ENFORCEMENT ACTION

The Board takes disciplinary action against licensed or unlicensed people who violate State laws regarding veterinary practice. Grounds for discipline focus on behaviors that place consumers and animals at risk of harm, including negligence, fraud or deception, incompetence, or unsanitary conditions. Disciplinary actions that may be taken include citation and fine, restrictions on practice, and even license revocation. Disciplinary action taken by the Board is public information and is available to consumers.

LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Veterinarians and RVTs are responsible for knowing and following the California Veterinary Medicine Practice Act. For more about the laws, regulations, policies, and legal opinions relating to veterinary care, visit **www.vmb.ca.gov/laws_regs.**

VETERINARY MEDICAL BOARD

REGISTERED VETERINARY TECHNICIAN COMMITTEE

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inside a veterinary hospital

Veterinary hospitals work a lot like human hospitals. Veterinarians are the doctors, and registered veterinary technicians are similar to registered nurses.

Most people know who the veterinarian is in a veterinary hospital, but sometimes consumers (even animal health professionals) may blur the lines between licensed and unlicensed staff.

It's important for consumers to know who the licensed and unlicensed staff are and the roles they play in a pet's care.

Here's an overview of who's who in veterinary healthcare, from the California Veterinary Medical Board and the Registered Veterinary Technician Committee.

LICENSED STAFF

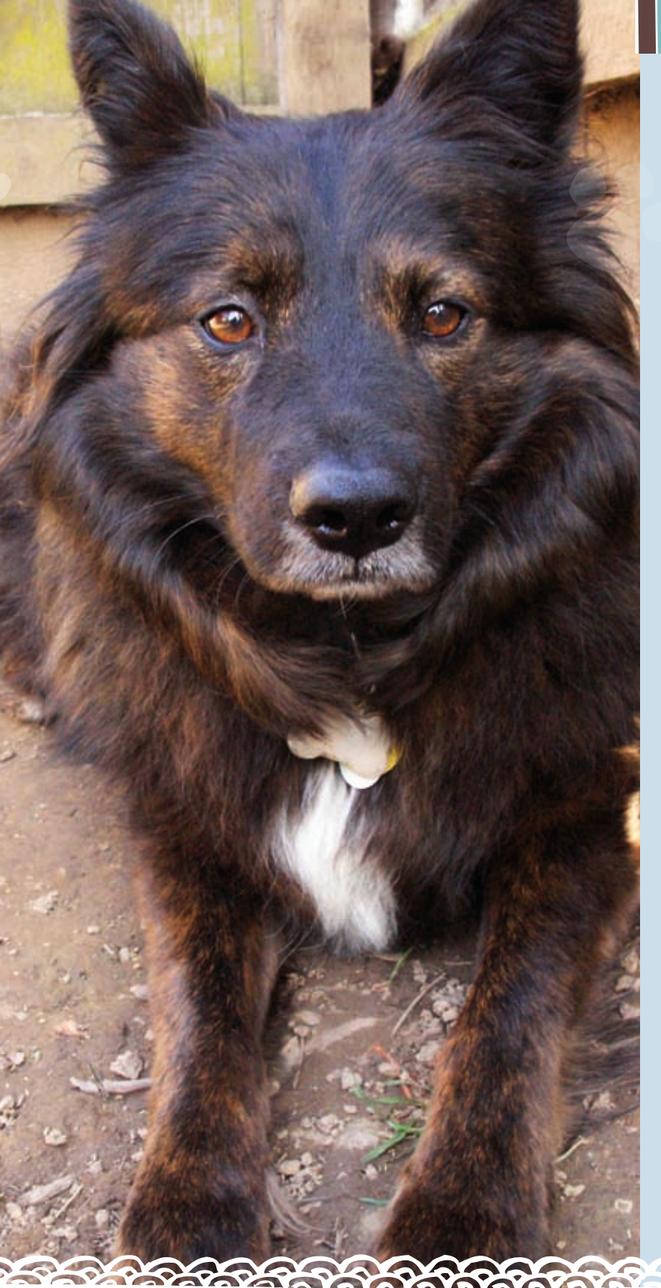
VETERINARIANS (DVMs)

Veterinarians alone are qualified to diagnose medical problems, prescribe therapies, and perform surgeries. Only currently licensed veterinarians may hold a permit to be the managing licensee at a veterinary facility.

tip: Veterinary licenses and premise permits must be posted for public view at veterinary facilities.

who's who... ...in the veterinarian's office

CALIFORNIA VETERINARY MEDICAL BOARD | REGISTERED VETERINARY TECHNICIAN COMMITTEE



REGISTERED VETERINARY TECHNICIANS (RVTs)
RVTs are skilled animal nursing professionals who have completed a Board-approved education and training program and have passed a State-administered licensing examination. There are certain veterinary medical tasks that a veterinarian can delegate to an RVT, but only if the veterinarian has examined the animal first.

tip: An RVT must be under direct supervision by a DVM when working with an anesthetized animal.

Under direct supervision, an RVT may:

- Administer anesthesia
- Suture skin and oral tissue
- Extract teeth
- Apply a splint or cast
- Create a relief hole in the skin for placement of an intravascular catheter

Under indirect supervision, an RVT may:

- Operate radiographic equipment
- Perform specific emergency lifesaving procedures
- Administer medications
- Apply or change bandages
- Draw blood and run lab tests

Like DVMs, RVTs must post their certification in the veterinary hospital in public view. DVMs and RVTs who provide services away from a hospital should carry the pocket version of their license. Consumers may ask to see the license before agreeing to any treatments.

tip: Direct supervision means the DVM is present and is quickly available where the animal healthcare task is being performed. Indirect supervision means the DVM is not present, but has given instructions for the animal's care.

UNLICENSED STAFF

Unlicensed staff may administer medications and assist with other tasks under the direct or indirect supervision of a DVM or under the direct supervision of an RVT, but are not allowed to perform tasks restricted to DVMs or RVTs. Unlicensed staff may not treat animals outside a hospital setting.

tip: Unlicensed staff may operate radiographic equipment, but only after completing specific training and only under direct supervision.

THE VETERINARY MEDICAL BOARD
The Veterinary Medical Board, with input from the Registered Veterinary Technician Committee, protects consumers and animals by developing and maintaining professional standards; licensing DVMs, RVTs, and veterinary premises; and by enforcing the California Veterinary Medicine Practice Act.

COMPLAINTS

Many of the complaints received by the Board have little to do with the care the animal received. Often, complaints are due to communication problems and the complexity of veterinary healthcare. When a consumer files a complaint, the Board investigates to determine if there has been a violation of the California Veterinary Medicine Practice Act. Even if the investigation determines that no direct violation has taken place, the Board may make recommendations to the veterinarian to help avoid future complaints.

tip: The Board has no control over fees charged for veterinary services or payment plans.