



# GEORGIA VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

## Updated Guidance for Veterinarians on Reopening Your Practice to Clients

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The numerous published COVID-19 guidelines for the veterinary profession continue to be broad and leave interpretation up to individual practice owners.

As we have seen throughout this pandemic, local conditions need to guide your actions so what is valid in one part of the state might not be valid for others.

You should continue to focus on erring on the side of safety and remember:

- It is an OSHA requirement for an employer to provide a safe work environment for all employees and you risk your hospital being shut down by OSHA/Georgia Department of Public Health if you are not providing a safe environment. Anyone, including employees or clients, can file a complaint regarding this to OSHA and the GA Department of Labor.
- Governor Kemp's Executive Order of 6/11/20 still stipulates that you should continue to follow the established protocols to safeguard critical infrastructure:
  1. Screening and evaluating workers who exhibit signs of illness, such as a fever over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, cough, or shortness of breath;
  2. Requiring workers who exhibit signs of illness to not report to work or to seek medical attention;
  3. Enhancing sanitation of the workplace as appropriate;
  4. Disinfecting common surfaces regularly;
  5. Requiring hand washing or sanitation by workers at appropriate places within the business location;
  6. Prohibiting gatherings of workers during working hours;
  7. Permitting workers to take breaks and lunch outside, in their office or personal workspace, or in such other areas where proper social distancing is attainable;
  8. Implementing teleworking for all possible workers;
  9. Implementing staggered shifts for all possible workers;
  10. Holding all meetings and conferences virtually, wherever possible;
  11. Delivering intangible services remotely wherever possible;
  12. Discouraging workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment;
  13. Prohibiting handshaking and other unnecessary person-to-person contact in the workplace; and
  14. If in use, open sales registers must be at least six (6) feet apart;
  15. Point of sale equipment, including PIN entry devices and signature pens, should be frequently cleaned and sanitized; and
  16. Placing notices that encourage hand hygiene at the entrance to the workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.



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The GVMA recommends that veterinary facilities continue implementing established methods for interacting with clients in areas where coronavirus is continuing to spread at a high rate:

- Discussion with client about procedure and receiving payment through mobile, computer, or phone prior to client coming into the practice if at all possible;
- Client calls upon arrival and a staff member goes outside to pick up the animal;
- Telemedicine continued to be used whenever possible (abiding by the rules in our practice act that establish VCPR—seeing the animal within the last 18 months and informed consent);
- Curbside delivery of food, medications, etc.;
- Continue to wear PPE at all times if at all possible, and
- Keep at least 6' distance after receiving the animal.

The GVMA recommends that veterinary facilities who want to allow clients back in the building in areas where coronavirus is continuing to spread at a moderate or low rate set up the following procedures:

1. 1 client per appointment
2. Clients must wear masks (staff as well)
3. Client calls from the car & are escorted directly into exam rooms (avoiding loitering in the lobby)
4. Boarding and tech appointments are still leaving clients in the car.
5. Clients are checked out in the exam rooms.

Continue to be all-in with proper safety, following the executive orders, and showing compassion to our employees by enforcing safety for them. Please use the information the GVMA is gathering to help you maintain safe control of your practices and to serve as community leaders. That is who we are as the veterinary community.

Dated: 06.18.2020