



National Animal Care & Control Association

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NACA Statement on Continuity of Animal Control and Sheltering Services

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In the event of service cancellations due to COVID-19, plans and protocols should be made to ensure Animal Control and Animal Sheltering operations remain open as essential services to communities and stakeholders while taking active steps to mitigate unnecessary exposure.

The most likely impact of COVID19 on shelters is a trend of average or increased intakes and decreased outcomes. Therefore, it is imperative that animal control and animal sheltering operations are considered essential to the health and wellbeing of the community and remain as essential services and are not subject to mandatory closures.

Animal control operations are key in order to continue to provide emergency services for priority investigation calls as well as a method by which to return animals home and reduce overall shelter intake. Animal control organizations should continue to take in pets that are sick and injured, or are in immediate danger, as in the case of animals that are victims of neglect or cruelty.

Animal sheltering operations should continue in order to provide appropriate care for all animals currently in the facility as well as to facilitate:

- Adoption and rescue placement of available pets
- Aid in direct owner placement as an alternative to shelter surrender
- Emergency foster placement to reduce shelter population
- Return-to-owner services that cannot be conducted in the field

To reduce the overall number of people in the public shelter areas, organizations should consider suspending non-essential intake, providing remote adoption and foster counseling as an option, and following strict cleaning protocol for vehicles and public areas of the shelter.

Communication:

Appropriate and effective communication during the COVID-19 pandemic is imperative. Any modification to services should be communicated in as clear and concise a manner as possible to ensure understanding and appropriate information sharing. Community members are the most valuable asset to a shelter and can greatly impact lives saved if any disruption to services occurs.