

Covid-19 and Veterinary Small Animal Hospitals



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Current Procedures

- Curbside Service Only
 - Contained area within lobby in event need to bring client indoors
- Non-Social distance amongst employees
- Employees stay at home if ill
- Masks when interacting with clients
- Hand washing; PPE provided
- Credit card payment over the phone
- Verbal authorization of procedures



Plans to open fully

- No further reopening plans until we are informed it is safe to do so
- Assurances that coming within 6 feet of clients doesn't put staff at risk



Needs from Government

- Communication -- no consistent or reliable information as to what is allowed and expected of us
- Written guidelines on procedures allowed
- Rights and responsibilities of employer towards employees
- Social distancing is no longer needed



**QUESTIONNAIRE RELATING TO THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY
PHASES OF COVID-19 AND PLANS, GUIDELINES, AND NEEDS
RELATIVE TO THE SAFE OPENING OF BUSINESSES AND OTHER
INSTITUTIONS**

Company/Organization Name: South County Animal Hospital

Industry/Sector: Veterinarian

Date: June 6, 2020

1. Are you open or partially open? Open with curbside service, no clients allowed in building
 - a. Are you an essential business? yes
 - b. Are you open under an exception such as: No
 - i. Outdoor Business?
 - ii. Pickup/Delivery?
 - iii. Curbside Retail?
 - iv. Food Distribution?
 - c. Have employees and customers cooperated with the health safety protocols? Protocols are not clear from authorities; we are forming our protocols on what we think is expected of us
 - d. To your knowledge, have employees or customers become infected with COVID-19?
No
2. How many of your activities can be moved outdoors? Actual working on our patients cannot be done outdoors. However, we can keep clients (pet owners) outside, bringing in the patient/pet indoors for procedures.

3. For indoor activities:
 - a. How can social distancing be maintained at points of ingress and egress, where people normally cluster? When clients are allowed back into the facility, we could keep them in examination rooms to minimize congregating in waiting rooms. We currently work only on prescheduled appointments.
 - b. How can employees and visitors be protected from transmission of the virus (e.g., no-touch temperature checks, hand sanitizer, masks, and face shields)? It is impossible to be 6 feet away from each other in our business, however as we are doing things now, it is only employees who are within 6 feet of each other. We are keeping clients outside, bringing their pets indoors for the examination and procedures needed, then returning the pets to their owners outside. Employees could take temperatures, wear masks and wash hands.

We have quarantined a portion of our waiting room with plastic in the event we need to bring a client into the building, (ie when it was 100 degrees out and we had to have a longer conversation), this limits the exposure of the client to the rest of the staff. We then disinfect after the person leaves.

- c. How will Personal Protective Equipment (such as face covering and gloves) and hand sanitizer be provided before entry? Could be placed on a table for people to pick up and use.
- d. Can the times of activities be staggered to reduce the amount of people gathered at any one time? Yes but the timing is still unpredictable so we will not be able to completely control who is in the building.
- e. Can customers make appointments to gain entry while inside capacity is restricted? absolutely

- f. How can social distancing be maintained inside your premises? Social distancing cannot be maintained when a pet/animal has to be restrained. Our examination rooms are too small to have two people in one room, six feet apart.
4. What is your plan to acquire and distribute Personal Protective Equipment (like masks and gloves) and testing to your employees? We always have PPE on hand, ordered through our distributors. I have not planned testing for employees at this time. I would need guidance from a government agency as to if employees need to be tested, when, how often etc... If such requirements are made, then a plan would be formed following such requirements.
5. How can you adapt to accommodate different size gatherings that may be allowed by the Public Health officer? (Smaller gatherings are likely to be allowed before very large ones.) We do not have large gatherings, but we could limit clients/family members to one per patient.
6. To meet the need for possible contact tracing, how would you maintain lists of employees and visitors with their contact information for contact tracing? (It is understood that lists of attendees would only be provided in

the event of an infection that needed to be traced, and then only to public health personnel trained in medical confidentiality.). This would be difficult to fully know which employee was in direct contact with which client however we could initial medical records. If an employee were to be sick, we would not be able to specifically say which client that employee came into contact with. However, we would be able to provide employees present for specific days as well as clients who visited for those days, as well as approximate times the client visited.

7. In order to assist safe and productive re-opening, what are your needs relative to:
 - a. Regulation? I would like specifics of what legally is required of me specifically towards my employees. If I am asked to limit my workload, I would like to know specifically which tasks are not allowed. If an employee is exposed to covid, what do I do with them? If I know an employee is not social distancing (ie: travelling, protesting, visiting family outside their house) what do I do? I would like a regulation about 6foot distance to be in place.
 - b. Licensure? none that I can think of other than guidance as to when it is safe for my employees as well as clients to all be in the same room, close to each other.
 - c. Childcare? Could be a problem if distance learning continues in that parents/employees might not be able to fulfill their schedule.
 - d. Housing? none
 - e. Digital Inclusion? none

f. Commute-Free Working? Not an option in my business

8. If you have been opened or partially opened, what challenges have you experienced?

The biggest challenge has been with our clients. Most of them have been understanding but some have not been happy about not being allowed into the facility with their pets. Some clients are not wearing masks and I do not know how I should handle this situation since they are outside anyway.

As a business owner, I am challenged as to the best way of protecting my staff. I worry that if one of us gets sick, does the business close? Who regulates this? Where do I get this information? If one of my employees opening admits to not social distancing at home, then what obligation do I have to not let them come to work? What if an employee flies out of state, when can they return to work? If they get another employee sick, am I liable?

The HR regulations have been difficult to locate and understand. Do I have to offer more sick leave? What if it isn't financially feasible for my business to offer more sick leave? There are four veterinary hospitals in our city of Morgan Hill and we are all hearing different things and therefore have different protocols. Who ultimately regulates what is being done? Do we need to tell our employees they need to be covid tested? Who pays for this? There are still so many factors that have to be considered and there is no clear, concise place to find the answers.

9. If you have been opened or partially opened, how has the community's adherence and response to the COVID health safety protocols been?

The community's adherence has been mostly positive however some people are not wearing masks. People really do not like having their pet escorted into the building without them.