

From: [WA DOH Veterinary Board of Governors](#)
Subject: Veterinary Board of Governors communication on issues related to the COVID-19 outbreak
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During the COVID-19 crisis, the Washington State Veterinary Board of Governors (board) is working to assist the veterinary community by sharing information about governmental actions and by developing messages, policies, or rules to further support the profession.

Special Meetings: The Veterinary Board of Governors is holding weekly special meetings on Fridays from April 3 through May 1, 2020, to discuss and act on issues related to the COVID-19 outbreak. We will share information and agendas for the meetings through this email distribution list.

Essential procedures: The governor has also issued a proclamation that [COVID-19 Non Urgent Medical Procedures](#) should be delayed to preserve medical equipment and supplies.

Consistent with the governor's proclamation to conserve personal protective equipment (PPE), if a procedure is not medically necessary, it should not be performed during the emergency. Whether a procedure is "essential" is a decision left to the competent practitioner's sound professional judgment. The [American Veterinary Medical Association \(AVMA\)](#) has published guidance on this topic. The board will further discuss this topic at its Friday, April 17 special meeting and may provide more information and guidance soon.

Worker Safety: The Department of Labor and Industries has COVID-19 guidance and resources for employees and employers, such as veterinarians. Please visit their website for more information about the [resources](#) or if you have [questions about worker safety](#).

Operating Environment: During this time of public emergency, the state has invoked its State [Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan](#). The guiding principles of the plan direct state agencies to do everything possible to support shelter-in-place orders when invoked. Similar guiding principles are to do what is necessary to support the public health and to limit use of medical supplies and equipment. The Comprehensive Plan provides operating principles, which are organized by sectors and emergency service functions (ESF).

- [ESF #6](#) provides limited guidance on how veterinary care to animals is to be provided during the state of emergency. ESF 6 establishes a Washington Animal Response Management Task Force, which is coordinated by the Washington State Department of Agriculture.
- [ESF#8](#) directs DOH to do what is necessary to contain diseases transmitted from animals and to protect the health of livestock, companion, and service animals.
- [ESF #11](#) is the State Animal Response plan, to be followed in conjunction with ESF #6, but ESF #6 does not deal with licensing issues.



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