



Oregon Health Authority Recommendations for Veterinary Facilities during COVID-19 Pandemic

Veterinary clinics are a part of the health care system.

To ensure the health & safety of veterinary clinic staff and pet owners, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) recommends taking the following precautions.

1. Staff should take their temperature at home prior to work.
2. Upon arrival, ask staff about any symptoms such as:
 - Cough
 - Sore throat
 - Fever or chills
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - Loss of smell or taste
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Diarrhea
 - Nausea
 - Vomiting

If any of the symptoms mentioned above are present, staff should not be allowed to work.

What constitutes an exposure:

- You were within six feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period
- A confirmed case sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19

Quarantine guidance for close contacts* (updated guidelines):

All close contacts of confirmed and presumptive cases must quarantine during the period in which they are most likely to become infectious. All close contacts must stay home and at least six feet away from everyone, including household members, for the 14 days after their last exposure to a person with COVID-19. Although a 14-day quarantine is the safest option to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to others, the Local Public Health Authority (LPHA) may consider ending quarantine early for close contacts who have not developed any symptoms:

- After 10 days of quarantine, without any testing, or
- After seven days, with a negative result by an antigen or PCR test within 48 hours before ending quarantine.

There is a small but significant chance that a shortened quarantine period may result in post-quarantine transmission; therefore, it is critical that quarantined individuals continue to monitor themselves for symptoms daily during the entire 14 days of quarantine. If symptoms develop, the individual should return to quarantine, notify their LPHA, and call their healthcare provider to discuss testing.

Note: Shortened quarantine will not be an option for residents or patients in these settings:

- Long-term care facilities (LTCFs)
- Adult foster homes (AFHs)
- Residential healthcare settings (e.g., behavioral health residential treatment centers, facilities for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities)
- Inpatient healthcare settings (e.g., hospitals, inpatient hospice)

OSHA Rules

When working at a veterinary facility, curbside service will be prioritized to limit contact with the public as per [OSHA rules](#) (appendix A-16) with exceptions such as:

- Euthanasia.
- Showing an owner how to treat animals (e.g. how to administer fluids).
- In the case of animals that are difficult to handle (such as horses). With these cases you should have the owner manage the animal for safety's sake, and possibly allow the owner and animal to enter the facility if you are unable to examine the animal outside of the veterinary facility.

Masks, face coverings, and face shields and personal protective equipment.

- To minimize the risk of airborne spread of the disease, veterinary facilities must review and implement [OHA Statewide Mask, Face Covering, and Face Shield Guidance](#). Because of the nature of the veterinary profession, all staff should be masked and maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance when not working together with an animal.

COVID-19 cases in Veterinary Facilities

When veterinary staff have tested positive for SARS-CoV-19 in a veterinary setting, it is necessary to help the [local health authority](#) with contact tracing to identify those exposed to COVID-19.

- Exposed individuals should be advised to get tested as per [testing guidelines](#) (page 3, section 3).
- Exposed individuals may be quarantined for 7-10 days*.
- Only with the approval of the local health department under the guidance of the health officer and the state public health veterinarian, exposed individuals may return to the workplace in accordance with CDC guidelines for medical staff. Any new workplace contact with exposed staff should be limited to the greatest extent that is feasible while maintaining essential operations.
- Exposed individuals may not attend gatherings, outings or have extended contact with anyone else outside of their home during the 7-10 days*.
- When at home, exposed individuals should wear a face covering and follow [OHA quarantine guidance](#) for 7-10 days * to limit exposure to other household members.

COVID-19 infection notification process

Employers must establish a mechanism for notifying both exposed and affected employees within 24 hours of the employer's knowledge of a potential COVID-19 workplace exposure (e.g. an individual with COVID-19 in the workplace.)

Medical removal (quarantine and return to work)

Whenever OHA, the local public health agency or medical provider recommends an employee be restricted from work due to quarantine or isolation for COVID-19, such as through identification during contact tracing activities, the affected worker(s) must be directed to remain at home and away from other non-quarantined individuals. Quarantined individuals must be allowed to work from home if suitable work is available. The affected individual is entitled to return to their previous job duties if they are still available. Return-to-work and testing decisions must be made in concordance with public health guidance and the employee's medical provider.

Cleaning and sanitation

The employer must regularly clean or sanitize all common areas, shared equipment and high-touch surfaces that are used by employees or the public.

Such regular cleaning or sanitization must be implemented based on the following frequencies:

1. at least once every 24 hours if the workplace is occupied less than 12 hours a day; or
2. at least every 8 hours while in use if the workplace is occupied for more than 12 hours a day.

“COVID activity depends strongly on the collective success of mitigation efforts”

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