



## **ANIMAL WELFARE BOARD OF INDIA**

Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Govt. of India  
(Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying)  
NIAW Campus, 42 Mile Stone, Delhi-Agra Highway  
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Email: [animalwelfareboard@gmail.com](mailto:animalwelfareboard@gmail.com) : Website: [www.awbi.in](http://www.awbi.in)

No. 3-4/2021-2022/PCA

Dated: 14.06.2021

### **TO WHOM SO EVER IT MAY CONCERN**

The Animal Welfare Board of India has been receiving several representatives, news, emails that there is wide fear of possibility of transmission of Coronavirus to human from animals specially from domestic animals viz. dogs, cats, cows etc. The people are getting worried regarding dangerous of keeping pets at home and working closely with them.

2. The Board sought technical advice of ICAR- Indian Veterinary Research Institute to help frame a guideline cum precautionary measure to be undertaken by the personnel involved in handling, care and rescue of animals on day to day basis which will help them prevent from spreading or contracting COVID-19.

3. It is clarified that SARS-CoV-2 spreads primarily through human-to-human transmission, but there is evidence of transmission between humans and animals. Several animals like mink, dogs, domestic cats, lions, tigers and raccoon have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 after contact with infected persons. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a few pets- including cats and dogs-also have been infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. This happened mostly after the animals were in close contact with people infected with the COVID-19 virus. The risk of animals spreading the COVID-19 virus to human is considered low. Animal doesn't appear to play role in spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. However, there is no report of SARS-CoV-2 transmission to domestic animals such as cattle, sheep, goat etc. from the infected human beings.

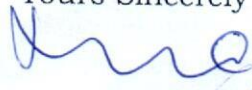
4. Further it is sated that there is no evidence that companion animals are playing an epidemiological role in the spread of human infections of SARS-CoV-2. However, as animals and people can both be affected by this virus, it is recommended that people who are suspected or confirmed

infection with COVID-19 virus should avoid close contact with their companion animals. Natural and experimental infection is found in cats and dogs. Cats shows high susceptibility to infection with clinical signs in some cases only. Transmission between cats is possible. Dogs shows low susceptibility to infection with clinical signs in some cases only. Transmission between dogs is not found. As a general, good practice, basic hygiene measures like hand washing before and after being around or handling animals, their food, or supplies, as well as avoiding kissing, being licked by animals, or sharing food may be strictly followed.

5. The AWBI has also **Revised guidelines for pet owners and caregivers to be followed during this period of COVID-19 Pandemic** in addition to already existing guidelines issued by the AWBI on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2015 and 01<sup>st</sup> June 2020, which should be read in conjunction with each other. The copy of the Revised Guidelines is enclosed herewith for your ready reference.

With Regards

Yours Sincerely

  
(Dr. O. P Chaudhary)  
Chairman

26.6.21

Encl: As above

Copy of necessary action and information:

1. All the Director of Animal Husbandry of States and UT's
2. All the District collectors of States and UT's

**Revised guidelines for pet owners and caregivers to be followed during this period of COVID-19 Pandemic.**

**I. For pet and stray animals.**

1. To avoid any unnecessary contact or interaction of your animals with outside people or animals.
2. To avoid dog parks or public places where many people and dogs gather or is present. Also, while allowing the dog to roam outside, maintain at least 6 feet (2 meters) distance from other people and animals.
3. In case of catstry to keep it indoors where ever possible.
4. If the pet owner or care giver is infected with COVID-19 and have pet or feeding animals in his / her area, in that case, the pet owner or care giver shall depute or arrange non-infected person to take care of pet and those animals.
5. Avoid excessive petting, snuggling, kissing or licking and sharing food or bedding with your pet.
6. The infected pet owner and care giver around the animals shall wear mask and also wash hands before touching and handling those animals and their belongings.
7. It is recommended to follow all the biosecurity measures such as regular cleaning of the premises with 1% Sodium hypochloride solution, wearing masks while feeding and watering of zoo tigers, cats, lions etc. and regular washing of hands with soap and water.

**II. For animals in Farm's and other institutes**

**A. Entry in the farm by workers/caregiver or visitors:**

Entry by workers or visitors is the most likely pathway for human-to-animal transmission on a farm. It is necessary that all workers including farm owners should monitor themselves for signs of infection before entering the farm. Everyone who develops symptoms should avoid contact with animals, including farmed and companion animals and other farm personnel and stay home. A system should be established to identify, monitor, and control individuals entering premises and to prevent the entry of unauthorized individuals. Access to farms should be limited to essential personnel.

**B. The measures to be followed by worker/caregiver or visitors to prevent introduction of Virus in Farm or Institute:**

1. All personnel and workers should stay home if they are sick or in the event they have been in contact with an individual infected with SARS-CoV-2, either for an isolation period or testing requirement.
2. Encourage workers to adhere to use face coverings and other public health recommendations time to time.
3. Encourage proper hand hygiene and restrict access to the premises and buildings where production animals are kept.
4. Limit non-production animal access, and implement measures to exclude domestic pets (dogs, cats, others), rodents, birds, and other wildlife from buildings.
5. Provide and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) depending on the activity being performed, like working closely with animals including aerosol generating procedures.
6. Use fences, gates, and other barriers to control access of people and other animals to animal housing.
7. Increase distance between workers while working in a common area.
8. Require visitors to park their vehicles in designated areas away from animal housing.
9. Use signage to advise visitors to remain in their vehicles until farm personnel assist them and provide a phone number that visitors can call for entry instructions.
10. Maintain a log of all personnel who enter the property (family, workers, visitors, etc.) including the date, contact information, information on previous contact with other animals, and nature of their visit.

