

Animal Health Alert: Updated COVID-19 Guidance for Veterinary Practice Staff
5.14.2021

Dear Colleagues,

First, we want to thank you again for your continued efforts to keep pets and humans healthy through the COVID-19 pandemic. We know that the everyday logistics of veterinary practice have changed drastically and quickly this past year. Your response to these challenges has been admirable and your service is truly essential.

We have recently updated the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health COVID Guidance for Veterinary Practice Staff to align with the current Los Angeles County Health Order and guidance related to vaccinated individuals (see attached). Yesterday CDC posted guidance that indicates that fully vaccinated individuals do not have to wear masks in many situations, however State guidance and Cal OSHA regulations have not been updated to include the new federal guidance. In California masks are still required in businesses, even if individuals are fully vaccinated. The Cal OSHA COVID-19 related requirements are to be reviewed on May 20th and if changes are made, we will update the veterinary practice guidance so that it aligns with current Cal OSHA standards.

There are several important changes and recommendations to be aware of:

- Fully vaccinated staff with high risk exposures to an infectious COVID-19 case may continue to work as long as they remain asymptomatic. They must continue to follow all current infection prevention and control recommendations to protect themselves and others from SARS-CoV-2 including self-monitoring for symptoms, source control and testing recommendations.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) recommendations now state that a well-fitting medical-grade facemask such as a surgical or procedure face mask should be used if social distancing is not feasible while working (e.g. while restraining an animal or during a procedure). Face shields or eye protection are recommended when staff must be in close contact with person(s) who are not fully vaccinated, or their vaccination status is unknown.
- As veterinary practices assess allowing more clients to enter their clinic, they should consider their practice's individual characteristics (size, ventilation, etc.), consult the guidance below, and evaluate how best to continue to protect both staff and clients from potential COVID-19 exposure.

Guidance documents from Los Angeles County Public Health:

- [Los Angeles County COVID-19 Guidance for Veterinary Practice Staff](#)

Links for additional local and state COVID-19 updates:

- [Los Angeles County Department of Public Health COVID-19 site](#)
- [Los Angeles County COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [Los Angeles City COVID-19 site](#)
- [California Department of Public Health COVID-19 site](#)

Additional resources for veterinarians and clients:

- [American Veterinary Medical Association COVID-19 site](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 and Animals](#)
- [California Veterinary Medical Association COVID-19 Updates](#)

Information on SARS-CoV-2 Testing in Animals:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Evaluation for SARS-CoV-2 Testing in Animals](#)

This situation is constantly changing, and we encourage you to check for updates regularly. Please call (213-288-7060) or email (vet@ph.lacounty.gov) if you have specific questions.

Sincerely,

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