



Veterinary Surgeons' Board



GUIDELINES FOR MOBILE VETERINARY CLINICS AND VETERINARY HOUSE CALL SERVICES FOR SMALL OR COMPANION ANIMALS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these guidelines:

mobile veterinary clinic means a facility which provides that form of veterinary practice which may be moved from one location to another for delivery of a limited range of veterinary services

reasonably available means within a radius of 50 kilometres of any registered veterinary hospital or veterinary clinic at any time that services are available, or can be made available, at that registered veterinary hospital or veterinary clinic

small or companion animal includes a dog, cat, bird, rabbit, ferret, guinea pig or other “pocket pet”, reptile, amphibian, fish and small native animal

veterinary house call service means a limited range of veterinary services provided by a veterinary surgeon at an animal owner's premises.

PREAMBLE

The *Veterinary Surgeons Act* 1960 makes no reference to mobile veterinary clinics or the provision of veterinary house call services.

Where a veterinary surgeon operating a mobile veterinary clinic or providing a veterinary house call service is concerned about the animal's welfare, or other occupational health and safety issues, either for the veterinary surgeon or the animal, the veterinary surgeon must refuse to provide the veterinary service and must refer the animal to a registered veterinary hospital or veterinary clinic.

Mobile veterinary clinics and veterinary house call services should operate from a registered veterinary hospital or veterinary clinic. The onus is on the veterinary surgeon to justify any acts of veterinary surgery they perform at a place other than at a registered veterinary hospital or veterinary clinic.

INSURANCE

Veterinary surgeons providing services through a mobile veterinary clinic or providing house call services should have public liability insurance cover and professional indemnity insurance cover.

STANDARDS FOR MOBILE VETERINARY CLINICS AND VETERINARY HOUSE CALL SERVICES FOR SMALL OR COMPANION ANIMALS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

1. Subject to the mobile veterinary clinic being appropriately equipped or the animal owner's premises having adequate facilities, a veterinary surgeon may perform the following services from a mobile veterinary clinic or as a veterinary house call service:
 - a) consultations, examinations and investigations;
 - b) vaccinations;
 - c) microchipping;
 - d) minor procedures requiring light to moderate sedation and/or local anaesthetic only; and
 - e) euthanasia.
2. A vehicle used as a mobile veterinary clinic must:
 - a) be clean, hygienic and secure at all times;
 - b) be fitted with a locked container that is attached to the body of the vehicle and suitable for the transportation and storage of drugs as required by legislation;
 - c) carry sufficient and appropriate instrumentation for a clinical examination and the performance of minor surgery;
 - d) meet the requirements of local government by-laws, for example, for the correct disposal of waste; and
 - e) include a secure compartment for the safe transport of animals to a veterinary hospital or veterinary clinic.
3. The volume of Schedule 4 and Schedule 8 drugs held in a mobile veterinary clinic should be minimised as a matter of public safety, and wherever possible, limited to a maximum of one day's requirements.
4. Except in the case when a registered veterinary hospital or veterinary clinic is not reasonably available, a veterinary surgeon must not perform surgery on a companion or small animal if that surgery requires general or dissociative anaesthesia, or the administration of any drug or combination of drugs to render an animal unconscious.
5. Neither financial considerations, nor the prohibition of access of an individual veterinary surgeon to the facilities of a reasonably available registered veterinary hospital or veterinary clinic, are justification for a veterinary surgeon to perform surgery that requires general or dissociative anaesthesia, or the administration of any drug or combination of drugs to render an animal unconscious.
6. If an animal requires surgery that necessitates general or dissociative anaesthesia, or the administration of any drug or combination of drugs to render an animal unconscious, and the veterinary surgeon attending that animal does not have access to a reasonably available registered veterinary hospital or veterinary clinic, it is incumbent on the veterinary surgeon to refer the client to a reasonably available veterinary hospital or veterinary clinic.
7. If a veterinary surgeon is of the view that it is not reasonable or possible to appropriately manage the condition of an animal, the veterinary surgeon must advise the client of the need to transfer the animal to a veterinary hospital or veterinary clinic.
8. After performing a procedure on an animal, a veterinary surgeon must remain at the premises until the animal has recovered to at least sternal recumbency.
9. Clinical records should be made at the time a veterinary service is performed, or as soon as possible after a service is performed, by a veterinary surgeon conducting a mobile veterinary clinic or a veterinary house call service.

These guidelines were endorsed by the Board on 6 May 2010.