

Frequently Asked Questions

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General

1. What is the risk of getting COVID-19 from pets, birds or animals?

The current spread of COVID-19 is a result of human to human transmission. While there have been several isolated cases in the U.S., Hong Kong and Belgium of pet animals being tested positive after being in contact with COVID-19 infected persons, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and other national animal health organisations have maintained that there is no evidence that companion animals have spread the disease to humans.

AVS will continue to keep in close contact with OIE to monitor the developments on the virus as the situation is still evolving and review any further information that surfaces. We are also in contact with veterinary clinics, animal welfare groups and animal-related businesses to share information and advisories on COVID-19.

It is recommended that persons that are unwell limit their contact with pets as well as other people. Good hygiene practices are encouraged when handling pets, with thorough handwashing before and after direct contact with pets, their supplies and food.

2. What animal management cases will AVS continue to handle during this period?

AVS will continue to attend to cases where there are public safety and animal welfare concerns. We will also continue to rehome community animals.

3. Where can I report animal-related entities that are not observing the rules during the reopening phases?

You may write to AVS via our website at www.avs.gov.sg/feedback.

4. Who can conduct rehoming, adoption and fostering activities?

Only Animal Welfare Groups and animal shelters that have been identified by NParks/AVS to support the rehoming, adoption or fostering of animals may continue to do so.

Pet Owners

5. Will pet shops and veterinary clinics be open during this time?

Veterinary clinics will remain open only for services listed in the **Guidance document for veterinary and animal-related services (Post Circuit Breaker – Phase 1)**.

Pet shops are permitted to carry out on-site retail of pet food and supplies only. Pet shops are encouraged to continue to sell pet food and supplies online, or take the orders via phone and deliver them to customers.

6. Can I continue to buy my pet food and supplies from shops?

Pet shops are permitted to carry out on-site retail of pet food and supplies only. Pet owners are encouraged to continue to purchase their supplies and pet food online or via phone. These orders can be delivered to the pet owners to minimise the movement and interaction of people.

7. Why is it that only basic pet grooming, and animal physiotherapy and rehabilitation services are allowed to resume from 2 June 2020? What about other animal-related services/businesses?

A phased approach to resumption of business activities will help Singaporeans go back to work and allow businesses to resume in a safe way. Basic pet grooming services are part of the management of skin conditions for some pets, while physiotherapy and rehabilitation help animals with chronic joint and muscle conditions; and is part of the post-surgery management of animals. Establishments providing such services will thus be allowed to resume operations as they are required for animal health and welfare.

Cosmetic pet grooming such as styling of pets fur, fur dyeing and spa baths are not allowed.

Other non-permitted services and businesses, such as pet sitting, day care, walking, boarding, dog training and sale of pets, will remain closed for now, as measures are gradually eased in a careful and calibrated manner.

8. I need to hire a dog trainer for my pet, but this is not a permitted service. What can I do?

Pet owners requesting for this and other non-permitted services may apply to AVS at www.avs.gov.sg/feedback and provide supporting documents. This can be in the form of videos, medical records or a veterinary referral. AVS will make an assessment on a case-by-case basis and determine if the service is necessary for the animal's health and welfare, or for public safety reasons.

9. What are basic pet grooming services? What is considered cosmetic pet grooming services?

Basic pet grooming is allowed from 2 June 2020. This includes procedures that fall into these categories:

- Cleansing for hygiene purposes; Including teeth brushing for dental hygiene, emptying anal glands, ear cleaning and medicated baths
- Nail clipping
- Maintenance of skin and fur, including anti-parasitic treatment
- **[For pet birds]** Clipping of flight feathers, beak trimming, maintenance of skin and feathers, including anti-parasitic treatment.
- Any other treatment prescribed by a vet

Cosmetic pet grooming such as styling of pets fur, fur dyeing and spa baths are not allowed.

