



Veterinary Surgeons' Board



Guidelines for the authorisation of a lay person to carry out certain acts of EQUINE DENTISTRY in Western Australia under the direction of a registered veterinary surgeon

Background

Section 26(4)(b) of the *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1960* enables the Board to authorise a person who is not a registered veterinary surgeon to carry out, under the direction of a registered veterinary surgeon, an act of veterinary surgery that is specified by regulation.

Regulation 47 of the *Veterinary Surgeons Regulations 1979* specifies equine dentistry to be an act of veterinary surgery for the purpose of section 26(4)(b).

Authorisation by the Board

Following consultation with stakeholders, the Board determined the criteria to be used by the Board for the authorisation of a person to carry out equine dentistry under the provision of section 26(4)(b).

1. In each instance when a horse is to be treated by an authorised person, the directing veterinary surgeon is to direct the authorised person as to the property, the horse or group of horses and the date of the work.
2. For the purpose of authorisation, the Board interprets equine dentistry to mean acts of equine dentistry which fall within Category Two of the British Equine Veterinary Association categorisation of equine dentistry.
3. Authorisation to perform equine dentistry DOES NOT include authorisation to perform any act of equine dentistry that falls within Category Three of the British Equine Veterinary Association categorisation of equine dentistry.
4. The Board will authorise a person only if the Board also approves the veterinary surgeon/s nominated by the person to direct that person.
5. The Board may authorise a person to perform equine dentistry on the condition that:
 - (i) the applicant satisfies the Board that they have undertaken and passed a training course in equine dentistry approved by the Board. The course must provide training addressing the competencies in the Competencies for Equine Dentistry Document;
 - or
 - (ii) the applicant provides proof of competency and experience in each of the training requirements in item (i) by means of a disinterested party, approved by the Board in advance of the application, providing evidence that the applicant possesses the relevant knowledge and competence; and
 - (iii) the Board approves the registered veterinary surgeon/s under whose direction the applicant may operate.

6. The directing veterinary surgeon must be resident in Western Australia, complete the required form of application, and provide evidence of suitability.
7. The directing veterinary surgeon is accountable to the Board for the conduct of the authorised person.
8. The directing veterinary surgeon must maintain records of:
 - (i) the date of each equine dentistry examination;
 - (ii) the name and address of the owner of the horse;
 - (iii) the address of the property on which the equine dentistry was performed;
 - (iv) the number of horses on which equine dentistry was performed;
 - (vi) any advertising by the authorised person for the provision of equine dentistry.
9. The directing veterinary surgeon is to ensure that a registered veterinary surgeon is available to attend in the event that veterinary expertise is required.
10. Authorisation will be for a period no greater than one (1) year.
11. Maintenance of authorisation will rely upon the satisfactory performance of the authorised person and the directing veterinary surgeon and compliance with the conditions and restrictions set out in these guidelines.
12. Renewal of authorisation will require the authorised person to provide evidence of ongoing suitability and maintenance of competency.
13. It is the Board's expectation that an authorised person performing equine dentistry will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with that of a registered veterinary surgeon. This includes any advertising being factually correct and related only to acts of veterinary surgery the person is authorised to perform.
14. The Board may withdraw the authorisation of an authorised person if the Board, after due enquiry, considers the person to have acted in an inappropriate manner.
15. The Board may withdraw the authorisation of an authorised person who performs an act of veterinary surgery for which they are not authorised, and may prosecute the person for performing acts of veterinary surgery when not authorised.
16. The authorisation of an authorised person will automatically cease if their directing veterinary surgeon:
 - a) ceases to be a registered veterinary surgeon; or
 - b) has restrictions placed on their registration such that they are no longer eligible to be a directing veterinary surgeon; or
 - c) refuses to continue to comply with all of the requirements of the Board's guidelines for directing veterinary surgeons.

Maintenance of competency

Maintenance of competency requires evidence of having frequently carried out authorised acts of equine dentistry at a competent level.

Evidence of activity will be written records.

The accuracy of the records must be certified by the directing veterinary surgeon.

In the event that an authorised person does not maintain activity in equine dentistry, the Board may require the person to undergo further training and may terminate the person's authorisation until the person has completed the necessary training and provided evidence of competence.

Maintenance of records by an authorised person

For each equine treated, the authorised person will maintain a record of:

- (i) the date of the direction by the approved directing registered veterinary surgeon to carry out equine dentistry;
- (ii) the date of the equine dentistry;
- (iii) the name and address of the owner of the equine;
- (iv) the address of the property on which the equine dentistry was performed;
- (v) the number of equines on which the authorised person carried out equine dentistry.

Record keeping by the Veterinary Surgeons' Board

The Board will provide a certificate of authorisation.

The Board will maintain a register of authorised persons and the relevant directing registered veterinary surgeons.

Competencies required for persons applying for authorisation

The Board considers equine dentistry procedures to fall into three categories in line with the definitions of the British Equine Veterinary Association.

Category 1

Category 1 procedures are procedures the Board interprets as not being acts of veterinary surgery and may be performed by a person without authorisation from the Board.

Category 1 equine dentistry procedures include:

- i) the examination of equine teeth;
- ii) rasping;
- iii) removal of sharp enamel points and small dental overgrowths (less than 5mm high and involving less than half of the tooth's occlusal surface) with manual rasps;
- iv) removal of digitally (finger) loose deciduous teeth ("caps");
- v) removal of calculus which lies above the gum line.

Category 2

Category 2 procedures are procedures the Board interprets as being acts of veterinary surgery that may be performed by a person authorised by the Board under Section 26(4)(b) of the *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1960*.

Category 2 equine dentistry procedures include:

- i) extraction of digitally loose teeth, including deciduous teeth and teeth suffering from advanced periodontal disease, and excluding teeth which have been loosened by trauma and require investigation by a veterinary surgeon before being extracted;
- ii) extraction of normal, fully erupted and non-displaced wolf teeth;
- iii) removal of large dental overgrowths (over 5mm tall and involving over 50% of the occlusal surface of the tooth) and overgrowths over 5mm tall of the whole occlusal surface; and
- iv) techniques requiring the use of dental shears, inertia hammers and motorised dental instruments.

Many of these dental procedures will require sedation of the horse, which can only be performed by a veterinary surgeon or person authorised by the Board to do so under the direction of a veterinary surgeon.

If an applicant wishes to administer sedation and tranquilisation for the purposes of dentistry, they will need to further apply for authorisation under the Act.

Additionally, many cases will require tetanus prophylaxis, analgesics, anti-inflammatory and antibiotic treatment following the above dental procedures. These drugs can only be administered or dispensed by a veterinary surgeon.

Authorisation to perform equine dentistry does not exempt the authorised person from the provisions of the *Animal Welfare Act 2000*.

Category 3

Category 3 procedures are procedures the Board considers to be acts of veterinary surgery to be performed only by registered veterinary surgeons.

Category 3 equine dental procedures include:

- i) any procedure that involves an incision other than elevation of the gum for the purpose of intra-oral extraction of teeth under veterinary supervision;
- ii) extraction of teeth by repulsion, or lateral buccotomy;
- iii) endodontics including root canal treatment;
- iv) orthodontics including bracing parrot mouths; and
- v) repair of mandibular fractures.