



# Maryland Department of Agriculture

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Office of Marketing  
Animal Industries and Consumer Services

Larry Hogan, Governor  
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor  
Joseph Bartenfelder, Secretary  
Julianne A. Oberg, Deputy Secretary

## Animal Health

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50 Harry S. Truman Parkway  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
www.mda.maryland.gov

410.841.5810 Baltimore/Washington  
410.841.5999 Fax  
800.492.5590 Toll Free

April 20, 2020

Dear Maryland Veterinarian:

**Subject: Maryland Requirements for Testing of Pets and Exotic Animals for COVID-19**

This letter is to inform you of procedures required for requesting COVID-19\* testing for animals. At this time, there is no evidence to suggest that any animals, including pets or livestock, can spread COVID-19 to people. The State of Maryland, USDA, and CDC do not recommend routine testing of animals for this virus. Because the situation is ever-evolving, public and animal health officials may decide to test certain animals out of an abundance of caution. The Maryland Departments of Agriculture and Health have direct oversight of the approval process for animal testing for COVID-19 in Maryland.

**Testing of animals for COVID-19 will only be done under restricted circumstances.** The reasons for this are twofold; first, there is currently limited guidance regarding the management of a positive animal, and second, restrictive testing will help conserve personal protective equipment and other supplies desperately needed by human hospitals for COVID-19 response efforts. All requests for testing of animals will be evaluated jointly by the State Veterinarian and the Maryland Department of Health State Public Health Veterinarian to determine if the situation meets the testing criteria described in the attached document. Animal specimens will only be submitted to veterinary diagnostic laboratories for analysis.

**Requests for COVID-19 animal testing may be made by Maryland licensed veterinarians only by submitting the request in writing to the State Veterinarian at: [animalhealth.mda@maryland.gov](mailto:animalhealth.mda@maryland.gov).** All requests must include a case history, any relevant diagnostic testing, and contact information for the submitting veterinarian and the owner. Diagnostic test results must be provided with the application for testing. Owners will incur the financial costs of COVID-19 testing in animals in most cases.

Thank you for helping serve our Maryland animals and owners during this public health crisis. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call the MDA Duty Veterinarian at 410-841-5810 or email [animalhealth.mda@maryland.gov](mailto:animalhealth.mda@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

Michael J. Odian, DVM  
State Veterinarian  
MDA Animal Health

David A. Crum, DVM, MPH  
State Public Health Veterinarian  
Maryland Department of Health

\*Note: The disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus is commonly referred to as COVID-19.

Attachments (1)

## **Maryland Department of Agriculture**

### **GUIDANCE FOR VETERINARIANS**

#### **Criteria for Determining the Need for Testing of Animals for COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2\***

**April 20, 2020**

Animals in Maryland may be approved for COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 testing under the following circumstances:

- Animal and public health officials agree testing should occur due to a link to a known human case of COVID-19.
- Testing is a part of valid research project.
- An atypical pattern of disease arises suggesting a novel pathogen in a mass care situation such as an animal shelter; common causes of illness have been ruled out by appropriate diagnostic testing.
- An atypical pattern of disease suggesting SARS-CoV-2 infection among recently imported animals and common causes of illness have been ruled out by appropriate diagnostic testing.
- Threatened or endangered non-human primates or other species in zoos or other facilities are experiencing symptoms that may be consistent with SARS-CoV-2 infection and do not have an alternate diagnosis.

\*Note: The disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus is commonly referred to as COVID-19.

**Contact the Office of the State Veterinarian to request testing if these conditions are met at 410-841-5810 and ask for the Duty Veterinarian, or email [animalhealth.mda@maryland.gov](mailto:animalhealth.mda@maryland.gov).**