



VSBSA NEWSLETTER

November 2009 VSBSA Newsletter



INSIDE STORIES

PAGE 2

- 3 CASE STUDIES
- STORAGE OF DIGITAL X-RAYS

PAGE 3

- RENEWALS 2010
- RENEWAL CHECKLIST
- NEW STANDARDS FOR MOBILE VETERINARY PRACTICES

PAGE 4

- CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR OPENING TIMES
- INFORMATION & REMINDERS: Use of title MRCVS; Record Keeping; Advertising; X-ray Licences & EPA
- HAVE A LAUGH!

2010 Renewals

Renewal of Registration is due by 31 December 2009.

You can renew your registration by returning your Renewal Form with payment by post, or you can renew on-line. Go to www.vsbsa.org.au and the Renew Registration page.

Payment by MasterCard or Visa is accepted for on-line renewals.

See page 3 for more information about Renewals.

We have moved!!!

The Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia is in new premises. We are now located at 185 Fullarton Road Dulwich SA 5065 (on the ground floor).

Our new contact details are:

Postal & Street address: VETERINARY SURGEONS BOARD OF SA
185 FULLARTON ROAD
DULWICH SA 5065

Phone: (08) 8331 9433
Fax: (08) 8364 4688

Our email and website addresses remain the same

Emergency Contact System

The VSBSA, in conjunction with PIRSA, is developing a system to quickly contact veterinarians in South Australia in the event of a declared disaster or emergency.

Disasters or emergencies may be national or state based, and could include disease outbreak in livestock, or bushfire emergencies, for example.

The system is expected to be implemented in 2010. It will use global text messages sent via mobile telephones.

In the event of an emergency, a text message will be sent to all mobile telephones registered with the system. In the case of disease outbreak, for example, the message is likely to advise the veterinarian to contact PIRSA as soon as possible, and give more specific contact details.

The system is voluntary, and will rely on veterinarians keeping us up to date with their current mobile telephone number.

The Renewal Form for 2010 provides an 'opt in' tick box for veterinarians residing in South Australia. By ticking the box and providing a mobile telephone number, you will be included in the system. You can contact the Registrar if you want to discuss this further.



Vaccinations under the microscope

The AVA National Office released its new policy on Vaccination of Dogs and Cats earlier this year.



The new policy retains an emphasis on vaccination decisions being part of the veterinarian-client-patient relationship. It acknowledges that individual differences such as geographic location, immune status and concurrent disease issues will influence vaccination decisions.

The VSBSA supports and endorses the principles upon which the AVA policy is based. It suggests that vets inform themselves of the AVA policy (it can be accessed at the AVA website, www.ava.com.au).

The Board also recommends that vets individually assess all animals, discuss and explain the vaccination procedures with the client, and recommend which procedure is most appropriate for the client's animal. The key is to be informed and discuss and explain the issue with the client – and of course it is important to substantiate all clinical decisions and keep good records.

If following this procedure, the Board would not criticise vets for following the instructions on the label (i.e. if annual vaccinations); nor would it criticise vets following the AVA Guidelines.

The Board reminds all vets that any adverse reaction should be reported to the APVMA (www.apvma.gov.au) and the product company.

Storage of Digital X-rays

With more digital X-ray machines being used, the Board was asked to consider requirements for storage of images. Advice was sought from an interstate specialist in veterinary radiography, Dr G Allan.

Dr Allan's advice is that when purchasing a digital X-ray machine it is important for practices to put in place storage protocols – such as security and back-up; and hardware enabling images to be stored on the practices own server where possible.

Images should be stored for a minimum of 2 years. The Board recommends that back-up storage (e.g. storing images off-site) is provided. For storage longer than 2 years, images can be archived to a hard drive and separately stored.

The file format in which digital X-rays are stored (e.g. Dicom; Jpeg etc) does not affect the quality of the image.

Some recent case studies

DESEXED KITTENS

A recent complaint to the Board involved apparent confusion in a litter of kittens brought in for desexing by the breeder. The kittens were desexed by the vet and desexing certificates issued for all kittens. However, one kitten was recorded as monorchid.

The complaint was received from the owner of the monorchid kitten which was subsequently sold by the breeder. The owner complained the kitten exhibited male behaviour even though it had a sterilization certificate. When taken to another veterinary clinic, it was found to have the retained testicle.

After investigation, the Board found that the monorchid kitten (a blue mitted kitten) was confused with another kitten in the litter (a blue point). The vet who performed the original desexing procedure on the kitten litter had the monorchid kitten incorrectly recorded as the blue point.

