

Emergency Operating Procedure: Large Animal Ambulatory Clinic

Disclaimer: This Emergency Operating Procedure (EOP) was developed based on a compilation of best available information, knowledge, experience, and veterinary medical practices to provide guidance to Virginia Tech's Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) staff in performing the activities defined herein. For non-VTH users, this document should be considered as a reference and used as suggested guidance. The VTH has made every attempt to present the information in a clear and concise manner for a variety of users. However, the VTH and Virginia Tech are not responsible for the misuse or misinterpretation of the information presented herein. Under no circumstances shall the VTH or Virginia Tech be liable for any actions taken or omissions made by non-VTH users of this document.

I. Description & Purpose

This emergency operating procedure describes how to appropriately conduct scheduled and emergency appointments while minimizing contact with clients and protecting both clients and staff. These are recommendations based on current knowledge of the COVID-19 from the CDC as well as guidelines from the AVMA. These EOPs should be modified to meet your specific practice requirements in order to enhance compliance.

II. Important Information

In executing or modifying these procedures, please observe these essential principles:

- a. All clients should be asked CDC screening questions on the day of the scheduled visit prior to the appointment. If the answer is “yes” to any of the questions, reschedule the appointment or require that a different individual be present at the appointment.
- b. Maintain a distance of 6 feet between clients and personnel.
- c. The fewest number of people possible should attend the appointment.



- d. All appointments should be conducted outside.

III. Required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- a. Disposable hospital gown, white lab coat, or scrub top
- b. Nitrile gloves (S, M, L)
- c. Surgical mask
- d. Closed toed shoes

IV. Procedures

- a. Within 12 hours of the scheduled appointment or before going out on an emergency visit, clinic personnel will ask CDC screening questions.
- b. If the answer to any of the following questions is “YES”, the visit should be delayed 14 days, if possible. If not possible, the clinic should require that a different individual attend the appointment.
- c. Screening questions should include:
 - i. Does anyone in the household have a fever, cough, respiratory symptoms, or shortness of breath?
 - ii. Has anyone in the household been tested for COVID-19 or had contact with anyone who has been tested for COVID-19 or had respiratory symptoms in the past 14 days?
 - iii. Has anyone in the household traveled to a high-risk area within the past 14 days? (high risk areas will depend on your specific location, check the CDC website for details)
- d. If the client answers “YES” to any of the screening questions, and the appointment cannot be rescheduled and the client must be present for the appointment, advise them to remain in their home/office.
- e. If the client answers “NO” to all the screening questions, advise them that, for the duration of the visit, only the minimum number of clientele necessary can be present, preferably only 1 client, and maintain at least 6 feet distance from all veterinary personnel at all times.
- f. For all appointments and emergency calls, obtain the history over the phone prior to arriving or prior to exiting the vehicle. Avoid all face-to-face interactions.

- g.** During the appointment, gloves, a surgical mask, and a disposable gown or coveralls should be worn.
- h.** If coveralls are worn in place of a disposable hospital gown, they should be washed before being worn for another appointment.
- i.** All veterinary staff should wash their hands at the conclusion of the appointment and prior to leaving the site.

V. Euthanasia

- a.** Attended euthanasia poses a health risk to both the client and veterinary staff due to the use of confined space and the need to be physically close. In addition, due to the nature of euthanasia, there is a higher risk associated with clients who are crying and blowing their nose.
- b.** If attended euthanasia is permitted, perform euthanasia outside with as few people present as possible and only with those who answered “NO” to all CDC screening questions.
- c.** Require all individuals present to wear a surgical mask. Please be mindful of the PPE shortage, and limit the number of people present at the euthanasia.
- d.** Either use a very long extension set to maintain as much distance as possible between veterinary staff and the client; or ask the client to remain at least 6 feet from the animal and clinician during the procedure.
- e.** If a client answered “YES” to the CDC screening questions, attended euthanasia should be discouraged.

VI. Payments and Receipts

- a.** Payment can be made over the phone via credit card or billed, as per veterinary practice preference
- b.** If possible, all receipts should be emailed. If the client does not have access to email, receipts should be sent via mail.

VII. References

- a.** AVMA: Considerations for mobile and house call veterinarians during the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19/mobile-house-call-veterinarians-covid19-pandemic>

- b. CDC: Households with Pets: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/interim-guidance-managing-people-in-home-care-and-isolation-who-have-pets.html>