10. Why are dog runs still closed?

In line with the latest announcement by the Multi-Ministry Taskforce (MTF) on a phased approach to resume activities safely after the Circuit Breaker period, dog runs in our parks remain closed until further notice to allow for safe distancing and to prevent gathering in groups. We will review the opening of these facilities for Phase 2, in line with the advisories from the MTF.

Pet owners can continue to walk their dogs in our parks. Please note that dogs are not allowed in areas like the nature reserves. More info: www.go.gov.sg/funwithyourdogs

We urge the public to comply with safe distancing measures when they visit. They can check the NParks website for the latest advisories in response to the COVID-19 situation, and use the SafeDistParks.nparks.gov.sg portal for more information on the visitorship of major parks and green spaces.

11. What should pet owners observe?

Pet owners should continue to care for their pets while adopting good hygiene practices. There is also no need to restrict the movement of pets. If pets are observed to be unwell, owners should call their veterinary clinics first before bringing them for veterinary treatment.

Owning a pet is a lifelong commitment and owners must be responsible and provide care for the animals. AVS does not condone pet abandonment and will look into all feedback on animal welfare/cruelty, including pet abandonment. Individuals who are found guilty of abandoning their pets or fail in their duty of care towards their pets, are liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000 and/or a maximum jail term of 12 months for first conviction.

12. I am under a Stay Home Notice/Leave of Absence/Quarantine, can I still take care of my pet? What should I do if I am a confirmed COVID-19 patient and am unable to take care of my pet?

Pet owners should continue to care for their pet at home.

It is recommended that persons that are unwell limit their contact with pets as well as other people. Good hygiene practices are encouraged when handling pets, with thorough handwashing before and after direct contact with pets, their supplies and food.

If pet owners are under SHN/LOA/hospitalised or quarantined outside of their homes and are unable to care for their pet, it is recommended for them to seek help from another member of the household. It is in the best interests of the animal to be kept in a familiar environment as this would help to minimise stress on the pet.

Should pets fall sick during this period, other members of the household can contact their regular vet. If other members of the household are also unable to leave the house, they may contact NParks/AVS for assistance at 1800-476 1600.

13. MOH health advisory says to avoid contact with live animals, poultry and birds. Does that include my pets?

No. MOH's advice is meant primarily for members of public who are overseas or planning to travel overseas, and may come into contact with live animals, poultry and birds. Currently, there is no evidence of animal to human transmission in Singapore. Hence, there is no known risk of people being infected by the COVID-19 through your pets or other animals.

14. I made a reservation for a pet at a pet shop. Am I allowed to collect my pet if I had placed the reservation before 7 April 2020?

All retail and online sale of pets and live animals (including ornamental fishes) remains suspended. This includes physical and online viewing, bidding/auction, collection, delivery and reservation of animals for sale as pets.

15. I am a pet owner and I need to go into my place of work now that it has reopened for operations. Can I arrange for a pet sitter or pet day care services to look after my pet?

Pet sitting and pet day care services are currently not permitted to resume operations. While we understand the concerns of those affected by the suspension of these services, pet owners are strongly encouraged to make alternative pet care arrangements by seeking help from other members of the household during this period.

16. Can employees return to their workplace to feed a company pet that no one was able to bring home?

To ensure that animal health and welfare is not compromised, care for these pets must continue. Employees returning to their workplace should abide by safe distancing measures implemented by MOH and MOM's regulation in relation to the current COVID-19 situation.

For more information, latest updates, and advisories on COVID-19, please refer to the MOH website (<https://www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19>).

17. My pet has recently passed away and I would like to have a funeral service for it. Are such services permitted to operate?

Funeral and cremation services for pets are permitted. With effect from 6 June 2020, the physical viewing of pet funerals and cremation of pets will be permitted and limited to 5 persons.

Community Animal Caregivers

18. Will community animal caregivers be able to leave home to feed stray animals?

Community animal caregivers should abide by safe distancing measures by MOH when feeding community animals. Caregivers are reminded to feed alone and not join in feeds if there is another feeder at the intended feeding location. They should practise supervised feeding and remove any leftover food and receptacles after feeding to avoid dirtying the environment. They should also return home immediately after feeding and not loiter.

