

# Alameda and Contra Costa County Animal Shelters are asking for the Community's Help

*Public Animal Shelters in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties fear companion animals will be left without continued care if unprepared residents fall ill and need hospitalization*

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Alameda and Contra Costa Animal Shelters have united to ask the community to please make a plan for their beloved companion animals. With a COVID-19 peak expected in the San Francisco Bay Area, hospitals and medical providers are preparing to meet an overwhelming demand for medical assistance and hospital stays. Public Animal Shelters are preparing as well. Though this illness has proven to be deadly for our oldest and most compromised community members, countless residents may experience a hospital stay. This potentially leaves hundreds of companion animals needing care.

Shelters are urging residents to have a plan:

1. Put together a bag of animal supplies with food, 2 weeks of medications, and any additional needed supplies, including a travel kennel.
2. Create a written emergency plan for each of your pets. Include your name and contact information, including cell phone number, your pet's feeding schedule, any medical conditions and treatment instructions. Document whether your pet is up-to-date on vaccinations, and list the contact information for your veterinarian. Lastly, provide up to three contacts for family members or friends who will be able to check on your medical status and give the provider updates.
3. Find a temporary caregiver who is able to take on your pets if you are hospitalized. Contact neighbors, family, friends, pet-sitters and boarding facilities. The most ideal situation for you and your pets is for them to remain out of a public shelter. Though public shelters can help in emergencies, the system isn't designed to provide long-term care. In addition, available space is limited, and shelters may not have the capacity to help all animals in need.

Private and Public Shelters have seen an outpouring of offers to assist during this difficult time. Utilizing Governor Newsom's partnership with NextDoor, called Neighbor-to-Neighbor, you may find local community members who are willing to care for your animals while you recover.

Having a plan will reduce your stress by providing peace of mind that your pets will be cared for. In addition, keeping Public Shelters free of long-term care animals allows them to be better prepared for the onset of kitten season, stray pets, and animal care cases that require immediate attention.

Alameda and Contra Costa Counties combined have 8 public animal shelters operating year-round to serve pets in our communities. Facilities employ animal control officers and staff who specializes in reunited lost pets, fighting animal abuse, and caring for animals while they await new homes.

