



College of Veterinarians of British Columbia

Professional Practice Standard¹: Feline Partial Digit Amputation / Declawing

Published May 8, 2018, effective immediately

This College publication describes a mandatory standard of practice. The *Veterinarians Act* in section 52 provides that a failure to comply with a standard may be investigated.

No registrant may perform elective and non-therapeutic Partial Digit Amputation, otherwise known as declawing or onychectomy, of domestic cats.

The CVBC recognizes that elective and non-therapeutic declawing is ethically problematic and that it is not an appropriate means of dealing with feline behaviour issues.

However, the CVBC acknowledges that there are medical conditions that may necessitate partial or full digit amputation of some or all digits as an appropriate medical therapy. Such conditions include, but are not limited to:

- Biopsy of a nail or phalanx for the purposes of diagnosis, or
- Surgery to treat the following:
 - Neoplasia of the nail bed or phalanges,
 - Severe or irreversible trauma,
 - Immune-mediated disease affecting the nail bed,
 - Paronychia (inflammation or infection of the nail bed),
 - Onychodystrophy (abnormal formation of the nail),
 - Onychogryphosis (hypertrophy and abnormal curvature of the nail),
 - Onychomadesis (sloughing of the nail),
 - Onychomalacia (softening of the nail),
 - Onychomycosis (fungal infection),
 - Onychoschizia (splitting of the nail).

No medical conditions or environmental circumstances of the cat owner justify the declawing of domestic cats.

¹ Council approved this professional practice standard on May 4, 2018 in response to widespread input from CVBC Registrants in support of a ban on declawing.