



**Rules of
Department of Insurance,
Financial Institutions and
Professional Registration**

**Division 2270—Missouri Veterinary Medical Board
Chapter 6—Professional Conduct for the Practice of
Veterinary Medicine**

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**Title 20—DEPARTMENT OF
INSURANCE, FINANCIAL
INSTITUTIONS AND
PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION
Division 2270—Missouri Veterinary
Medical Board
Chapter 6—Professional Conduct for the
Practice of Veterinary Medicine**

**20 CSR 2270-6.011 Rules of Professional
Conduct**

PURPOSE: This rule establishes a professional code of conduct for veterinarians and veterinary technicians.

(1) Pursuant to section 340.210.2(13), RSMo, the Missouri Veterinary Medical Board adopts the following rules to be referred to as the rules of professional conduct. These rules of professional conduct are binding on every person licensed by the board to practice as a veterinarian or registered by the board to practice as a veterinary technician. Whenever the term licensee is used, it shall be read to include any individual possessing a license, certificate of registration, permit, or any other form of authorization issued by the board pursuant to Chapter 340, RSMo. Any act or practice found to be in violation of these rules of professional conduct shall be considered as unprofessional conduct and be grounds for the filing of a complaint with the Administrative Hearing Commission.

(2) In the performance of professional services, licensees at all times shall be cognizant that their primary responsibility is to the public's safety, health, or welfare and that this responsibility shall never be compromised by self-interest, personal advantage, or monetary gain.

(3) Licensees shall undertake to perform only those professional services for which they, or those whom the licensee may employ, are qualified by education, training, or experience to perform. If the licensee is not qualified to provide services requiring advanced training or education, the licensee must truthfully and accurately inform the client of those limitations and offer all available assistance in referring the client to colleagues or other professionals who are qualified to render those services or treatments.

(4) Licensees, directly or indirectly, shall not injure the professional reputation, standing, prospects of practice or employment of another member of the profession in any manner which could reasonably be deemed as malicious, false, or misleading.

(5) Licensees at all times shall conform their practice to the currently accepted standards for the profession of veterinary medicine as these standards are set forth under Chapter 340, RSMo or by any rule lawfully promulgated by the board or as otherwise found to be accepted within the profession as gauged by the reasonable conduct of other professionals engaged in the practice of veterinary medicine.

(6) Licensees shall not initiate or knowingly participate in any form of advertising or solicitation that contains false, deceptive, or misleading statements or claims.

(7) A licensee shall not advertise, state, or imply by any means that s/he is a specialist in any given field unless the licensee is, in fact, a diplomate of an American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)-recognized specialty and is board-certified by the AVMA.

(8) Licensees at all times shall conduct themselves in a professional manner with the general public and clients through courteous verbal exchange. Licensees shall provide all clients with a diagnostic assessment and treatment plan, to include recommendations and medications when appropriate, prior to rendering the treatment, except in cases of emergencies where the client cannot be reached for consultation within a reasonable time frame as dictated by the patient's condition. All clients shall be informed of any required follow-up treatment. All diagnostic assessments, treatment plans, medications, and other pertinent information regarding the treatment of the patient shall be recorded in the patient's medical record and a copy of the record shall be made available to the client upon request.

(9) In the event that a client should choose to consult with or utilize the services of another veterinarian, the licensee shall withdraw from the case if so requested. The licensee shall indicate the circumstances for withdrawal on the medical records and cooperate fully with the other veterinarian to include the transmittal of a copy of all pertinent medical records upon the request of the other veterinarian who has the authorization of the owner of the animal to which it pertains or directly to the owner or owner's agent.

(10) Although a licensee may choose whom to serve, once the care of a patient has been undertaken the licensee has an obligation to provide reasonable services or treatment to stabilize the patient or to prevent unnecessary suffering or pain.

(11) Licensees shall not reveal confidential, proprietary, or privileged facts or data or any other sensitive information contained in a patient's medical records or as otherwise obtained in a professional capacity without the prior consent of the client except as otherwise authorized or required by Chapter 340, RSMo, lawful rules as promulgated by the board, court order, or any other state or federal law, or regulation. However, this section shall not apply to cases in which the veterinarian may observe animal abuse or neglect. The board recognizes that veterinarians may observe cases of animal abuse or neglect as defined by federal or state laws, or local ordinances. When these situations cannot be resolved through education, the board considers it the responsibility of the veterinarian to report such cases to the appropriate authorities. Disclosures may be necessary to protect the health and welfare of animals and people. Veterinarians should be aware that accurate record keeping and documentation of these cases are invaluable.

(12) Licensees have an obligation to immediately inform the board of any disciplinary action taken against their licenses to practice veterinary medicine by another state or federal authority or of the suspension, revocation or surrender of any controlled substance license or registration issued by any state or federal authority. Licensees at all times shall conduct their professional activities in conformity with all state and federal laws and regulations.

(13) Licensees have an obligation and professional duty to cooperate with any reasonable request by the board to appear before the board or to furnish information to the board upon request concerning any investigation or complaint.

(14) Licensees at all times shall comply with any lawful order issued by the board or with any consent agreement voluntarily entered into between the licensee and the board.

(15) A licensee shall not dispense or prescribe any controlled substance or legend drug except in the professional course of his/her practice and only upon the establishment of a bona fide veterinarian-client-patient relationship.

(16) A licensee shall not issue any certificate of health/inspection required or authorized by state, federal, or municipal law unless s/he has personal knowledge of the factual averments contained in the certificate of health by means of actual inspection, examination, appropriate



testing, or any combination of these, of the animal(s).

(17) A licensee shall not aid or abet, either directly or indirectly, the unlawful practice of veterinary medicine and shall be obligated to report to the board any information which the licensee has regarding the unlawful or unlicensed practice of veterinary medicine.

(18) A licensee shall not delegate any professional responsibility to any person, whether or not that person is employed by the licensee, except as otherwise provided for or authorized under and pursuant to Chapter 340, RSMo or any lawful rule promulgated by the board.

(19) A licensee shall obtain the informed written consent of the client prior to placing any patient under anesthesia or performing any surgical procedure, or both, except in an emergency.

(20) Licensees shall have the responsibility and obligation to ascertain whether or not any person engaged in the employment of the licensee has the necessary license or registration to practice his/her profession in this state and that the license or registration is current.

(21) A licensee shall obtain the consent of the client prior to transporting a patient to another facility for veterinary care or lodging, unless circumstances qualifying as an emergency do not permit obtaining consent, or as otherwise provided for under Chapter 340, RSMo or any lawful rule promulgated by the board.

(22) Licensees shall notify clients where to call if a licensed veterinarian is unavailable at that facility. The use of an answering device will meet the intent of this rule.

(23) The initials “RVT” shall designate a registered veterinary technician. Only those individuals who are so licensed by the board may use the designation with their name.

AUTHORITY: section 340.210, RSMo 2016. This rule originally filed as 4 CSR 270-6.011. Original rule filed Nov. 4, 1992, effective July 8, 1993. Amended: Filed April 14, 1994, effective Sept. 30, 1994. Amended: Filed June 28, 2002, effective Dec. 30, 2002. Moved to 20 CSR 2270-6.011, effective Aug. 28, 2006. Amended: Filed Oct. 30, 2007, effective April 30, 2008. Amended: Filed July 25, 2018, effective Jan. 30, 2019.*

**Original authority: 340.210, RSMo 1992, amended 1993, 1995, 1999.*