

PETS IN TEMPORARY CARE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Shelter, Support and Housing Administration

Current as of October 13, 2020

POLICY

The current spread of COVID-19 is a result of human-to-human transmission. There is no evidence to suggest that pets or other animals play a role in directly transmitting the disease to humans. There is evidence that the virus can live on pet fur for some time. Pet owners are encouraged to wash their hands before and after handling their pet.

COVID-19 emergency shelters, respite sites and 24-hour drop-ins are generally pet-friendly. Where possible, pets should remain with their owners, even when the owner is ill. Service animals should always stay with their owners, in accordance with provincial legislation (AODA).

Staff should only follow the procedure below for clients who have COVID-19 symptoms and have a pet and need to go to an assessment centre, hospital, or isolation/recovery site that is not pet friendly.

PROCEDURE

When sending a client who has a pet to a COVID-19 assessment centre or hospital:

1. When a client with a pet is required to go to a hospital or assessment centre for COVID-19 testing, staff must arrange care for the pet. Only service animals are to accompany their owners to test sites.
2. Let the client know that testing can take a number of hours. If the client tests negative for COVID-19, they will be able to return to the site. Staff will keep the pet on-site for up to 12 hours and will feed and take care of the pet.
3. If clients test positive for COVID-19, they will be transported directly to a recovery site. If the client has had contact with someone who has tested positive, they may also be required to isolate.
 - If the site is pet-friendly, the client will be reunited with their pet at the isolation/recovery site.
 - If the site is not pet-friendly, the client will be reunited with their pet when they are being discharged from the recovery site. Their pet will be placed in the temporary care of a family member/friend, or in the temporary care of Toronto Animal Services until the client has recovered.
4. Ask the client to complete paperwork about their pet (Section A and Section D of form attached). Make a copy of paperwork and give one to the client, keep a second on file.

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5. Advise the client to give their copy of the pet information form to staff at the recovery site upon their arrival to arrange reunification with their pet, which will happen immediately if the site is pet friendly, or upon discharge if the site is not pet-friendly.
6. Collect all of the pet's medications and any vaccination records. Print any photos of the pet that the client is able to share, labelled with the pet's name and client's name and contact information.

If the client does not return to the site after 12 hours:

1. If an emergency contact family member/friend is identified in client paperwork:
 - a. Contact the family member/friend to determine if that person can pick up the pet.
 - b. If they cannot pick up the pet, and the pet needs to be transported to that person, confirm address of family member/friend and complete Section B of paperwork.
 - c. Email completed paperwork to SSHACOVIDtransport@toronto.ca . SSHA Transportation Dispatch will respond to arrange transportation. If urgent, contact SSHA Transportation Dispatch at 416-397-0598.
 - d. Photocopy the form and keep one copy on file and send one copy with the dispatched driver to give to the family member or friend with the pet.
2. If there are no family member(s) and/or friend(s) who can take care of the pet, contact 311 and request 311 to have Toronto Animal Services (TAS) Dispatch contact the shelter.
 - a. Give 311 your name and phone number. You should get a response from TAS within 15 minutes.
 - b. Inform TAS Dispatch that a client's pet needs temporary shelter while their owner undergoes assessment and confirm the site the animal can be sent to.
 - c. Complete Section B of paperwork with TAS site address and contact information.
 - d. Email completed paperwork to SSHACOVIDtransport@toronto.ca . SSHA Transportation Dispatch will respond to arrange transportation. If urgent, contact SSHA Transportation Dispatch at 416-397-0598.
 - e. Photocopy the form, keep one copy on file and send one copy with the pet to the identified TAS site.

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3. Seal medications, vaccination records and photos of pet labelled with pet's name and client name and contact information in a plastic bag along with the information form to be transported with the pet.
4. Include the pet's collar and leash, if the client has these.
5. When transportation arrives, put the pet in a carrier/crate. If they do not have their own, the transportation unit will bring one. Ensure this is clearly marked on the pet information form.

