation operations

  - Minimize on-site personnel.

  - Ensure adequate PPE is available.

  - Re-evaluate standard procedures for loading and unloading animals.

    — Mark off one-way traffic patterns wherever possible to discourage personnel from crossing paths in close proximity.

    — Mark off six-foot distances on the floor in key areas to act as visual reminders.

  - Consider whether there are ways to relocate or open new loading and unloading areas or add workstations to use space outside of the partnering organizations if spaces are tight.

- Animal unloading

  SEE: Animal Loading and Unloading Protocol located in the Samples section at the end of this document.

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- Decontamination

  » Review general biosecurity measures for drivers.

  SEE: General Biosecurity Protocol located in the Samples section at the end of this document.

  » Review protocols for cleaning and disinfection of equipment and supplies.

  — SARS-CoV-2 on surfaces and objects is naturally inactivated within hours to days and is susceptible to a wide variety of disinfectants when used appropriately.

  — Utilize these **techniques to extend your supply of disinfectant** if supplies are running low.

Notes

Paperwork and Record-Keeping

Approaches for managing paperwork and record-keeping should seek to minimize contact between individuals, yet balance practical, technological, and financial constraints of relocation programs.

- Paperless

  » Create an electronic transport manifest/list (e.g., Excel, Airtable, Google Docs).

  » Add digital photos to the electronic manifest.

  » Utilize electronic CVIs (health certificates).

  — Some companies may offer discounts based on non-profit/government status or existing partnerships, so programs should find the one that works best for them. Options include:

  — **GlobalVetLINK, LLC (GVL®)**

  — **AgView**

  » Transfer medical records electronically.

  » Schedule video conferencing to discuss medical and/or behavioral concerns, where allowable by applicable law.

  » Utilize tablets placed in a clear, plastic disposable sleeve and a sanitized stylus for on-site paperwork needs.

- Paper with additional biosecurity

  » Designate one individual to handle paperwork for each partner.

  » Wear PPE when handling paperwork.

  — At a minimum, gloves and face covering should be worn.

  » Maintain paperwork in sanitizable sleeve.

  » Use sanitizable pens, clipboard and other items.

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Post-Transport Concerns

- Prior to relocation, partnering organizations should communicate a plan in the event of increased disease in the source population, the transport population, or the destination population.

  » An increase in infectious disease of any kind in the source or destination shelters or communities warrants a risk assessment of continued transport; postponement of any scheduled transport may be necessary until such assessment is completed or following completion of an assessment until appropriate control measures can be put in place.

  » Partners should be in tune with current SARS-CoV-2 **testing recommendations** in animals and the implications for such testing.

  NOTE: Routine testing of companion animals for SARS-CoV-2 is NOT recommended. Prior to testing animals, veterinarians should contact their state public health veterinarian or designated health official. Ensure that the implications of any positive test results in a shelter animal are understood and verified with your state public health official(s) in advance of testing animal(s) in your shelter population.

  » In the event that relocation program personnel are diagnosed with COVID-19 or test positive for SARS- CoV-2, partners should inform potentially exposed individuals of potential exposure.

  » Respect patient privacy and always follow applicable laws.

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Sample Frameworks for Relocation Protocols

The following pages provide possible frameworks for a variety of relocation protocols.

These frameworks are for informational purposes only, and you are advised to develop your own protocols and practices in accordance with your own needs and to comply with applicable law. Each organization's protocols and practices will differ based on organizational needs, state and local laws, and health and legal guidance that develop daily.

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COVID-19 Animal Relocation Program Preparedness Checklist*

CAN we resume relocation?

- Are stay-at-home orders lifted by state and local government at the source, destination, and waystation?
- Are all shelter operations allowed to proceed by state and local government?
- Can all state laws regarding animal importation be followed?

If YES to ALL
↓

SHOULD we resume relocation?

