

F. No. MHA/POLICE K9/Covid Advisory

**Government of India
Ministry of Home Affairs
Police Modernization Division
MHA Police K9 Cell**

HQ NSG, Mehram Nagar, Palam
New Delhi-110037
Dated: **17 Apr 2020**

To

Directors General of all CAPFs, NSG & AR

**Subject : ADVISORY ON COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS AMONG
SERVICE ANIMALS**

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic is caused by a novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) which was first reported in Dec 2019 in the city of Wuhan, China and subsequently declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on 11 March 2020. Since then, the Govt of India has constantly issued various orders, guidelines, advisories to contain the disease in an ongoing fight against COVID-19.

2. The following are the key issues of COVID-19 with regards to the service animals :
 - (a). There is no evidence as of now that companion animals, including pets, can spread COVID-19 to people or that they might be a source of infection.
 - (b). SARS CoV-2 virus has been shown to replicate poorly in dogs, pigs, chickens, and ducks but efficiently grows in ferrets and cats, through experimental inoculation as per one available report.
 - (c). On 09 March 2020, one of two dogs tested positive after their owner was hospitalised after COVID-19 infection in Hong Kong. Both the dogs did not develop any clinical sign, however they were kept under 14 days' quarantine.
 - (d). On 06 Apr 2020, a tiger that had a respiratory illness at a zoo in New York City, USA was tested positive for COVID-19.
 - (e). There is no evidence to suggest that imported animals or animal products pose a risk of spreading the 2019 novel coronavirus.
 - (f). Further studies are needed due to constantly evolving situation to understand if and how different animals could be affected by COVID-19.

3. The above mentioned issues have highlighted the need for effective management for COVID-19 control among service animals. Further, following precautions must be observed:

Testing of COVID-19 among Animals

- (a). At this stage, there is no evidence to suggest that the animals could be source of infection to human beings.
- (b). With regards to the positive case reported in a Tiger in USA, the Central Zoo Authority, MOEF&CC has already issued instructions vide their letter dated 06 Apr 2020 to take necessary precautions and closely monitor Tiger populations in India.
- (c). On similar lines, it is important to keep monitoring the service animals especially Police Service K9s (PSKs) for any unusual signs related to COVID-19 persisting over long time and report such cases to the higher veterinary authorities of the Government for further necessary advice.
- (d). The Central Zoo Authority vide their letter referred above have already recommended that clinical samples from suspect cases be sent to the designated animal health institutes to initiate COVID-19 testing at National Institute of High Security Animal Disease (NIHSAD) Laboratory, Bhopal (MP) or National Research Centre on Equines (NRCE), Hisar (Haryana) or Centre for Animal Disease Research and diagnosis (CADRAD), Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI), Izatnagar, Bareilly (UP) duly following all bio-containment and safety measures required to handle high risk pathogen as per ICMR guidelines.
- (e). However, this is a constantly evolving situation and decision on testing animals known to have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus could be taken at a later stage once more evidence is seen or as a measure of caution.

Hygiene and Disinfection Process

- (f). Constant use of masks by the animal handlers while handling any type of animals singularly or in groups.
- (g). Dog paw wiping/soaking - All the four paws upto pastern joints must be dipped/wiped in a suitable disinfectant like diluted povidone iodine (diluted to ice tea colour) or diluted dettol/savalon for a while after return from duty or outdoor training. However, do remember to dry the paws through soft towel.
- (h). Veterinary Clinics, Dispensaries and Hospitals - Mopping with a disinfectant using 1% sodium hypochlorite or phenolic disinfectants or 5% Lysol.
- (i). Kennels – Bleaching Powder with 70% available chlorine (7 Gms to 1 Ltr water) for floor cleaning. The kennels should also be disinfected with flame gun as dry heat is extremely useful in eliminating all sorts of viral infections.

- (j). The surgical and other clinical equipments – Autoclaving as per norms in vogue.
- (k). Disinfection of floors - 1% sodium hypochlorite or bleaching powder with 70% available chlorine (7 Gms to 1 Ltr water) or 5% Lysol.
- (l). Ambulances/vehicles – 5% Lysol or spraying with 1% freshly prepared sodium hypochlorite. The steering and other parts touched by human beings to be cleaned using 70% alcohol preparations.
- (m). Hand Sanitizer – Frequent washing of hands with soap for 20-30 seconds or 75% Isopropyl Alcohol
- (n). 70% Alcohol can be used to wipe down surfaces where the use of bleach is not suitable, e.g. metal. (Chloroxyleneol (4.5-5.5%)/ Benzalkonium Chloride or any other disinfectants found to be effective against coronavirus may be used as per manufacturer's instructions)
- (o). Always use freshly prepared 1% sodium hypochlorite.

4. In view of the foregoing, it is prime responsibility of all concerned to keep service animals especially PSKs healthy and fit for their assigned role and leave no stone unturned to contribute to the collective fight against this pandemic. Let us keep our animals safe and handlers healthy & COVID free.



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