When a client who has a pet leaves a COVID-19 assessment centre or hospital and is transported to isolation/recovery sites:

If the isolation/recovery site is pet-friendly:

1. When a client arrives with a pet information form, contact the shelter the client left to determine if the pet is still at that location, has been sent to stay with the client's emergency contact or has been sent to a TAS site.
2. If the pet has already been sent to stay with the client's emergency contact or has been sent to a TAS site, ask shelter staff to email you the updated paperwork (with Section B completed) or to share that information over the phone.
3. Complete Section C of the paperwork and email the updated form to SSHACOVIDtransport@toronto.ca . SSHA Transportation Dispatch will respond to arrange transportation. If urgent, contact SSHA Transportation Dispatch at 416-397-0598.
4. Keep the pet information form on file for the duration of the client's stay at the site. Provide the client with a copy of the completed form.
5. When transportation arrives, ask the client to review and confirm that all items sent with the pet, such as medications and accessories, have been delivered with the pet.
6. Let the client know that if they have an emergency and need to leave the building, staff will keep the pet on-site for up to 12 hours and will feed and take care of the pet.
7. Let the client know that after 12 hours, staff will contact the emergency person listed on their form to request they take the pet.
8. If no arrangements are made, staff will call TAS, who will care for their pet until the client returns.

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If the isolation/recovery site is not pet-friendly:

1. When a client arrives with a pet information form, inform them that staff will arrange for the pet to arrive on-site when the client is being discharged.
2. Contact the shelter the client left to determine if the pet has been sent to stay with the client's emergency contact or has been sent to a TAS site. Ask shelter staff to email you the updated paperwork (with Section B completed) or to share that information over the phone.
3. Keep the pet information form on file for the duration of the client's stay at the site. Provide the client with a copy of the completed form.
4. Upon client discharge, complete Section C of the paperwork and email the updated form to SSHACOVIDtransport@toronto.ca . SSHA Transportation Dispatch will respond to arrange transportation. If urgent, contact SSHA Transportation Dispatch at 416-397-0598.
5. Keep the pet information form until the pet arrives onsite. Provide the client with a copy of the completed form.
6. When transportation arrives, ask the client to review and confirm that all items sent with the pet, such as medications and accessories, have been delivered with the pet.

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CLIENT CONTACT AND TEMPORARY CARE INFORMATION

Section A: To be completed by site staff with the client before they are sent for COVID-19 testing

Client Name:			
SMIS ID:			
Client Phone Number:		Client Email:	
Client Emergency Contact Name:		Client Emergency Contact Phone/Email:	
Veterinary Clinic:			
Vet Phone Number:		Vet Email:	
Referring Site Name:		Referring Site Address:	

Section B: To be completed by site staff when animal is being transported to family friend or TAS site:

Referring Site Contact Person:		Referring Site Contact Phone Number:	
Family friend Drop-off Address (if applicable):			
Toronto Animal Services Site Name and Address (if applicable):			
Toronto Animal Services Contact Person:		Toronto Animal Services Contact Phone Number/Email:	

Section C: to be completed by staff at isolation site when client is to be reunited with their pet

Receiving Site Name:		Receiving Site Address:	
Receiving Site Contact Person:		Receiving Site Contact Phone Number:	

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PET INFORMATION

Section D: To be completed by site staff with the client before they are sent for COVID-19 testing

Name:		Age:	
Species:		Sex:	
Breed:		Spayed/Neutered:	
Vaccination information:			
Health Issues, including any medications and allergies:			
Behavioural Concerns:			
Feeding Instructions:			
Location of Emergency Supplies:			
Collar Tag Information i.e. City of Toronto Lic.:		Microchip Number:	
Inclusions with transportation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Carrier/crate<input type="checkbox"/> Collar<input type="checkbox"/> Leash<input type="checkbox"/> Medications<input type="checkbox"/> Vaccination card<input type="checkbox"/> Photos	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify:	

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Checklist for Pet Owner:

- Work with shelter staff to complete the pet information form for the referral.
- Document all of your pet's medications on the pet information form. Include dosages and administering directions from your veterinarian (if you have them). Give shelter staff all of your pet's medications. Provide shelter staff with pet vaccination records, if you have them. They will seal these items in a plastic bag along with the information form to be transported with your pet.
- Include your pet's collar with identification tags that link to your information, if you have one. If your pet is microchipped, ensure your contact and emergency contact information is current with the registry.
- Include your pet's leash, if you have one.
- If possible, give shelter staff a picture of your pet(s) for them to attach to the information form so they are easily identified, especially if you own more than one pet.
- Shelter staff will label a carrier/crate with your name, your pet's name and phone number.
- When you leave the hospital or assessment centre, you may be transported to a new facility to isolate, or you may be cleared to leave the facility. To get your pet transported back to you, either:
 - Give your pet information form to the staff at the new facility and request they arrange for your pet to be returned, or;
 - Return to the shelter where you were staying, give your pet information for to the staff at that site and request they arrange for your pet to be returned.