

*Updated March 24, 2020*

The Sault Ste. Marie Humane Society considers the health and safety of our clients, volunteers, staff and animals a priority and is monitoring the information being provided by [Algoma Public Health](#), [Ontario Ministry of Health](#) and the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#). Based on the recommendations of these agencies, we will be taking the following actions:

- **Effective immediately, we will be closing public access to the shelter;**
- We will be allowing restricted public access for the purpose of receiving or returning pets through Animal Care & Control Services. **Please call the shelter before bringing in a found pet or coming to pick up your lost pet;**
- Applying restrictions on interactions with the public;
- Limiting Animal Care & Control responses to high priority/emergency calls;
- The City of Sault Ste. Marie dog license renewal deadline has been moved to June 30, 2020. We encourage the public to purchase their annual dog license online [Dog/Cat License Application](#)
- Increased cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces has been implemented in addition to our standard disinfecting protocols to limit disease transmission.
- Encouraging foster home applications for dogs, cats, rabbits and guinea pigs in the event that we require assistance with animal care. [Foster Home Application](#).
- Postponing an upcoming fashion show fundraiser
- Not accepting the donation of any used goods at this time;
- These changes will remain in effect until April 6 and will be reassessed as the situation evolves.

Over the next few days, please watch for further information on:

- Adoptions by appointment;
- Emergency pet food supplies for those in need (a limited supply will be available at the shelter and delivered to the Soup Kitchen today);
- Amazon Wish List for donation of needed items.

A number of internal policies for staff and volunteers have been implemented to prevent the shelter from being compromised by COVID-19 and to ensure that we are able to continue to provide care for the animals in our care and community.

Shelter staff is on-site providing care to the animals and is available for inquiries by phone or email seven days a week from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. **Do not hesitate to call if you or someone you know is struggling to provide care for their pet(s).** If you have any questions or require assistance, please contact us at 705-949-3573 or [ssmhsinfo@shaw.ca](mailto:ssmhsinfo@shaw.ca)

Thank you for your patience and understanding while we adapt our operations to best meet the needs of our animals and community during this public health crisis.

## **COVID-19 & YOUR PET**

### **Can I catch the virus from my pet or vice versa?**

The [World Health Organization](#) has advised that “There is no evidence that companion animals or pets such as cats and dogs have been infected or could spread the virus that causes COVID-19.” However, it is possible that pets could carry the virus on their fur if they are around an infected person. Contact your veterinarian and your physician if you suspect that you or your pet has been exposed to the virus.

### **How can I prepare now in case I get sick?**

It is important to have a plan in place for all members of your household to respond to any emergency, including illness. Consider what provisions and pet supplies you would need for you and your pet if you were quarantined for an extended period of time, and also consider who would assist if you needed to find temporary alternate housing for your pet should you become unable to care for them.

Even though our pets cannot contract the virus, they can still be impacted by its effect on our community. Pet owners should always have a “pet preparedness plan” in case of emergencies. That includes:

- Make sure you have enough food and supplies to care for pets’ needs.
- Identify a family member or friend who can care for pets if you or someone in your house becomes ill.
- Have crates, food and extra supplies on hand for quick movement of pets.
- Keep all animal vaccines up to date in the event boarding becomes necessary.
- Have an identification collar for your pet: collar with ID tag and microchip.
- Make sure any prescriptions are up-to-date and accessible.