

Introduction

The *Veterinary Practice Act 2003* (s 67) requires the holder of a veterinary hospital licence to ensure that the premises the subject of that licence are managed by a superintendent. The superintendent must be a registered veterinarian and the Board must be notified in writing of the name of that person before he or she assumes the duties of the superintendent.

The holder of the licence must notify the Board if the superintendent leaves the hospital or is permanently replaced by completing and submitting the Appointment of a Veterinary Hospital Superintendent Form.

Responsibilities

The specific responsibilities of the superintendent include ensuring that:

1. He or she attends the hospital at least once per week and organises a replacement superintendent when taking leave from the hospital for more than one week.
2. The hospital sign issued by the Board which specifies the type or types of major surgery authorised to be carried out is placed in a location that would reasonably be expected to be seen by clients entering the premises.
3. He or she performs a stock check of all S8 drugs (drugs of addiction) at the time of appointment irrespective of the time of year and ensures that further stock checks are performed in March and September each year and that the results of these stock checks are recorded in the S8 register.

The Board considers the superintendent's management duties to include: the development of protocols and procedures to assist veterinarians working at the hospital to comply with relevant legislation; to act as a central point of contact with clients if required; to provide a central point of contact with the Board; and to assist with assessments of the premises by the Hospital Inspector.

Accordingly, the superintendent should assist with the development of protocols and procedures to ensure that:

1. Veterinarians employed by the hospital are registered in New South Wales or another State or Territory of Australia.
2. Veterinarians working at the hospital are familiar with the *Veterinary Practitioners Code of Professional Conduct*.
3. Veterinarians employed by the hospital are adequately supervised and assistance is available when required either through consultation with colleagues or referral where appropriate.
4. Any veterinarian who assumes control of the hospital for one month or more (i.e. replaces the current superintendent either temporarily or permanently) immediately performs a stock check of all drugs of addiction irrespective of the time of year and records the results of this stock check in the S8 register.
5. There is a sufficient number of competent staff available when elective surgery is being performed.
6. Informed consent has been provided by the person responsible for the care of the animal regarding any treatment, diagnostic test or procedure performed at the hospital. Informed consent includes:
 - a. The likely extent and outcome of the veterinary services
 - b. An estimate of cost of any proposed treatment, test or procedure performed at the hospital
 - c. Evidence is maintained for the obtaining of informed consent either through a written document signed by the client or through the recording of a contemporaneous note in the medical record
7. A detailed record of any consultation, procedure, diagnostic test (including imaging) or treatment is made as soon as practicable and stored in a way that enables easy retrieval for at least 3 years.

Responsibilities of a Veterinary Hospital Superintendent

Issue June 2019
Review Annually
Reference Number GH02

8. The hospital has the appropriate personal protective equipment and other equipment necessary to perform clinical examinations, treatments and surgery to current standards of practice and that this equipment is maintained in accordance with the recommendations of the manufacturer.
9. The hospital has a written infection control plan which is reviewed at least annually to help people in the hospital reduce their risk of acquiring a zoonotic disease.
10. Animals suffering from a suspected contagious disease are isolated from other patients and that all reasonable measures are taken to prevent the spread of disease.
11. Animals admitted to the hospital are identified and treated in accordance with the informed consent that has been provided by the person responsible for the care of the animal or as required if this is not practicable.
12. The hospital has a sufficient amount of medication appropriate for the needs of the hospital and that this medication is acquired, stored, dispensed and details recorded in accordance with relevant legislation.
13. Non-veterinarians employed at the hospital understand the importance of client to veterinarian communication and always communicate with the veterinarian if they are not able to answer enquiries from clients.
14. The hospital does not refuse to provide relief of pain or suffering to an animal that is in the presence of a veterinarian where relief of pain means either first aid treatment, timely referral to another veterinarian or euthanasia.
15. A veterinarian is available for the ongoing care of those animals accepted for diagnosis or treatment and if one is not available arrangements have been made with another veterinarian to take over the care of those animals.