The Board was concerned at a number of protocol failures with the desexing procedure. It recommended that

1. The clinic's admittance procedures were improved so that kittens were individually identified by way of collar etc
2. Discharge consultations are held when a problem with the desexing procedure has occurred
3. The certificate of sterilization is not completed by the vet if the animal is not sterilized
4. The veterinarian must sign certificates rather than certificates be stamped with the vet's name.

COST OF CARE

In this complaint, the owners kitten was assessed by a veterinarian and a diagnosis was provided. The kitten needed further treatment, and hospitalisation.

The owner was asked to sign a consent form, and this included an estimate of the costs involved. The owner signed the form, agreeing to the procedures and costs.

The kitten deteriorated and a higher level of intensive care was required. The veterinarian contacted the owner and explained the clinical situation – but did not advise the owner that there would be additional costs involved in the treatment.

In this case, the Board noted that 3 different veterinarians were involved in the treatment of the kitten. The Board was advised however, that the practice acknowledged that the owner of the kitten should have been informed of the higher costs involved, and that this was an oversight on the part of the practice.

As a gesture of goodwill, an invitation was made to the owner of the kitten to contact the practice and a reduction in the additional costs would be made.

The Board informed the owner of the offer. It also suggested that in future, the practice could provide owners of the animal with a copy of the signed consent form/estimate of costs, if requested by the owner.

REFER ON

This case involved an operation to repair a dog's hind leg. The operation was complex, and some 3 months later the owner was concerned the leg was not aligned correctly. Further corrective surgery was suggested by the vet. It was at this point the owner lodged a complaint.

The Board assessed the records, including the X-rays of the dog's leg.

After considering all the documentation, the Board concluded that the veterinarian should have given the owner the option of referral to a specialist in the first instance; and again when the dog was returned needing corrective surgery. Though this may have involved additional costs, the Board advised the option should have been given so that the owner could make an informed decision.

Furthermore, the Board noted that while the dog was seen regularly immediately after the surgical procedure, there was a gap of 10 weeks when the animal was not seen. The owner only returned the dog to the vet when it became clear the leg was not aligned correctly.

The vet acknowledged that the dog should have been seen during this 10 week period. While the Board accepted that the owner had some responsibility in returning the dog earlier, the Board agreed with the vet's assessment that in hindsight an earlier return visit should have been scheduled.



Registration Renewals — 2010

Enclosed is your Annual Renewal of Registration Form for 2010. Forms must be completed and returned by no later than 31 December 2009 to retain your registration.

Please make sure you complete all sections of the Form, and sign the declaration. *Incomplete forms will hold up your renewal and can impact on your practice and professional indemnity insurance.*

If you do not wish to remain on the Register, please circle the appropriate section on the Form and return it so that it can be processed as a non-renewal.

On-line Renewal Renewals can be completed online. Go to the Board's website www.vsbsa.org.au; then to the Vet Page, and Renew Registration. Log on details for 2010 are

Username: vetreg10
Password: mtwh185

All required sections of the Form must be completed, otherwise you will not be able to finalise your renewal. You will need to include your credit card details (MasterCard or Visa) to finalise payment at the secure payment page.

Posting Renewal

If paying by cheque or money order you will need to complete the renewal form posted to you, and return it by post. *Please do not fax renewal forms.*

Annual practising certificates will be returned to you as soon as possible. *Please keep this certificate/receipt in a safe place for taxation purposes.* We are unable to issue another original if it is lost.

If you have any queries about your renewal, call the office (8331 9433) and speak to Alison.

Mobile Veterinary Services — New Standards

The VSBSA recently approved new Standards for Mobile Veterinary Practices.

The Standards are directed towards mobile veterinary practices providing services to small animals, and to practices offering house calls to clients with small animals. (Small animals include cats, dogs, birds, rabbits, guinea pigs, reptiles, and some native animals.)

The Board recommends that Mobile Veterinary Practices have public liability insurance along with professional indemnity insurance.

In brief, the 7 Standards include:

1. There must be access to a staffed clinic base
2. The vehicle must be appropriately fitted and include a secure compartment for the safe transportation of an animal to a clinic

3. The animal should be transferred to the clinic base or another practice if the situation cannot be managed.
 - General health and welfare check
 - Vaccinations
4. Appropriate telephone contact and telephone message service must be available, including advice to callers out of hours.
 - Surgery requiring sedation or local anaesthetic only
 - Euthanasia
 - Routine dental examinations
5. Assistance should be organized beforehand if the animal is known to be aggressive — if not, the animal should be referred to the clinic.
 - Consultations, examinations and investigations
 - Minor procedures not involving general anaesthetic — e.g. 'hot spot' clipping, nail cutting
 - Microchip implanting
6. Examination of medical patients and surgery requiring sedation and local anaesthetic only may be carried out at the animal owner's premises, and/or in an appropriately equipped mobile surgery.
7. The following procedures may be performed:

A full copy of the Standards are available from the Office, or go to the VSBSA website — www.vsbsa.org.au

Renewal Checklist

Whether you are completing your Renewal Form and returning it by post or online, it cannot be processed unless all the required information is included.

