

# VETERINARY BOARD OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

## GUIDELINES ON ANAESTHESIA

### LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

#### ***Veterinarians Act***

The Board is empowered under section 6(e) of the *Veterinarians Act* to issue guidelines on standards in relation to the provision of veterinary services that must be observed by registered veterinarians and veterinary specialists.

Failure to uphold or maintain contemporary professional standards constitutes incompetence within the meaning of misconduct as defined in section 28 of the *Veterinarians Act*.

#### **Code of Conduct – Regulation 9 - Veterinarians Regulations**

The Code of Conduct prescribed at Regulation 9 of the Veterinarians Regulations requires registered veterinarians to be familiar with and abide by all legislation pertaining to veterinary practice; to maintain current standards of practice in their chosen areas of veterinary practice; and to carry out all veterinary services in accordance with the Board's guidelines.

Specifically,

#### Clause 1 – BASIC PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

**includes the requirement under 1(1)(b) for registered veterinarians to be familiar with and abide by all relevant legislation** affecting their professional activity and behaviour (**which includes** the *Veterinarians Act*, Veterinarians Regulations, **the Code of Conduct, and the Board's Guidelines**).

#### Clause 4 - KNOWLEDGE OF CURRENT STANDARD OF PRACTICE

provides at 4(1) that a registered veterinarian must maintain current standards of veterinary practice in their areas of veterinary practice and **requires at 4(1)(b) that registered veterinarians “always carry out veterinary services in accordance with those current standards and in accordance with the Board's guidelines.”**

## **GUIDELINES UNDER SECTION 6(e) OF THE *VETERINARIANS ACT***

### **ANAESTHESIA**

With current technology and drugs, anaesthetic complications are rare and deaths even rarer. Diligent monitoring will avert most anaesthetic deaths.

The Board does not expect all veterinarians to have state of the art anaesthetic monitoring equipment, but does expect anaesthetics to be monitored.

The Board accepts that in some emergency situations this is not possible. However, for routine procedures within normal business hours, the Board would expect that a second person would be available to assist.

The Board does expect the drug, dosage, time and route of administration to be recorded in the clinical notes. (See Guidelines on Minimum Standards for Record Keeping.)

In addition, veterinarians are required under section 48 of the *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act* to maintain a register recording details of the supply or administration of controlled drugs, including the reason for the supply or administration.

---

#### **NB**

Practitioners should read these Guidelines in conjunction with the Code of Conduct prescribed in the Veterinarians Regulations and the additional Guidelines published by the Board under Section 6(e) of the *Veterinarians Act* on the Minimum Standards for:

- Record Keeping
- Staff
- Veterinary Premises
- House-Call Practices

Copies can be accessed from the Board website: [www.vetboard.nt.gov.au](http://www.vetboard.nt.gov.au)

Date Last Reviewed - May 2014