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Province updates essential workplace list: impact on veterinary practices

Earlier today, the provincial government updated the list of essential workplaces during the COVID-19 outbreak. **Veterinary services are still considered essential, so veterinary practices may remain open.** However, the province has added a qualifier, indicating that **practices are to offer "urgent care only."** OVMA has discussed what that change in wording means with the Ministry of the Solicitor General, which coordinates emergency services in Ontario. The new wording will not necessitate any changes in operations for food animal practices. The ministry has clarified that companion animal practices operating in accordance with OVMA's [Companion Animal Practice Guide to Elective and Essential Services](#) will be considered to be operating with the scope of services allowed by the province. That means:

- Delaying elective or non-urgent procedures.
- Using telemedicine to the extent possible for client appointments.
- Using no-contact methods (home delivery or curbside pickup) when selling veterinary diets and medications.
- Ensuring effective social distancing in the practice.

Practices that have not yet reviewed the guide and implemented its recommendations should do so immediately. Practices that are not taking appropriate precautions to protect both practice staff and clients could be subject to a fine of up to \$10 million.



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