



College of Veterinarians of British Columbia

Practice Facility Closure Protocol and Rules

General

All veterinarians are prohibited from carrying on the practice of veterinary medicine from an unaccredited facility.

In the event that a practice facility closes or is to close, either voluntarily or as a result of a failure to obtain accreditation or having an accreditation cancelled, the Designated Registrant (DR) for the facility is to immediately undertake the following facility closing procedures:

1. Surrender the Practice Accreditation Certificate to the CVBC office. Section 3.20(1)(a) of the Bylaws states: “Immediately on receipt of the decision to cancel accreditation, the designated registrant of the practice or facility must...promptly surrender the accreditation certificate to the registrar”.
2. Cease scheduling or seeing any new clients or patients.
3. Notify all existing clients of the closure of the facility, of the arrangements for access to their medical records, and to advise them to seek another veterinarian for health services. This can be performed in a number of ways:
 - a) Posting a conspicuous “Notice of Office Closure” which includes the effective date of the closure, on all entrance doors to the facility;
 - b) Mailing a letter to each client’s residence; and
 - c) Placing an advertisement, that must extend for a minimum duration of 2 consecutive weeks, in the appropriate community newspaper or on the radio.

The DR must ensure that the facility staff facilitates the transfer of clients with animals that have on-going medical conditions and needs, including medications or other medical support service and their medical records, to another facility.

4. Ensure that arrangements are in place to comply with the Record Retention Guidelines. The DR is required to maintain the integrity of patient medical records for 7 years or as otherwise required in statute. The DR shall comply with any rules enacted by the Council from time to time dealing with the handling of closed office records. The DR must take reasonable measures, including implementing procedures, to safeguard the security, integrity and the confidentiality of the information in clients’ files.
5. Lastly, the DR must keep in mind at all times that the owner of the animal to whom a record pertains is the owner of the information in that record.

6. Cease all advertising by mail and website.
7. Cease, and prevent renewal of, all advertisements in the Yellow and White Pages, facility website, community newspapers or magazines, and radio.
8. Notify all suppliers and government agencies that the facility has CLOSED and the effective date of the closure.
9. Cancel any outstanding orders of veterinary supplies or equipment.
10. Arrange for the proper disposal of controlled substances, prescription products (drug, vaccine, etc.), over-the-counter products, and other veterinary equipment and supplies.
11. Cease the operation of ionizing radiation-emitting devices (i.e. x-ray, fluoroscope, computed tomography) that may have been surveyed and recorded on the “Certificate of Safety” (or its equivalent) for this veterinary facility.
12. Advise the Registrar’s office, and provide documentation, that the above steps have been taken.

Practice from an unaccredited facility

If evidence comes to the attention of the CVBC that the DR or any person has refused or failed to close the facility and/or has attempted to operate the facility without a Certificate of Accreditation, such conduct would trigger a complaint or discipline investigation for a Bylaw violation. Bylaw 3.5(1)(c) states: “A registrant must not practice in or from a practice facility...if the practice facility’s accreditation has been cancelled or suspended.”

Any such allegations and evidence would be referred to the Investigation Committee. Should the outcome of any disciplinary proceedings result in a finding of guilt against a registrant, the registrant will be liable to a range of sanctions including costs, available under the CVBC Bylaws.