

CONDITIONS OF LICENSING FOR VETERINARY CENTRES

PART A: General conditions for licensing a veterinary clinic or a veterinary hospital

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Section 54 of the Animals and Birds Act (CAP 7) and the Animals and Birds (Veterinary Centres) Rules 2002 regulate and govern the administration and management of all veterinary clinics and hospitals in Singapore.
- 1.2 Any persons who wish to operate and maintain a premises as a veterinary clinic or hospital must apply for a Licence from the Director-General, Animal Health and Welfare (hereafter referred to as the Director-General) and ensure that they comply with the above legislation. It is also their responsibility to keep themselves informed of and to observe all relevant statutory requirements. Copies of the legislation are available from the Singapore National Printers.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LICENSEE

- 2.1 The licensee shall ensure that the veterinary surgeons under his employment are licensed by the Director-General and comply with conditions of licensing of veterinary surgeons (this is already a condition of licence), and any directives that the Director-General may issue from time to time.
- 2.2 All veterinary centres must appoint a veterinary surgeon who controls and manages the centre (veterinary manager). The licensee shall inform the Director-General in writing, within 7 days, if there is any change in the appointment of the veterinary manager. Responsibilities of the veterinary manager are in Addendum A.
- 2.3 The licensee shall permit inspection of the centre by authorised officers of the Animal and Veterinary Service, as and when required.
- 2.4 The licensee shall ensure that all necessary clearances have been obtained from relevant authorities such as the Urban Redevelopment Authority, Housing Development Board, Jurong Town Corporation, Fire Safety and Shelter Bureau and Land Transport Authority.
- 2.5 The licensee shall ensure that the activities of the centre do not pose a nuisance or an inconvenience to the neighbourhood or to the public.
- 2.6 The licensee shall ensure the proper storage, use, disposal and audit of all controlled medication, prescription drugs and vaccines. The prescription and dispensation of medication and drugs shall be in accordance with the Medicines and Poisons Act.
- 2.7 If the centre is going to cease operations, the licensee shall inform the Director-General in writing at least 30 days before cessation of operations.
- 2.8 The licensee shall ensure that all veterinary activities carried out by the veterinary centre are in accordance with the Code of Ethics at all times.

3. PREMISES & ANCILLARY BUSINESSES

3.1 The key and primary activities of the centre shall be the provision of veterinary examination, diagnostic, medical and/or surgical services. The centre shall be a distinct entity and shall not be an adjunct to a commercial enterprise such as boarding kennels, pet shops and grooming parlour.

3.2 Where the centre shares the same location as a commercial enterprise, the premises of the centre shall be physically separate from that of the commercial enterprise. The public entrance to the veterinary centre shall be separate and distinct from that of the commercial enterprise and without direct traffic ways between them, unless the centre has been in operation prior to the introduction of the Animals and Birds (Veterinary Centres) Rules. In this case, the centre may share a common public entrance with the commercial enterprise but the centre shall be partitioned from the enterprise.

3.3 Only related businesses that are ancillary to the veterinary practice shall be conducted on the premises. The businesses shall meet the following requirements:

- they shall not occupy more than 20% of the floor space of the centre;
- their activities shall not interfere with the veterinary services provided by the centre.

3.4 The centre shall not be used for the boarding, trade and grooming of animals.

3.5 The centre shall provide separate areas for the following specific uses:

- Area for use as waiting and for the purpose of client reception;
- Room for consultation and examination;
- Facilities for animal holding and for the purpose of isolation;
- Room for surgery, if the centre performs surgical procedures.

3.6 If the centre performs surgical procedures, the surgery room shall be equipped with an inhalation anaesthetic machine, appropriate non-chemical sterilisation equipment (e.g. radiation, gas, autoclave) and a scavenger system (passive or active).

3.7 There shall be facilities that can be used to isolate and quarantine any animal, bird, carcass or specimen infected with or suspected to be infected with a notifiable disease. The aforesaid animal, bird, carcass or specimen must be properly contained.

3.8 The facilities for consultation, examination, treatment and animal holding in the centre shall be of sound construction and design so as to prevent the escape of an animal or bird from the facilities.

3.9 The centre shall be kept in clean and sanitary condition.

4. INFORMATION

4.1 Information on charges for standard and routine services and procedures including consultation, vaccination, sterilisation and teeth scaling shall be clearly displayed at the reception or in the waiting area.

4.2 The centre shall not claim expertise in any veterinary specialty unless it has on current staff a veterinarian with the proper qualification and certification, as recognised by the Animal and Veterinary Service.

5 RECORDS

5.1 Proper medical records, including client and patient particulars (including, but not limited to NRIC information), case history, examination findings, diagnosis and treatment, shall be kept.

5.2 The centre shall maintain the confidentiality of client and patient records, unless the information is required by the appropriate authorities.

5.3 Controlled substances (see **Annex A**) shall be kept under lock and key, in accordance with the Medicines and Poisons Act. An inventory must be established to record the stock of such controlled substances in store.

5.4 All records shall be kept for a minimum of 3 years.

6. FACILITIES & EQUIPMENT

6.1 The centre shall be equipped to handle emergencies, including the provision of drugs and means of administration to manage cardiac and respiratory emergencies as well as emergencies involving shock or allergies, and shall have resuscitation capabilities such as oxygen.

6.2 The centre shall either provide after-hours patient care or have standing written arrangement with another centre to provide this.

7. WASTE DISPOSAL

7.1 Needles, blades, and other sharp objects shall, either be disposed of by a contractor licensed to do so by the National Environment Agency, or disinfected and disposed of properly in puncture-resistant containers.