- What local outcome opportunities are available in the source community?
- What is the trajectory of COVID-19 cases in the two-week period prior to relocation?
- What is the capacity of the destination community to care for and rehome animals moved to foster care?
- What is the local demand for adoptions in the source and destination communities?
- What is the availability of veterinary services, including spay-neuter, and staff to care for shelter animals as well as newly adopted pets at both the source and destination?
- What is the impact of social distancing recommendations on shelter operations and the ability to safely care for and rehome animals?
- How will operational changes impact adherence to standard relocation practices?
- What is the exposure risk to staff, volunteers, and foster homes of completing the transport?

If the decision is made to RESUME RELOCATION
↓

Choose the most appropriate for each:

	Geographic Model +	Shelter Population Model +	Financial Model	
+ Increasing Risk —	• Local (intra-community or intra-state) relocation • Regional (inter-state) relocation within ~8-hour drive or relocation utilizing direct flight • Regional (inter-state) relocation requiring overnight stop or relocation utilizing flights with multiple stops	• Single source shelter to single destination organization • Single hub/aggregator to single destination organization • Single hub/aggregator to multiple destinations or single distributing destination	• Individual animal transport in personal vehicles • Volume ground transport in purpose-built vehicles • Individual animal transport via commercial airlines • Volume, private air transports	**+ Increasing Cost —**

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Develop, review, or modify SOPs

- ☐ Personnel safety and support
- ☐ Handling SARS-CoV-2 positive personnel
- ☐ Handling COVID-exposed animals
- ☐ Training staff and volunteers
- ☐ Frequency, volume, animal selection criteria, personnel selection criteria
- ☐ Communication with partners, program personnel, members of the public
- ☐ Social distancing protocols for animal selection at source; animal loading and unloading; waystation operations; decontamination of equipment, supplies, and personnel; paperwork and record-keeping

For each SOP
↓

Assess

- ☐ Physical capacity of source shelter, transport vehicle, waystation, destination shelter
- ☐ Staffing capacity for all phases of transport
- ☐ Veterinary capacity for provision of CVIs, emergency care, post-arrival care, and disease management
- ☐ Availability of supplies and PPE

*Please see the full COVID-19 Animal Relocation Program Preparedness Guide for additional context and guidance on the use of this checklist.

Sample 1: Relocation Team Check-In

This short check-in for relocation teams during the time of COVID-19 provides a point of communication that allows team members to verify their roles, identify any anticipated issues and connect with other team members. Although this can be repetitive with a small team, it sets the tone for the transport and gives all staff members a reminder regarding role, focus and self-monitoring. Check-ins should occur upon assignment of a relocation route, immediately prior to departure, and after completing the transport.

Relocation Route Assignment Check-In

- ☐ Are you feeling well? Symptoms of COVID-19 include cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat and new loss of taste or smell.
- ☐ Are you comfortable with your personal travel plans and the relocation route?
- ☐ Do you have an assigned personal supply of masks/face coverings?
- ☐ Are you familiar with the social distancing protocols that have been put in place?
- ☐ What questions do you have about completing this transport?

Pre-Transport Check-In

- ☐ Are you feeling well? Symptoms of COVID-19 include cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat and new loss of taste or smell.
- ☐ Do you know and are you comfortable with your role for the transport?
- ☐ Do you have all the equipment and supplies needed to carry out social distancing and biosecurity protocols?
- ☐ What questions do you have about completing this transport?

Post-Transport Check-In

- ☐ Are you feeling well? Symptoms of COVID-19 include cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat and new loss of taste or smell.
- ☐ Did you have all the equipment and supplies needed to carry out social distancing and biosecurity protocols and/or do any of those items need to be restocked?
- ☐ What challenges did you encounter during the transport?

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Sample 2: Animal Loading and Unloading Protocol

Loading & Unloading Cats

1. **Drop off kennels the night before transport.**

   a. Shelter personnel load cats in kennels with food, water, pee pad, litter box and comfort item.

   b. Shelter personnel prepare paperwork and leave it in an accessible location for drivers.

2. **Drivers arrive for loading.**

   a. Drivers don clean, disposable gloves and gowns, and then enter the holding room after ensuring no shelter personnel are present.

   b. Drivers perform visual inspection of the animals and remove litter boxes from adult cat kennels.

   c. Drivers carry kennels to the truck and load each kennel into its designated space.