If asked to leave by safe distancing enforcement officers, caregivers should comply with the instructions. Persons that are unwell and on Quarantine Order or Stay Home Notice should stay home. Good hygiene practices are encouraged when handling animals, with thorough handwashing before and after direct contact with animals, their supplies and food.

19. Can I continue to bring stray dogs and cats for sterilisation (under national animal management programmes, or otherwise)?

The removal of stray animals (dogs and cats) from the community by caregivers is not allowed. Stray community animals may only be trapped or rescued by Animal Welfare Groups or contractors authorised by AVS and only for public safety or animal welfare reasons. These community animals may be sterilised prior to rehoming or release.

Animal-related Business Owners

20. What services are permitted under the animal sector?

The following services for the animal sector are permitted to operate, to ensure animal health and welfare:

- Veterinary services for the provision of services listed in the **Guidance document for veterinary and animal-related services (Post Circuit Breaker – Phase 1)** Provision of animal feed and supplies
- Animal and wildlife management services for public safety
- Basic Pet grooming
- Pet transport
- Pet cremation

For a list of permitted activities, please refer to covid.gobusiness.gov.sg/permittedlist/. If you provide a service that is not on the permitted list, you must apply for General Exemption should you need to operate. Do note that sector specific guidelines would apply to some companies.

Please refer to the official MTI website for COVID-19 updates for businesses (<https://www.mti.gov.sg/Newsroom/Updates-on-COVID-19>).

Pet Shops

21. I run a pet shop. Can I sell pets/accept deposits for sale of pets, sell pet food and pet-related accessories through online-retail to other businesses or individuals locally?

Pet shops are permitted to carry out on-site retail of pet food and supplies only. Pet shops are encouraged to continue to sell pet food and supplies online or via phone. These orders may be delivered to the customers.

The retail and online sale of animals, including viewing, bidding/auction, collection, delivery and reservation, is not allowed to discourage impulse buying of animals. Interested potential pet-owners will not be able to visit pet shops to interact with animals during this time. Pet shops should clearly indicate that only sale of pet food and supplies is available, and there is no sale of animals. There is to be no display of any live animals at the shopfront. For the avoidance of doubt, there should be no live animals visible to customers and members of the public in or near the shop premises.

Pet shop personnel are allowed to continue providing care for the animals on their premises to ensure the animals' health and well-being.

22. I run a bird shop. Am I allowed to sun my birds to ensure they stay healthy?

Bird shops may continue to sun their birds daily from 7am to 7pm to ensure the birds stay healthy. Bird shops should abide by safe distancing measures by MOH and ensure that people do not gather to view the birds.

Animal Boarding Facility

23. I operate a licensed pet boarding facility. Can I take in healthy pets belonging to confirmed COVID-19 patients or people under SHN/QO?

Licensed pet boarders are allowed to continue providing care for the animals on their premises to ensure the animals' health and well-being. However, they will not be allowed to take on more pets for boarding except for healthy pets belonging to confirmed COVID-19 patients or people under SHN/QO if they have been unable to make alternative pet care arrangements (e.g. care from other members of the household). Members of the public will only be allowed on your premises for the sole purpose of bringing their animals home.

Licensed pet boarders are to abide by safe distancing measures by MOH (e.g. safe distancing amongst employees, temperature monitoring, observing good personal hygiene) to minimise the spread of COVID-19.

All non-licensed boarding facilities are not allowed to take on new pets for boarding. They can continue to care for the animals boarded within their facility.

Animal Breeding Facility

24. I breed animals for sale. Can I continue operating?

All breeding activities are not applicable for exemption and should be suspended. All breeding facilities have to be closed to the public, and cease all leisure activities. In-person and on-site activities related to the retail and online sale of animals, including viewing, bidding/auction, collection, delivery and reservation, are not allowed during this time.

