



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

PREAMBLE

The *Veterinary Practice Act 2021V* (Act) specifies that a veterinary practice business is to be carried out at or from a veterinary premises. A veterinary practice business is a business that involves 'the practice of veterinary medicine by 1 or more veterinarians. The definition of a premises under the Act includes a vehicle.

Veterinarians 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 14 November 2023.

These Guidelines may be superseded by subsequent versions. To ascertain whether this version has been superseded, view the current version on the Board's website at www.vpbwa.org.au.

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

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these guidelines:

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.

INSURANCE

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

PERMITS AND LICENCES

All veterinarians must ensure that they hold the relevant permits and licences necessary for them to practise veterinary surgery, including but not limited to Poisons Permits under the *Medicines and Poisons Act 2014* and Radiation Licences under the *Radiation Safety Act 1975*.

Drug Dispensing Labels

The Department of Health's requirements for drug dispensing labels can be found under Appendix L of the [Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons \(SUSMP\) \(external site\)](#).

Under the SUSMP, drug dispensing labels must include the name, address and telephone number of the dispenser supplying the substance. Given that most veterinarians conduct a house call practice from their private residence, the use of a post office box on the label, rather than a physical address, is sufficient.

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.
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 lockable fridge for the storage of medications requiring refrigeration;
 - e) carry sufficient and appropriate instrumentation for all procedures that will be performed in the facility;
 - f) be equipped with an autoclave, gaseous anaesthetic machine and radiography equipment;
 - g) have appropriate secure individual caging for animals; and
 - h) meet the requirements of local government by-laws, such as for the correct disposal of waste.
4. It is incumbent on the veterinarian to refer a client to a registered fixed veterinary premises or a specialist veterinarian when:
 - a) the veterinary mobile facility has not been approved for the required procedure; or
 - b) the veterinarian is not able to provide the required level of care; or
 - c) the animal requires isolation and / or barrier nursing; or
 - d) the veterinarian lacks the equipment or expertise to perform the required investigation or surgery.
5. Following sedation or anaesthesia, a veterinarian 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.
6. Clinical records and the supply of scheduled drugs must comply with the Board's [Code of Practice](#) No.1 of 2022.

DISCLAIMER

These Guidelines (printed, electronic or any other medium) do not constitute legal advice.

Readers are encouraged to seek their own professional advice to determine their obligations under the Act, subsidiary legislation made under the Act and other applicable laws. It is the responsibility of those persons regulated by the Act to determine their obligations. The authors, the Veterinary Practice Board of Western Australia (**Board**), the members of the Board and the staff of the Board accept no liability for losses caused by reliance on any of the material in these Guidelines.