



POSITION STATEMENT

After-Hours Care of Animals

Approved by Council:	March 19, 2008
Publication Date:	April 2008
To Be Reviewed by:	March 2011
Key Words:	After-hours; supervision; emergency; referral
Related Topics:	Informed consent; Release of Medical Information
Replaces:	Policy, "After-Hours Service" (March 2003), and Policy, "Supervision of Pets after Closing" (September 1997)
Legislative References:	<i>Veterinarians Act R.S.O. 1990</i> ; O. Reg. 1093, Section 20. See Appendix 1.
College Contact:	Registrar
Reference Materials:	CVO's Position Statement, "Release of Medical Information" (June 2007)

College publications contain practice parameters and standards which should be considered by all Ontario veterinarians in the care of their patients and in the practice of the profession. College publications are developed in consultation with the profession and describe current professional expectations. It is important to note that these College publications may be used by the College or other bodies in determining whether appropriate standards of practice and professional responsibilities have been maintained.

Purpose

This position statement indicates Council's view of veterinarians' requirement to provide care to animals outside of regular practice hours.

Scope

This position statement applies to all veterinarians practicing in Ontario.

Background

This position statement is a combination of two previous policy documents, "Policy, "After-Hours Service" (March 2003), and Policy, "Supervision of Pets after Closing" (September 1997). It does not introduce any changes to those policies, but places them in the context of after-hours care whether or not that care is provided at the primary veterinarian's facility, or by another veterinarian elsewhere.

The requirement to provide medically necessary services outside of regular practice hours is clearly stipulated in Ontario Regulation 1093. The regulation ensures that clients whose animals are treated by a veterinarian have access to medical services for their animals at times when the practice is closed. It also ensures that clients whose animals are treated at emergency clinics will continue to receive services from their regular veterinarian after their animals are discharged.

Position Statement

General

O. Reg. 1093 s.20 requires veterinarians to provide medically necessary services in a reasonably prompt fashion to clients' animals outside of regular practice hours. These services may be provided by the member, the member's associate(s), or by another member on a referral basis.

Compliance with this section of the Regulation is interpreted by the College on a case-by-case basis.

In general, it is the position of the Council of the College of Veterinarians of Ontario that veterinarians shall provide the best after-hours care for their clients that they can arrange, given their particular circumstances.

Informed Consent

The College position is that veterinarians must inform clients of the level to which the member will provide after-hours coverage.

Clients must also be informed of the level of supervision that animals will receive in a veterinary facility after closing.

Relevant Legislation

Act

The *Veterinarians Act, 1989*, is the profession-specific Act that governs the practice of veterinarians in Ontario. O. Reg. 1093 is the regulation under that Act.

Regulation 1093 states that:

20. (1) A member is responsible for providing reasonably prompt services outside of regular practice hours if the services are medically necessary for animals that he or she has recently treated or that he or she treats regularly. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 1093, s. 20 (1).

(2) The services required under subsection (1) may be provided by the member or an associate or by referral to another member who has agreed to cover the referring member's practice. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 1093, s. 20 (2).

(3) If a member provides services under subsection (1) outside of regular practice hours by referring an animal to an emergency clinic, the member is responsible for promptly continuing to provide medically necessary services to the animal after discharge from the emergency clinic until the services are no longer required or until the client has had a reasonable opportunity to arrange for the services of another member. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 1093, s. 20 (3).