Breeding facilities are allowed to continue providing care for the animals on their premises to ensure the animals' health and well-being. They should abide by safe distancing measures by MOH (e.g. safe distancing amongst employees, temperature monitoring, observing good personal hygiene) to minimise the spread of COVID-19.

Animal Welfare Groups (AWGs) and Animal Shelters

25. I operate an animal shelter. Can my employees and volunteers continue to help care for the animals?

Animal shelters may allow their employees and volunteers to enter their premises only for the purpose of ensuring the health and welfare of the animals and as long as they abide by safe distancing measures by MOH (e.g. safe distancing amongst employees/volunteers, temperature monitoring, observing good personal hygiene). Care of the animals should not be interrupted as a result of the suspension of activities.

26. I operate an animal shelter. Can I continue to take in stray/surrendered/abandoned animals into my shelter?

Animal shelters are only allowed to take in animals for public safety reasons, or those that have been rescued on welfare grounds. Trapping, including transporting of animals for public safety and animal welfare reasons should only be done by approved Animal Welfare Groups or animal management contractors. These community animals may be sterilised prior to rehoming or release.

27. I am an Animal Welfare Group (AWG) and/or operate an animal shelter. Can I continue to hold adoption drives or allow customers to visit or collect animals at the shelter for adoption, rehoming or fostering?

The gradual resumption of rehoming, adoption or fostering activities is essential as animal shelters have limited capacities. Cessation of these activities may hinder the shelters' ability to take in more rescued animals and could cause overcrowding. Moreover, the long-term housing of an animal in a shelter environment is detrimental to its health and welfare.

Only AWGs or animal shelters that have been identified by AVS to support the rehoming, adoption or fostering of animals may be allowed to do so. For these AWGs and shelters, all

interaction between rehomer and adopter/fosterer should be virtual (e.g. via video calls, e-payment). If the AWG Partners require on-site interaction between the adopter and animals, prior approval must be sought from NParks with safe distancing measures in place. NParks may also require AWG Partners to include additional measures to ensure that the interaction is kept to a minimum level. Once the adoption or fostering has been agreed upon, the animal should be delivered to the adopter or fosterer by an approved pet transporter or by the AWG's registered employee or volunteer, with safe distancing measures observed.

28. I am an Animal Welfare Group (AWG) involved in the Trap-Neuter-Release Manage (TNRM) programme or Stray Cat Sterilisation Programme (SCSP) for stray dogs and cats respectively. Can I continue with my TNRM/SCSP operations?

Stray dogs and cats may only be trapped or rescued by AWGs or contractors authorised by AVS and only for public safety or animal welfare reasons. These community animals may be sterilised prior to rehoming or release.

Horse Establishment

29. I operate a horse establishment which does not have sufficient staff to care for all the horses. Can I continue to allow horse owners to provide care for their own horses?

Both staff of horse establishments and horse owners (on a controlled schedule) are allowed to care for and exercise the horses. Horse owners should contact their respective establishments for the details of what they are permitted to do.

Other Services for Pets

30. I provide dog walking services. Can I continue to walk my clients' dogs?

Dog walking services are not permitted to operate and should remain suspended. Pet owners are encouraged to walk their own dogs.

Pet Transport/Pet Agent

31. I am a pet agent. Can I continue to facilitate the transport of imported pets to Singapore?

Please refer to AVS' website (<https://www.nparks.gov.sg/avs/bringing-animals-into-singapore-and-exporting/bringing-in-and-transshipping-dogs-and-cats/preparing-to-bring-dogs-and-cats-into-singapore>) for guidance on bringing pets into Singapore.

Animal Trade

32. Will I still be able to bring animals into Singapore from overseas?

Animal traders are allowed to continue the import and export of animals and must continue to provide care for the animals in their premises to ensure the animals' health and welfare. AVS will continue to process all import and export applications.