

COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) PRODUCTION ADVISORY

UPDATED October 30, 2020

COVID-19 remains a rapidly evolving situation and information regarding this subject could change. American Humane believes animals can work safely on film sets provided proper safety protocol is in place. This Advisory contains information on how to work safely with animals and is based on what is currently scientifically known about COVID-19. It supports the Guidance given by the [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC), the [American Veterinary Medical Association](#) (AVMA), and the [World Organization for Animal Health](#) (OIE).

General guidance is provided below, however, since each production is unique, we urge productions to contact American Humane as early as possible to ensure their COVID-19 safety plans provide adequate protection for animals.

We are here to advise and assist you when working with animals during this challenging time!

ANIMALS AND SARS-CoV-2: GENERAL INFORMATION

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the virus that causes COVID-19, spreads mainly from person-to-person through respiratory droplets from coughing, sneezing, and talking. Recent studies show that people who are infected but do not have symptoms (asymptomatic) play a role in the spread of COVID-19.

- **The risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to humans is low**, according to the CDC. There is no evidence that COVID-19 can spread to people from the skin, fur, or hair of pets. **Currently, animals are NOT tested for the virus.**
- **The virus can be spread from people that have the virus to some animals through close contact.** This includes presymptomatic and asymptomatic human carriers.
- **Certain species of animals appear to be at higher risk of contracting the virus from humans. They include cats (domestic and exotic cats), hamsters (Syrian), ferrets (Mustelids) and primates. Although these animals are at higher risk, these animals can work safely provided that precautions recommended in this Advisory are taken.**
 - Other animals, such as horses, appear to be less susceptible to the virus.

AMERICAN HUMANE RECOMMENDATIONS & REQUIREMENTS

The following recommendations and requirements are in addition to American Humane's Guidelines. Cast and crew should be advised of the additional requirements either on the call sheet or at the daily safety meeting, or both.

General:

- Production must provide American Humane their safety protocols at least two business days prior to filming for review.
- **Safety Protocols must, at a minimum, require all cast and crew be screened at the start of each day for symptoms** which could be associated with COVID-19. This includes daily temperature monitoring. Anyone with symptoms, including elevated temperature, should not be allowed on set.
- **Adequate social distancing and standard safety protocols must be in place** for a Certified Animal Safety Representative™ (CASR) to be assigned. Should social distancing and other safety protocols not be adhered to on set, a CASR shall leave that set and productions will not be eligible for certification.
- If production will be using a zone/pod system, be advised our CASR will need access to the animal holding area and the set to view the animals and the animal action. To maintain social distancing, there also may be a need for the production to provide our CASR with a monitor and/or a radio. This is dependent on the dynamics of each individual production.
- **TESTING** – If production requires CASR COVID testing, please inform our office immediately so that arrangements can be made.

Limit Contact with Animals:

Animal actors should be protected the same as humans. The guiding principle is the fewer people who are interacting with the animal actors, the lower the risk of transmitting the virus to an animal.

- Cast and crew should not interact with animals unless required for actual filming. There should be no touching or petting animals by anyone other than animal owners/handlers/trainers.
- **If scenes call for close actor/animal interaction (closer than 6 feet to an animal), actors must be tested within 48 hours of working with the animal. Contact AH for further guidance as information about animal susceptibility is dynamic and may change.**
- **Suggestions to limit contact include:**
 - Limit the time animals are on set.
 - Limit takes.
 - Use “stuffies” as stand-ins for camera and lighting set up/rehearsals instead of the live animal.
 - Utilize the animal handler/owner for close contact action whenever possible.

Keep Animals from Different Households Separate:

- If animals are working together or working on the same day/same set, productions should attempt to hire animals from the same animal provider/household. When this is not possible, **animals coming from different households/providers should be housed separately and the animals must maintain 6 feet distance from each other.**
- If any human in a household, breeding facility, trainer facility, etc. has tested positive for COVID-19, then no animals from that facility should be used until the human is cleared of the virus.

Working with High-Risk Animals – Human Testing Required:

- When productions plan to use a high-risk animal (domestic and exotic cats, hamsters (Syrian), ferrets (Mustelids) and/or primates), **all cast and crew that may interact or be in close proximity to these animals should be tested.** The test must be accomplished within 48 hours of the animal(s) working on set.
- **If production plans to work with primates, or other high-risk animals, please contact AH for further guidance.**

Sanitization:

Along with industry recommended protocols for enhanced sanitization, the following is recommended:

- Animal owners/handlers/trainers should disinfect any objects that are taken and returned home (such as leashes, bowls, and toys).
- Use an EPA-registered disinfectant to clean items and rinse thoroughly with clean water afterwards.
- **DO NOT** wipe or bathe animals with chemical disinfectants, or any products not approved for animal use.
- Props, costumes, saddlery, pens, and cages, etc. should NOT be shared between animals.
- Animal waste collection and disposal facilities should be provided for animal feces, bedding, and wastewater.

Locations:

- A separate and secure animal holding area should be provided with dedicated facilities for hand washing and social distancing. This area should take into consideration the need for human and animal social distancing requirements.
- Dog parks or other areas where large numbers of animals and people go should be avoided.
- When filming on location, cast, crew, and animals should stay a safe distance away from wildlife. Contact local wildlife agencies for assistance when needed.
- When stray animals are present at the location, consult with local animal control agencies for the safe humane removal of the animal.
- **Cast and Crew should not bring personal pets to the location.**

American Humane’s Resource Center provides guidance to productions regarding best animal welfare practices, achieving desired animal action and care, licensing/permitting, and transportation at no charge. American Humane recommends productions reach out to American Humane early in preproduction. Each production is unique and there will be varying risk factors which must be considered. **Contact us at 1-818-501-0123 or email filmunit@americanhumane.org.**