7.2 Animal carcasses and waste shall be properly bagged and disposed of.

PART B: Specific conditions for licensing a veterinary hospital

1.1 A veterinary centre shall be considered a “veterinary hospital” and permitted to use the name “veterinary hospital” only if, **in addition** to complying with all the above-mentioned conditions of licensing for a veterinary centre, the centre also:

- provides the services of a licensed veterinary surgeon at all times at the hospital (requiring at least 3 licensed veterinary surgeons to achieve this);
- provides veterinary examination, diagnostic, medical and surgical services;
- provides extended accommodation services for sick animals;
- provides for continuous veterinary care of any hospitalized animals;
- provides at least two examination rooms;
- provides for laboratory diagnostic services in which microscopic, routine haematology, faecal and urinary examination would normally be undertaken on the premises;
- provides equipment and facilities for radiographic investigations;
- provides a separate area for the preparation of patients for surgical procedures;
- provides for pre-surgical washing adjacent to, but not in, the surgical room;
- provides at least ten sheltered kennels or cages and of surfaces which are smooth, easily cleaned and impervious to water; and
- has an area or areas for the exercise of animals appropriate to the number and size of the animals hospitalized.

CONTROLLED DRUGS

I ANAESTHETICS

Cyclohexylamines

- 1) Ketamine
- 2) Tiletamine & Zolazepam (Zoletil®)

Steroid Anaesthetics

- 1) Alphaxalone & Alphadolone (Saffan®)

Barbiturates

- 1) Thiopentone sodium (Intraval®)
- 2) Methohexital sodium (Brietal®)
- 3) Thiamylal

Muscle Relaxants

- 1) Guaifenesin

II NARCOTICS

- 1) Etorphine hydrochloride & Acepromazine (Immobilon®)
- 2) Fentanyl citrate (Innovar-Vet®)
- 3) Buprenorphine (Temgesic®)
- 4) Butorphanol (Trobutrol®)
- 5) Meperidine (Demerol®)
- 6) Morphine and its derivatives
- 7) Naxolone (Narcan® – narcotic antagonist)
- 8) Diprenorphine (etorphine antagonist)

III SEDATIVES & TRANQUILISERS

- 1) Benzodiazepines eg Diazepam (Valium®) & Midazolam (Dormicum®)
- 2) Xylazine (Rompun®)
- 3) Yohimbine (Yobine® - xylazine antagonist)
- 4) Detomidine (Domosedan®)
- 5) Medetomidine (Dormitor®)
- 6) Atipamezole (Antisedan®)
- 7) Acepromazine (ACP®)
- 8) Chlorpromazine
- 9) Phenobarbitone tablets

IV EUTHANASIA SOLUTIONS

- 1) Pentobarbitone (Euthathal®)

Responsibilities of the Veterinary Manager

1. **It is mandatory** for the appointed veterinary manager for the veterinary centre to:
 - 1.1. Be contactable at all times, and appoint a substitute vet manager if he/she is on leave or will otherwise be un-contactable. The substitute veterinary manager must also have at least one year of local experience.
 - 1.2. Oversee the veterinary activities in the veterinary centre and ensure compliance to the existing regulations pertaining to the practice of veterinary medicine and the Code of Ethics for Veterinarians.
 - 1.3. Ensure that information pertaining to all microchip implantations performed on dogs in the clinic is submitted to AVS on a monthly basis. Rabies vaccination information should also be submitted when performed.
 - 1.4. Develop relevant standard operating procedures to assist staff at the vet centre in complying with relevant legislation.
 - 1.5. Perform quarterly checks on controlled drugs inventory and ensure compliance to existing regulations relating to controlled substances and drugs used in the clinic.
 - 1.6. Notify Director-General within 7 business days if he or she is no longer the veterinary manager.
 - 1.7. Serve as the main point of contact with AVS or clients if required.

2. **In addition, it is a strong recommendation for the veterinary manager to:**
 - 2.1. Ensure that veterinarians employed at the vet centre are adequately supervised and assistance is available when required either through consultation with colleagues or referral where appropriate.
 - 2.2. Ensure fresh veterinary graduates employed are provided with sufficient guidance from senior veterinarian(s). A mentor could be assigned to provide guidance for a suitable period of time. Fresh vet graduates should be encouraged to keep a self-assessment diary to track their professional development and competencies in the first year of work.
 - 2.3. Conduct regular staff meetings to discuss cases, vet centre policies and procedures, and ways to continually improve conditions for staff and service to clients.
 - 2.4. Assist with the development of procedures to cover the most common activities of the vet centre which should be readily available to all staff and regularly reviewed. Procedures on the following should be included:
 - 2.4.1. Veterinary staff are appropriately trained or supervised. This includes support for continuing professional education (CPE), and time should be made available for staff to undertake the required CPE units.

- 2.4.2. Staff are familiar with requirements in the Code of Ethics and existing regulations.
- 2.4.3. 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 vet centre.
- 2.4.4. An estimate of cost is provided to the person responsible for the care of the animal for any proposed treatment, test or procedure performed at the vet centre.
- 2.4.5. Medical records including diagnostic tests and results are stored in a way that enables easy retrieval for at least 3 years, e.g. for the purposes of providing such records to the AVS, colleagues or other relevant personnel.
- 2.4.6. The vet centre has a sufficient amount of medication necessary for normal requirements of the vet centre; and that the medication is stored and dispensed in a manner consistent with professionally accepted guidelines.
- 2.4.7. Risk assessments following Workplace Safety and Health's guidelines have been undertaken to minimise safety and health hazards for staff and visitors to the clinic, and appropriate measures taken to safeguard against these.