

# **New Bedford Police Animal Control statement on pets and the spread of COVID-19**



**NEW BEDFORD POLICE  
ANIMAL CONTROL DEPARTMENT  
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Over the past few weeks, the coronavirus pandemic has greatly affected our lives, and I recognize that this is a challenging time. I want to assure you that **New Bedford Animal Control continues to prioritize the health and safety of our Animal Control Officers, Constituents, and the animals in our care.**

We want to stress there is **no current evidence** that suggests the coronavirus can be transmitted to or from companion animals. We have been taking necessary measures to mitigate concerns around public interaction with our Animal Control Officers. We have gathered some information that may be helpful below as always your safety should be first Stay Safe and Healthy may God Bless you and your family during these times.

**Considerations for COVID-19 patients under home care and isolation who have pets or other animals:**

People with COVID-19 should be advised to tell their public health point of contact that they have pets or other animals in their home.

In addition to other prevention measures, people with COVID-19 who are identified by public health officials as requiring home care and isolation should be advised to limit interaction with pets and other animals. Specifically, while these people are symptomatic, they should maintain separation from pets as they would with other household members, and avoid direct contact with pets, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food. Service animals should be permitted to remain with their handlers.

If possible, a household member should be designated to care for pets in the home. If the individual in home care and isolation must care for pet(s), including service animals, they should ensure they wash their hands before and after caring for pets and wear a facemask while interacting with pets, until they are medically cleared to return to normal activities.

If you are not ill with COVID-19, you can interact with your pet as you normally would, including walking, feeding, and playing. You should continue to practice good hygiene during those interactions (e.g., wash hands before and after interacting with your pet; ensure your pet is kept well-groomed; regularly clean your pet's food and water bowls, bedding material, and toys).

**At this point there is no evidence that companion animals, including pets, can spread COVID-19.**

When a public health professional is notified of a pet or other animal, in the home of a person with COVID-19, they should notify the state public health veterinarian or other designated animal health professional.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available

Infectious disease experts and multiple international and domestic human and animal health organizations agree there is no evidence at this point to indicate that pets become ill with COVID-19 or that they spread it to other animals, including people.

Out of an abundance of caution, it is recommended that those ill with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus. Have another member of your household take care of walking, feeding, and playing with your pet. If you have a service animal or you must care for your pet, then wear a facemask; don't share food, kiss, or hug them; and wash your hands before and after any contact with them.

As always, careful hand washing and other infection control practices can greatly reduce the chance of spreading any disease.

**Here are some tips and ways to protect your pet during these times.**

- 1) Double check that you're pet vaccinated and is registered with your city.
- 2) Identify a friend or family member who can care for your pet should you get sick
- 3) Have extra pet food and supplies on hand.
- 4) Ensure your pet is wearing proper identification
- 5) Make sure your pet's microchip info is up to date and have an emergency contact
- 6) Make an easily shareable record of your pets needs (medication, food, where you keep the lease, etc) that you can share if you need someone to care for your pet in an emergency
- 7) Notify Emergency personnel that you have an animal at home who will need care.

New Bedford Animal Control understands the fear and uncertainty that we are all facing and we are here as always to support our community in any way that we can. As always, careful hand washing and other infection control practices can greatly reduce the chance of spreading any disease. Continue washing your hands, cleaning diligently and be Safe and Healthy. May God Bless you and your family **NBACSTRONG**.

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