**C. Introduction of new animals onto a farm**

New animals of species that are of moderate to high risk of infection with SARS-CoV-2, (i.e. mustelids, felids, and racoon dogs) brought to a farm are a potential risk, especially if no surveillance is being done on the origin farm. Introducing new animals of species that are of moderate to high risk of infection with.



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No. 9-16/2019-20/PCA

Date: 01.06.2020

**CIRCULAR**

To

The Chief Secretary of all States/ UTs

Sir/Madam,

**Subject: Request to allow pet owners to take their pets out for nature's calls and walks/exercise due to the COVID19 – reg.**

The Animal Welfare Board of India is receiving number of representations from various organizations and pet owners informing that the local administration is not allowing the pets to go outside for nature's call / exercise/ walk etc. During the COVID-19 lock down this situation has further aggravated and the local administration / RWAs are hindering the pet owner to come out from the home for nature's call.

2. In this regard it is clarified that stopping pet animals and other animals for nature's call and exercise is a part of offense as accumulation of body excretion in the body creates physiological changes and toxicity in the animal body. This may lead to change of normal behaviour of animals and even the animal may die. Further, keeping these animals in the home without exercise also creates metabolic disturbances in the animal body like human being. Hence, the animal owners need to take their animal out from their home and no body cannot stop these animals.

3. It is further clarified that cruelty to animals in this kind is an offence under Section 3, Section 11 (1) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 and other Rules made thereunder. Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has upheld the five freedoms of animals in SLP(C) 11686 of 2007 in the matter of Animal Welfare Board of India vs. A. Nagaraja and Others and directed all the State Governments to take proactive steps to prevent unnecessary pain and sufferings to animals. Therefore, it is also violation of the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

4. The Board vide its letter dated 11.03.2020, 24.03.2020 and 25.04.2020 issued advisories to take steps for the welfare of animals including allowing of pet animals for nature calls (urinate/defecate) and exercise, it is the responsibility of District Authorities and other local bodies to ensure the same and take appropriate action if any one stops the pet owner to carry out such things. The Copies of the same is enclosed herewith for kind information and further action.

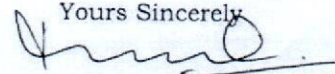
5. It is further clarified that most of the pet animals kept by people have small bladders and their bodies are not designed to hold urine and poop for unnecessary long period of time. The pet animals although domesticated still need minimum physical activities such as walk to keep them in good health physically as well as mentally. Also, keeping an animals constrained, not letting him go on a walk or for exercise is an offence of cruelty under Section 11(1)(g) "being the owner, neglects to exercise or cause to be exercised reasonably any dog habitually chained up or kept in close confinement".

6. In view of the above, it is requested to kindly direct the local administration to create at least 3 time slots of 20 minutes each in all the zones during which pet owners can take their animals out to urinate or defecate and for walk/exercise provided they adhere to the "Board's Guideline for pet owners and caregivers to be followed during this period of COVID-19 pandemic 2020" issued by the Board. The Copy of the Guideline is enclosed herewith for your information.

With Regards

Encl: As above

Yours Sincerely



(Dr. O.P Chaudhary) 1.6.20  
Chairman

Copy to

All the Director of Animal Husbandry of States and UTs.



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Date: 01.06.2020

#### **Guidelines-with respect of pet animal owners during pandemic of COVID-19.**

1. Pet owner are requested to buy pet food as per their requirement and not to stockpile to avoid any unnecessary shortage of pet food and to avoid difficulties for other pet owners.
2. Pet food supplier and distributors are requested to maintain regular supply of pet food through shop or online portals after maintaining COVID guidelines.
3. Pet owner are to identify nearest person or contact of dog shelter or day-care who can take care for their pet in case of pet owner or their family member infected with COVID.
4. Limit the pet walks or exercise and take their pet out for nature's call during time slot specified by the local authorities or police. They should strictly maintain social distancing norms and any other precautions as specified by the Government at the time of taking their pet for walk and nature's call.
5. Pet owner are strictly advised to avoid any unnecessary contact of their pet with other humans and animals. If their pet came into contact with any person suspicious of COVID-19 it should be first isolated and then with proper precaution to be taken like proper bath with soap / shampoo and also take advice of their veterinarian.
6. Pet owners are advised to get their pets vaccinated and keep vaccination record readily available.

These guidelines are in addition to the already existing guidelines issued by AWBI on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2015 and are to read with keep principle of harmonious construction in mind. These guidelines are to be followed during this period of COVID-19 pandemic and this in no way override and supersedes previous guidelines of 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2015.