STANDARDS OF VETERINARY PREMISES

Preamble
This standard is declared a veterinary service standard within the meaning of section 5B of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1987 (the Act). It specifies standards of veterinary premises and service to be provided and rules of conduct to be observed by a registered veterinary surgeon or registered veterinary specialist.

This standard constitutes a minimum requirement expected from a registered veterinary surgeon or registered veterinary specialist who provides treatment to an animal or group of animals.

Section 41(2)(ab) of the Act provides that a registered veterinary surgeon or registered veterinary specialist is guilty of misconduct in a professional sense if he or she contravenes or fails to comply with any provision of a veterinary service standard declared under section 5B.

Interpretation
Words and expressions used in this standard have the same meaning as set out in the Act.

References hereafter to a ‘veterinary surgeon’ mean a registered veterinary surgeon or a registered veterinary specialist.

‘Veterinary premises’ has the same meaning as a ‘veterinary establishment’ as defined in the Act.

1. BACKGROUND

For the purpose of this standard the definition of veterinary premises is any building, vehicle or place where veterinary services are performed. This includes all fixed premises as well as mobile clinics, house call practices and practices providing on farm services; and includes rooms embedded in other business premises. (See section 3 for definitions of the types of veterinary practice). Whilst veterinary premises may be owned by any person or company, the Board considers that it is the responsibility of veterinary surgeons using the premises to ensure that the premises meet certain minimum standards. Efforts to exceed the standards are encouraged.

2. GENERAL STANDARDS (APPLICABLE TO ALL PREMISES)

2.1 All veterinary premises shall:
(a) only perform examinations, diagnosis and treatment commensurate with the equipment and facilities available
(b) hold a supply of drugs adequate for the veterinary treatment of animals and appropriate to the type of practice provided
(c) be in good condition with the interior, exterior and immediate surrounds (where applicable), maintained in a clean, orderly and sanitary state
(d) convey clearly and prominently to clientele the name of the premises, telephone number, the usual times of attendance of the veterinary surgeon(s) and what arrangements are in place for the after hours and emergency needs of their clients

(e) provide for the maintenance of patient records (see Standard 1/2013 Record Keeping by Veterinary Surgeons)

(f) comply with the Poisons Act and Poisons Regulations with particular reference to storage, handling, supply and labelling of prescription animal remedies

(g) take precautions to prevent the spread of contagious disease and provide for isolation of animals (where applicable)

(h) have access to facilities for cleaning and laundering re-used items such as drapes, towels and bedding

(i) meet the requirements of local authority by-laws or other regulations applicable to veterinary premises.

2.2 Veterinary premises shall, where applicable to the type of practice:\n
(a) have both veterinary and support staff in attendance during the stated business hours. A veterinary surgeon who is attending a farm call or is temporarily absent at a time or times during a given day is considered to be in attendance\(^2\)

(b) be designed and constructed so as to prevent the escape of an animal brought into the premises and to ensure the effective confinement of that animal at all times

(c) have a reception area of a size and design, and with a seating capacity appropriate for the size and type of premises

(d) have internal walls and floors that can be easily cleaned and disinfected

(e) provide facilities to weigh small animal patients

(f) have adequate ventilation and be free from offensive odours

(g) have a supply of potable hot and cold water at a pressure and in quantity sufficient for the needs of the premises

(h) be supplied with electricity sufficient for the needs of the premises

(i) have lighting in all rooms that is adequate for the purposes for which the room is to be used

(j) have facilities and equipment for adequately heating and cooling the interior of the premises if required

(k) have facilities and equipment for the hygienic and safe disposal of soiled dressings, animal tissue, animal bedding, animal excreta, dead animals, sharps and any other contaminated or unwholesome matter arising from the operation of the premises, except in so far as other arrangements have been made for the matter to be removed from the premises in a hygienic and safe manner

(l) provide in the consulting or examination area:
   (i) an examination table with impervious surfaces
   (ii) a basin with hot and cold running water and fixed drainage

(m) use surgically sterile instruments for sterile surgical procedures\(^3\)

(n) provide for the veterinary care of any animals requiring hospitalisation\(^4\).

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\(^1\) Noting that some practices may be considered to fall under more than one category of premises;

\(^2\) ‘to be in attendance’ includes doing the business of the veterinary practice elsewhere such as banking;

\(^3\) Includes autoclave, chemical sterilisation and pre-sterilised disposable equipment;

\(^4\) Includes after hours care whether at the premises (if permissible under the definitions) or at another premises providing after hours care service e.g. after hours emergency practices;
3. DEFINITIONS AND ASSOCIATED STANDARDS

For the purposes of this standard, the following definitions are intended as a guide to the types of practices and facilities that are offered or provided. This does not restrict the naming of a practice or facility to these terms, but rather indicates the intent of the practice. Some premises may be considered under more than one definition.

3.1. VETERINARY CONSULTING ROOMS

Veterinary consulting room means premises wherein management advice, physical examinations, diagnostic, prophylactic and medical services for animals are provided. A veterinary consulting room shall not be used for:

i. the purpose of surgical procedures or
ii. the hospitalisation of animals

In addition to the general standards applicable to this type of practice, a consulting room shall:

(a) refer clients to, or have access to fixed veterinary premises for the treatment and management of cases that are beyond the scope of this type of practice.

3.2. HOUSE CALL PRACTICES

House call practice means a practice that provides management advice, physical examinations, diagnostic, prophylactic and medical services for non-farm and non-equine animals at the client’s home or property.