3. **After loading is complete, remove PPE and discard in trash receptacle at the shelter.**

   a. Prior to entering the vehicle cabin, drivers wash hands with soap and water.

   b. Drivers should apply hand sanitizer immediately upon and each time they enter the vehicle, prior to touching any of the vehicle controls.

4. **Upon arriving at the destination, the above process is repeated in reverse.**

   a. Drivers don clean, disposable gown and gloves.

   b. Drivers carry all kennels into holding area and alert shelter personnel when unloading is complete.

   c. Shelter personnel enter the holding area after drivers have exited and unload each cat.

   d. Shelter personnel alert drivers when all cats have been unloaded and they have exited the room.

   e. Drivers enter the holding area and retrieve the empty kennels.

   f. Empty kennels are loaded back into vehicle.

   g. Drivers remove and discard their gown and gloves, wash their hands with soap and water, and apply hand sanitizer upon re-entering the vehicle.

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Sample 3: Animal Loading and Unloading Protocol

Loading and Unloading Puppies and Small Dogs

1. **Upon arrival at the shelter, unload kennels designated for puppies and small dogs placing them in the designated holding area.**

   a. Shelter personnel load puppies and small dogs in the appropriate kennels with pee pad.

   b. Shelter personnel prepare paperwork and leave it in an accessible location for drivers.

   c. Shelter personnel alert drivers that all animals are loaded and they have exited the room.

2. **Drivers don clean, disposable gloves and enter the holding room.**

   a. Drivers carry kennels to the truck and load each kennel into its designated space.

3. **After loading is complete, remove gloves and discard in trash receptacle at the shelter.**

   a. Prior to entering the vehicle cabin, drivers wash hands with soap and water.

   b. Drivers should apply hand sanitizer immediately upon and each time they enter the vehicle, prior to touching any of the vehicle controls.

4. **Upon arriving at the destination, the above process is repeated in reverse.**

   a. Drivers don clean, disposable gloves.

   b. Drivers carry all kennels into holding area and alert shelter personnel when unloading is complete.

   c. Shelter personnel enter the holding area after drivers have exited and unload each kennel.

   d. Shelter personnel alert drivers when all kennels have been unloaded and they have exited the room.

   e. Drivers enter the holding area and retrieve the empty kennels.

   f. Empty kennels are loaded back into vehicle.

   g. Drivers remove and discard their gloves, wash their hands with soap and water, and apply hand sanitizer upon re-entering the vehicle.

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Sample 4: Animal Loading and Unloading Protocol

Loading & Unloading Leashed Dogs

1. **Load cats, small dogs and puppies as described above prior to loading leashed dogs.**

2. **Drivers don clean, disposable gowns and gloves and retrieve supply of clean leashes.**

3. **Shelter personnel don clean, disposable gloves.**

4. **Driver hands clean leash to gloved shelter personnel who retrieves the dog.**

5. **Gloved shelter personnel hands the leashed dog to the driver who loads the dog onto the vehicle.**

6. **Place the used leashes in the designated container for use during unloading.**

7. **Driver discards gloves in trash receptacle, dons a clean pair of gloves, hands a clean leash to the gloved shelter personnel who retrieves the next dog.**

8. **Repeat steps 4-7 until all leashed dogs are loaded.**

9. **After loading is complete, remove gloves and discard in trash receptacle at the shelter.**

   a, Prior to entering the vehicle cabin, drivers wash hands with soap and water.

   b. Drivers should apply hand sanitizer immediately upon and each time they enter the vehicle, prior to touching any of the vehicle controls.

10. **Upon arrival at the destination, unload leashed dogs prior to unloading cats, small dogs, and puppies. Repeat the above process in reverse.**

    a. Drivers don clean, disposable gowns and gloves.

    b. Shelter personnel don clean, disposable gloves.

    c. Using the leashes saved from loading, driver retrieves dog and hands leash to shelter personnel.

    d. Shelter personnel take the dog into the shelter and returns the leash to the designated laundry bin.

    e. Driver discards gloves in trash receptacle, dons a clean pair of gloves, retrieves the next dog, and hands the leash to gloved shelter personnel.

    f. Repeat steps 10a-10e until all leashed dogs are unloaded.

    g. Drivers remove and discard their gloves, wash their hands with soap and water, and apply hand sanitizer upon re-entering the vehicle.

