



# Mississippi Board of Animal Health

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**James A. Watson, D.V.M.**  
State Veterinarian

DATE: April 18, 2020

TO: Pet Stores, Groomers, Boarding Facilities, Shelters, Humane Organizations, Fosters, and Transports

FROM: Jim Watson, DVM

RE: Updated COVID-19 Issues and Guidance for Shelter-in-Place

Friday, the Governor released his update on his COVID-19 Shelter in Place Executive Order. The new order runs from 8:00am on **April 20, 2020 to April 27, 2020**. While the new order removes the requirement that only "essential businesses" be allowed to be open, and eases the requirements on essential services, there are still restrictions regarding gathering of people and prohibiting customers inside non-essential businesses.

Based on the new order, after 8:00 am on April 20, 2020, pet stores, humane organizations, shelters, fosters, groomers, and boarding facilities may resume services if they are able to do so "curbside."

**In all aspects the staff and volunteers should follow local, state, and federal recommendations and make adjustments as the guidance changes.\*, \*\* (see links below)**

According to the CDC...

*By far, the greatest risk of COVID-19 exposure to staff, volunteers, and the public at animal shelters comes from person-to-person contact. Shelters should follow [CDC guidance](#) on preventing COVID-19 exposure in businesses to help you plan, prepare, and respond to COVID-19. In particular, staff and volunteers should not come to work if sick, and should take [steps](#) to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Interventions to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission are the same at an animal shelter or veterinary clinic as in other aspects of daily life; follow up to date information from the CDC on how to protect yourself.\*\*\**

The MBAH has developed a guidance document entitled "Interim Guidance for Updated Executive Order April 20-27, 2020" to help Pet Stores, Groomers, Boarding Facilities, Shelters, Humane Organizations, Fosters, and Transports adjust to the new phase of Shelter-in-Place. It can be found at [www.mbah.ms.gov](http://www.mbah.ms.gov).

**It is important that employees/staff/volunteers continue to follow CDC guidance for prevention of COVID-19:**

- Employees can [take steps to protect themselves](#) at work and at home. Older people and people with serious chronic medical conditions are at [higher risk for complications](#).
- Follow the policies and procedures of your employer related to illness, cleaning and disinfecting, and work meetings and travel.
- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care. Learn [what to do if you are sick](#).
- Inform your supervisor if you have a sick family member at home with COVID-19. Learn what to do [if someone in your house is sick](#).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash and immediately wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Learn more about [coughing and sneezing](#) etiquette on the CDC website.
- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs. Dirty surfaces can be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection. To disinfect, use [products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2](#)[external icon](#), the cause of COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface.

**Helpful Links:**

\*American Veterinary Medical Association:

Interim recommendations for intake of companion animals from households where humans with COVID-19 are present:

<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19/interim-recommendations-intake-companion-animals-households-humans-COVID-19-are-present>

\*\*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: How to Protect Yourself and Others:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

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