
Fwd: Operating Protocols During COVID-19

1 message

George Seiler <drgseiler@comcast.net>
Reply-To: George Seiler <drgseiler@comcast.net>
To: WVVMA <victoria@wvma.org>

Wed, Mar 25, 2020 at 3:18 PM

Hello Victoria- Please forward this information directly to our membership. Thanks- George

----- Original Message -----

From: FVMA <info@fvma.org>

To: drgseiler@comcast.net

Date: March 24, 2020 at 7:37 PM

Subject: Operating Protocols During COVID-19



Operating Protocols During COVID-19

Dear Dr. George Seiler,

With the COVID-19 crisis growing, many practices have changed the way they operate. In an effort to help disseminate useful information to our members, we've compiled protocols that your practice may want to consider implementing, if you have not done so already. These protocols are meant to serve as a template so that you can pick and choose ideas that will work for you — or that can be adapted to your particular operation. We hope these strategies will help you, your staff and your clients stay as safe as possible during this stressful time.

Prioritize appointments. Some practices now prioritize urgent and sick-pet visits over wellness visits—young animal vaccination schedules not included. Veterinarians should keep in mind Executive Order 20-72, issued by Governor Ron DeSantis on March 20, 2020 that directs all medically unnecessary, non-urgent or non-emergency procedures or surgeries be delayed. While the governor's order does not specify veterinary medicine, the FVMA recommends that veterinarians defer elective procedures, that in their judgement are not necessary, to help reduce human-to-human contact and conserve PPE.

Communicate new protocol to clients. Many practices are shifting to a curbside model where:

- Clients call from the parking lot on arrival
- Team members shuttle pets to the facility and back
- Clients stay in their cars
- Conversations happen by phone as needed

When making this shift:

- Explain the change when appointments are made
- Email all clients about the process
- Post on social media about the change
- Reiterate the changes to the clients when they arrive
- Share how the new protocol is working and any adjustments that have been made on social media to keep your clients up-to-date

Set appropriate exceptions to new protocols that work for you. Consider new euthanasia protocols and offer exceptions (critical cases, young animals, or patients with special needs).

When handling deliveries and lab samples, consider:

- Having deliveries left outside
- Wearing gloves to carry and unpack boxes
- Disinfecting boxes
- Putting all lab samples in outside pick-up boxes, so that drivers don't have to come inside

Adjust hours of operation. Shortening hours of operation can allow for additional sanitizing time. In these particularly difficult times, it could also help prevent burnout.

In addition to new operating protocols, it is important to do the following:

- **Practice good hygiene.** [Review CDC guidelines.](#)
 - NO HANDSHAKING! Use a fist bump, slight bow, elbow bump, etc.
 - Use ONLY your knuckle to touch light switches, elevator buttons, etc.
 - Lift the gasoline dispenser with a paper towel or use a disposable glove.
 - Open doors with your closed fist or hip - do not grasp the handle with your hand unless there is no other way to open the door. This is especially important on bathroom and office/commercial doors.
 - Use disinfectant wipes at the stores when they are available, including wiping the handle and child seat in grocery carts.
 - Wash hands with soap for 20 seconds and/or use a greater than 60% alcohol-based sanitizer whenever you return home from ANY activity that involves locations where other people have been.
 - If possible, cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue and discard. Use your elbow only if you have to.
- **Stay home if you are sick.** Maintain flexible leave policies and make sure all employees know they need to stay home if they are ill. Ask that clients notify you if they're experiencing any symptoms to ensure you are able to take appropriate protective measures.

- **Avoid close contact and practice social distancing.** If you or your staff are able, work remotely. Maintain at least 6 feet between contacts.
- **Clean and disinfect** frequently-touched surfaces.
- **Prioritize your health and well-being.** During this tough time, the stress of being a veterinary professional can be overwhelming. Take your entire veterinary team's well-being into account. Take care of yourself and be sure to ask your family and employees how they're doing. Additional resources are available on the FVMA's professional wellness page at [FVMA.org](https://www.fvma.org).

The FVMA will be sharing additional information impacting our members as issues develop and information becomes available. Other resources can be found on our website, [FVMA.org](https://www.fvma.org).

Thank you for all you and your teams are doing in these trying times to meet the needs of your clients and patients.

Sincerely,
Philip J. Hinkle
Executive Director



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