



# Veterinary Surgeons' Board



## GUIDELINES FOR SMALL OR COMPANION ANIMAL VETERINARY MOBILE SURGICAL FACILITIES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### PREAMBLE

The *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1960* (Act) makes no reference to veterinary mobile surgical facilities. However in remote areas of Western Australia there is little access for animal owners to veterinary services, and in particular to facilities with appropriate facilities to perform surgery while ensuring animal welfare is not compromised. The provision of mobile facilities specifically equipped to perform surgery and approved by the Board will help improve public access to veterinary services.

**Prior to operating a small or companion animal veterinary mobile surgical facility, a veterinary surgeon must apply for and be granted an exemption from the Board's Guidelines on mobile veterinary clinics or house call services.**

Veterinary surgeons conducting a veterinary mobile surgical facility must ensure there are reliable means of communication with clients during advertised business hours and for out of hours and / or emergency cases.

There are separate guidelines for mobile veterinary services and the provision of veterinary house call services for small or companion animals, and for large animal mobile veterinary services.

### APPLICATION OF THESE GUIDELINES

These Guidelines apply from and including 9 May 2017.

These Guidelines may be superseded by subsequent versions. To ascertain whether this version has been superseded, view the current version on the Board's website at [www.vsbwa.org.au](http://www.vsbwa.org.au).

It is the responsibility of veterinary surgeons who operate veterinary mobile surgical facilities, to be conversant with the current version of these Guidelines.

### DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these guidelines:

**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. Whether or not a mobile veterinary surgeon has the use of a registered veterinary hospital or clinic is irrelevant to the question of whether a service is reasonably available at that registered veterinary hospital or 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;

**surgery** means any procedure performed on an animal that involves the use of some, usually sharp and metallic, instrument to perform a procedure that exposes otherwise unexposed blood or other body tissues or removes a body part; and

**veterinary mobile surgical facility** is a mobile facility, which may include but is not limited to a tandem trailer or articulated vehicle, equipped to a standard approved by the Board to provide approved surgical procedures when a veterinary hospital or veterinary clinic is not reasonably available or under other circumstances approved by the Board.

## **INSURANCE**

The veterinary surgeon is responsible for their insurance requirements and should seek professional advice on public liability insurance and professional indemnity insurance cover.

## **PERMITS AND LICENCES**

All veterinary surgeons must ensure that they hold the relevant permits and licences necessary for them to practise veterinary surgery, including but not limited to Poisons Permits and Radiation Licences.

## **STANDARDS FOR SMALL OR COMPANION ANIMAL VETERINARY MOBILE SURGICAL FACILITIES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

1. Subject to the approval of the Board and compliance with other statutes including but not restricted to the *Radiation Safety Act 1975*, and the *Medicines and Poisons Act 2014* a veterinary mobile surgical facility may provide the following services:
  - a) routine consultative services including examinations and vaccinations;
  - b) induction and maintenance of gaseous anaesthesia;
  - c) the performance of surgical procedures approved by the Board on small or companion animals;  
and
  - d) facilities for recovery from anaesthesia and / or hospitalisation.
2. The veterinary mobile surgical facility must be designed, built, equipped, maintained and staffed as required by the Board. The facility will be made available to the Board's inspectors for inspections as and when required.
3. The veterinary mobile surgical facility must:
  - a) be clean, hygienic and secure at all times;
  - b) be air-conditioned;
  - c) have separate compartments with closable doors for consultations, surgical preparation, operating theatre and kennel room;
  - d) be fitted with a locked container or cupboard that is attached to the body of the vehicle and suitable for the transportation and storage of drugs;
  - e) be fitted with a lockable fridge for the storage of medications requiring refrigeration;
  - f) carry sufficient and appropriate instrumentation for all procedures that will be performed in the facility;
  - g) be equipped with an autoclave, gaseous anaesthetic machine and radiography equipment;
  - h) have appropriate secure individual caging for animals; and
  - i) meet the requirements of local government by-laws, such as for the correct disposal of waste.
4. The volume of Schedule 4 and Schedule 8 drugs held in a veterinary mobile surgical facility should be minimised as a matter of public safety.
5. It is incumbent on the veterinary surgeon to refer a client to a registered veterinary hospital or veterinary clinic or a specialist veterinary surgeon when:

- a) the veterinary mobile facility has not been approved for the required procedure; or
  - b) the veterinary surgeon is not able to provide the required level of care; or
  - c) the animal requires isolation and / or barrier nursing; or
  - d) the veterinary surgeon lacks the equipment or expertise to perform the required investigation or surgery.
6. Following sedation or anaesthesia, a veterinary surgeon must remain at the location where the procedure was performed until the animal is able to stand and walk unaided. The Board's preference is that the facility remains on site for a minimum of 12 hours after the discharge of the last patient in order to enable ready access by clients in the event of problems or complications after surgery.
7. Clinical records and the supply of scheduled drugs must comply with regulations 29, 29A, 29B, 29C, 30, 30A and 31 of the *Veterinary Surgeons Regulations 1979*. The records should be made at the time a veterinary service is performed, or as soon as possible after a service is performed, by the veterinary surgeon.

## **DISCLAIMER**

This document (printed, electronic or any other medium) cannot be regarded as legal advice.

Although all care has been taken in preparing these Guidelines they do not replace advice specific to the reader's circumstances. Where necessary, advice must be sought from competent legal practitioners. Neither the authors nor the Veterinary Surgeons' Board of Western Australia accept or undertake any duty of care relating to any part of these Guidelines.