3.2.1 Standards

In addition to the general standards applicable to this type of practice, a house call practice shall:

(a) not perform surgery
(b) refer clients to, or have access to fixed veterinary premises for the treatment and management of cases that are beyond the scope of this type of practice.

3.3. VETERINARY CLINICS, CENTRES AND HOSPITALS

Veterinary clinic, centre or hospital means premises wherein management advice, physical examinations, diagnostic, prophylactic, medical and surgical services for animals are provided.

3.3.1 Standards

In addition to the general standards, a veterinary clinic, centre or hospital shall:

(a) provide facilities and equipment to enable basic laboratory diagnostic testing to be carried out at the premises; and provide for or have referral arrangements for more complex laboratory diagnostic testing
(b) provide facilities and equipment for the taking, processing and viewing of radiographs, which comply with all occupational health and safety requirements and the Radiation Protection Act 2005
(c) provide a room or rooms separate from any examination or consulting room for the carrying out of surgical procedures. This room shall:

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5 Examples include, but not limited to: a microscope, glucometer, urine test strips, refractometer;
i. be equipped to perform intubation, gaseous anaesthesia, anaesthetic monitoring, oxygen resuscitation and supportive fluid therapy
ii. not be a general thorough fare
iii. not be used for non-sterile, potentially contaminating procedures, such as dentistry, treatment of contaminated wounds, clipping and grooming, kennelling

(d) provide facilities for personal pre-surgical preparation by veterinary surgeons and of animals
(e) taking the urgency of the animal’s condition and welfare into account; have a sufficient number of competent assistants present during veterinary procedures
(f) provide suitable after surgery care on the premises and after discharge
(g) provide suitable facilities for care and observation of animals during recovery from anaesthesia and retain all animals that have been anaesthetised under veterinary care until they are ambulatory (except where a condition such as a spinal problem precludes ambulation) or arrange for transfer to an after hours service

(h) provide a separate room or rooms for the housing of animals in which any kennel or cage is of a size appropriate to the animal housed and is constructed of impervious and easily cleaned materials
(i) provide an area for the hygienic preparation and storage of food
(j) provide arrangements for access to after hours and/or emergency service for clients.

3.4 MOBILE VETERINARY CLINICS

A mobile veterinary clinic means a facility that provides that form of veterinary practice which may be transported or moved from one location to another for delivery of a limited range of medical and/or surgical services in a trailer or vehicle.

3.4.1 Standards

In addition to the general and clinic/hospital standards a mobile clinic practice shall:

(a) ensure clients have readily accessible communication with the mobile veterinary surgeon
(b) only carry out surgery from which the animal can recover to become ambulatory whilst under veterinary supervision and can then be safely discharged. This does not include spinal or orthopaedic procedures or any other surgical procedure that may require intensive monitoring and/or overnight hospitalisation
(c) refer clients to, or have access to fixed veterinary premises for the further treatment of all other cases.

3.4.2 Vehicular standards

A mobile veterinary clinic shall:

(a) be a lockable vehicle or trailer specifically modified for the purpose, be maintained in a hygienic manner, meet the requirements of all necessary government regulations; and

(b) in addition to the general standards have the following:
   i. power source
   ii. collection tank for disposal of wastes
   iii. separate compartment of appropriate size for the safe transport or holding of animals.
3.5 EQUINE AND FARM/PRODUCTION ANIMAL PRACTICES

Equine or farm/production animal practice means a practice that provides management advice, physical examinations, diagnostic, prophylactic and surgical services on horses or farmed animals at the client’s property. This includes hobby farms and fish farms.

3.5.1 Standards

In addition to the general standards applicable to this type of practice, an equine or farm/production animal practice shall:

(a) given the variability in on farm facilities, give due consideration to the welfare and safety of any animal(s) and/or persons when providing veterinary services

(b) make every effort to ensure any procedures are carried out hygienically and with due attention to infection control

(c) carry the necessary equipment and instruments to perform any services or procedures that may be reasonably required at short notice

(d) where reasonably available and taking animal welfare into consideration, offer referral to a large animal or equine clinic, for cases requiring major surgery or intensive medical care and monitoring.

4. EMERGENCY TREATMENT

The Board acknowledges that there may be situations necessitating the provision of emergency veterinary treatment to an animal in circumstances where these Standards may not be able to be complied with in full.

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VETERINARY SURGEONS ACT 1987

DECLARATION OF VETERINARY SERVICE STANDARD

Pursuant to section 5B(1) of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1987, the Veterinary Board of Tasmania hereby declares Veterinary Service Standard 2/2014 “STANDARDS OF VETERINARY PREMISES”.

The Standard defines veterinary premises to include veterinary consulting rooms; house call practices; veterinary clinics, centres and hospitals; mobile veterinary clinics; and equine and farm production animal practices.

The Standard specifies standards for veterinary premises, including the physical premises and available facilities; the services to be provided and rules of conduct to be observed by a registered veterinary surgeon or registered veterinary specialist in operating or working at those veterinary premises. The Standard sets the minimum requirements for all premises and specific requirements for the different types of veterinary premises.

A full copy of the standard is available on the Veterinary Board of Tasmania’s website at http://dpiwe.tas.gov.au/animal-biosecurity/veterinary-board-of-tasmania

Dr Neil Leighton, Chairman.

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6 This encompasses race courses, showgrounds etc where animals may also require veterinary attention.