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Sample 5: General Biosecurity Measures for Drivers

1. **In accordance with CDC guidance, all employees are strongly encouraged to wear cloth face coverings (e.g., cloth mask, bandana, scarf) in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., in vehicles), especially in areas of significant community-based transmission or as otherwise recommended or required by local, state, and/ or federal public health officials.**

    » The purpose of a simple cloth face covering is to slow the spread of the virus and help prevent people who may have the virus from transmitting it to others.

    » If an employee does not have a cloth face covering, encourage the employee to contact his or her manager to secure a cloth face covering as available.

2. **No specific PPE is required for driver teams, other than when loading and unloading animals. Drivers should avoid coming into close proximity to or contact with any members of the public and partner shelter staff, other than gloved contact when handing off leashes (see Loading and Unloading Leashed Dogs).**

3. **Any driver who feels sick, has a temperature of 100.4°F or greater (unless a different temperature is recommended by state or local law), or shows any symptoms identified by the CDC as symptomatic of COVID-19 (e.g., coughing, shortness of breath, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell) should notify their supervisor immediately. They should not report to work.**

    NOTE: In order to reduce potential spread via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks, any driver that develops any of the above symptoms while on duty should don a surgical face mask (located in glove compartment) and notify their supervisor immediately.

4. **Drivers will work in assigned teams of 2 to minimize staff exposure should one of the drivers be exposed to or become ill as a result of coronavirus.**

    » Drivers should take care to maintain as much physical distance between one another as is feasible and minimize direct physical contact.

    » During rest stops, drivers should take care to remain on opposite sides of the vehicle at all times.

    » Drivers must NOT share any drinks, snacks, gum or other consumables.

    » Drivers must NOT share personal phones; when using the assigned-vehicle phone, it should be set to speaker phone.

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5. **At the start of each shift, spray all the interior surfaces of the vehicle cabin with accelerated hydrogen peroxide 1:32 (4 oz./gal) for 5 minutes contact time, or ready-to-use accelerated hydrogen peroxide for 30 seconds contact time and wipe it dry with a clean paper towel. Discard the used paper towel immediately.**

» Sensitive areas such as electronic controls and the steering wheel can be wiped using AHP wipes, commercial or household sanitizing wipes.

» At the start of each shift, using accelerated hydrogen peroxide wipes, commercial or household sanitizing wipes, wipe down the vehicle phone and tablet. Discard the used wipe in the trash receptacle immediately.

6. **An alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be available in each vehicle.**

» Drivers should apply hand sanitizer immediately upon and each time they enter the vehicle, prior to touching any of the vehicle controls.

NOTE: Hand sanitizer is not a replacement for washing hands with soap and water. Hands should be visibly clean prior to applying hand sanitizer.

» Hands should be washed with soap and water, followed by application of hand sanitizer after pumping gas, prior to eating, and in the event that driver comes in direct contact with a client.

7. **Each driver will be assigned resealable plastic bags for their own trash. Drivers are responsible for keeping the trash bag in their side door pocket and disposing of the trash at the end of the day.**

» Drivers must place all trash items directly within their assigned bag(s) or a public trash receptacle immediately after use.

8. **At the end of the shift, spray all the interior surfaces of the vehicle cabin with accelerated hydrogen peroxide 1:32 (4 oz./gal) for 5 minutes contact time or ready-to-use accelerated hydrogen peroxide for 30 seconds contact time, and wipe it dry with a clean paper towel. Discard the used paper towel immediately.**

» Sensitive areas such as electronic controls and the steering wheel can be wiped using accelerated hydrogen peroxide wipes, commercial or household sanitizing wipes.

» After the interior surfaces have been sanitized, close the door and use the wipe to clean the door handle. Discard the used wipe in a trash receptacle immediately.

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