

# VETERINARY SURGEONS BOARD OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

## Standards

### Mobile Veterinary Practices

The Standards are the minimum requirements for all veterinarians providing a mobile practice service.

#### Preamble

A Mobile veterinary practice is a facility which provides that form of clinical 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 available from a trailer or vehicle. In addition, a Mobile veterinary practice is one which provides a veterinary service only to small animals, usually in the home of the owner. Small animals include cats, dogs, birds, rabbits, guinea pigs, reptiles, and some native animals.

Practices which provide services to large animals by attending the home/property of the owner or farm manager are not considered to be Mobile Practices for the purposes of these Standards. Also exempt are veterinarians providing a service to animals on land owned by Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) under the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands Right Act 1981, or similar Aboriginal communities in rural and remote areas of South Australia.

These standards should also be met by all veterinary practices which provide house calls as a service of the clinic-based practice, to small animals.

#### Public Liability

Veterinarians providing services through their mobile practice, or by providing house calls as a service of the clinic-based practice, should have public liability insurance cover in addition to professional indemnity insurance.

#### Standards

1. A Mobile Practice must have access to a staffed clinic base (i.e. one where at least one other staff person is available) that can provide the following as a minimum:
  - i. Storage of drugs as required by legislation
  - ii. Safe and adequate radiology, anaesthesia and surgery
  - iii. Room/s for the housing of animals in which any kennel or cage is of a size appropriate to the animal housed and with adequate cooling, heating and ventilation
  - iv. Complete medical and surgical records for all patients

# VETERINARY SURGEONS BOARD OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

2. The vehicle used for house calls is to:
  - i. Be clean and hygienic at all times
  - ii. Have secure storage for carrying drugs as required by legislation
  - iii. Carry sufficient stocks of veterinary stationery to enable medical and surgical records to be completed when house calls are made
  - iv. Meet the requirements of local Authority by-laws (e.g. for disposal of waste etc)
  - v. Carry sufficient instrumentation (and sterilization equipment) for a competent clinical examination and the performance of minor surgery
  - vi. Include a secure compartment for the safe transport of the animal to a veterinary clinic
3. If a situation cannot be managed appropriately as an outpatient, then the animal should be transferred to the base clinic, or referred to another clinic.
4. Mobile Practices must have adequate telephone contact and telephone message services. This includes ensuring the veterinarian or the clinic base can be contacted by telephone during normal hours. It also includes making sure that advice to callers includes contact details for out of hours and/or emergency services. This may include referral to the clinic base, or an after hours veterinary service.
5. Safety and public liability issues must be determined before a visit (i.e. if the animal is known to be aggressive etc). Adequate assistance should be organized before attending where safety or public liability is compromised (e.g. a trained vet nurse attending with the veterinarian). In the event that assistance is not available, and the veterinarian is concerned about an animal's aggression, has any other safety concerns, or concerns about the general management of the patient, the animal should be referred to a veterinary clinic.
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. All cases requiring hospitalization and/or surgical procedures requiring either general anaesthetic (i.e. involving loss of consciousness by animal) or intensive care must be performed at veterinary premises that conform to Board guidelines on standards of veterinary premises and include surgical and patient accommodation.

Where minor surgery is conducted, the veterinarian will remain at the premises until the animal has recovered to at least sternal recumbency.

The owner must sign a consent form for all procedures requiring sedation or local anaesthetic. This will alert them to the risks associated with the use of such medications in a setting other than a clinic base (e.g. risks associated with continual monitoring not being available, nor attendance by veterinary nurses.)

# VETERINARY SURGEONS BOARD OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

7. The following procedures may be performed by a mobile practice. (Nevertheless, the veterinarian should perform the procedure at a clinic base if the animal is overtly aggressive or the veterinarian perceives other problems which may compromise the patient's outcome).
- General health and welfare check of the animal
  - Vaccinations
  - Surgery requiring sedation or local anaesthetic only (e.g. removal of grass seeds; suturing minor wounds). Procedures requiring general anaesthetic (i.e. loss of consciousness) must be referred to a clinic.
  - Euthanasia
  - Routine dental examinations
  - Consultations, examinations and investigations
  - Minor procedures not involving general anaesthetic, for example clipping 'hot spots', nail cutting
  - Microchip implantation. (All veterinarians must first scan the animal for an existing microchip; implant if no microchip is present; and then scan to ensure the microchip inserted is readable. Microchip certificates should be signed by the veterinary surgeon.)

*Endorsed by the Veterinary Surgeons Board of SA: September 2009*

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