The section of the Form which is most often not complete is the Declaration Page. The information included in the Declaration is required under the Act. *Please ensure that you read each question carefully before ticking the relevant Yes / No box; last year many people ticked a No box when the answer should have been Yes.* Please make sure answers are provided to each section, and the Declaration Form is signed.

Other information often not provided are CPD details, and Insurance details.

Before returning your Renewal Form, please check that you have

- Provided your name and address details
- Completed the Insurance information, including the reason for exemption if applicable
- Ticked all the necessary boxes in the Declaration
- Signed the Declaration

For Primary Vets only:

- Completed your CPD details and returned your form if sending your renewal by post. (Note: a copy of your CPD form may be requested at a later date if you are renewing online).
- If opting in to the Emergency procedure system, include your mobile phone number.

VETERINARY SURGEONS BOARD OF SA

postal and street address:
185 Fullarton Road
Dulwich SA 5065

Phone: (08) 8331 9433
Fax: (08) 8364 4688
Email: admin@vsbsa.org.au

Office Hours: 10 am – 4 pm
Monday to Friday

Visit the website for regular
news items and information
www.vsbsa.org.au

The Members and Deputy Members of the Board
extend their best wishes for Christmas and the New Year
to all members of the profession. We also thank all who
have assisted the Board during the year and wish everyone
a safe and enjoyable holiday season



Please note that over the Christmas & New Year period the
VSBSA office will close 4pm Thursday 24th December 2009
and reopen 10am Monday 4th January 2010.
*If you have an urgent enquiry during this
time, please call 0419 826 389.*

INFORMATION & REMINDERS

USE OF THE TITLE MRCVS

As this is not an academic qualification, the use of same by those who have membership could be considered misleading to the public. It is not included on the Register unless gained by examination.

SUGGESTIONS FOR GOOD RECORD KEEPING

- 'if it's not written down – it's not done' should be your benchmark. The Board assumes procedures are done when they are recorded; and conversely not done when they are not recorded.
- make sure your records are accurate
- ensure the details of the consultation are recorded at the time of, or immediately following, the consultation
- if you need to add something later on, include the date, time and your initials
- if sending your records to another vet, make sure a complete copy of the record is sent

ADVERTISING

A veterinary practice may advertise provided the information

- is not false or misleading;
- does not compare the competence of any registered person with that of any other;
- is not vulgar or sensational;
- would not tend to bring the practice of veterinary surgery into disrepute.

X-RAY LICENCES & ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY (EPA)

In SA the possession and use of an X-ray apparatus is regulated by the *Radiation Protection and Control Act 1982* and *Radiation Protection and Control (Ionising Radiation) Regulations 2000*. The Act requires owners of ionising radiation (X-ray) apparatus to register the apparatus and operators of apparatus must hold a licence for that purpose.

As a veterinary surgeon practicing in SA, you should be aware of the requirements of the Act and Regulations that apply to this practice

Information on personal radiation monitoring, registration and licence application forms, and links to the Act and Regulations can be found on the EPA website:

www.environment.sa.gov.au/epa/radiation

Please contact the EPA Radiation Protection Division if you have any enquiries on these matters

Tel: (08) 8463 7826

Email: radiationprotection@epa.sa.gov.au

Postal address: GPO BOX 2607

ADELAIDE SA 5001

Have a Laugh!

A man ran into the vet's office carrying his dog and screaming for help. The vet asked him to put his dog on the examination table, and after a few minutes, sadly pronounced the dog was dead. The man wasn't willing to accept this, and demanded a second opinion.

The vet went to the back room, and came out with a cat, which he placed on the table with the dog. The cat walked from one end of the dog to the other, and then meowed. The vet said the cat confirmed his diagnosis.

Still not willing to accept the decision, the man demanded another opinion. This time, the vet returned with a black Labrador, which sniffed the dog from head to foot, and once again pronounced him dead.

The man finally resigned himself to the diagnosis, and asked how much the fee was. "\$650" replied the vet, "but it would only have been \$50 if you'd taken my first diagnosis and not insisted on a cat scan or lab tests"!

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