

Professional Relationships:

Veterinarians must interact with colleagues honestly and with respect and in a way that fosters good relationships and communication

1. Veterinarians must ensure that, unless there is good reason for confidentiality, factual technical information in their possession is communicated to those with a need to know wherever this is necessary to ensure (either generally or in individual cases) the welfare of animals, the promotion of public health, national biosecurity, integrity of certification, the advancement of veterinary knowledge, or maintenance of public confidence in the profession.
2. Where a veterinarian is providing a specific and limited range of veterinary services to a client (e.g. consultancy services) they must:
 - a. Ascertain from the client which veterinarian would be considered to be their usual general veterinary practitioner ;
 - b. Make contact (with the client's consent) and continue to communicate relevant information with the general veterinary practitioner during the course of their professional involvement with the client;
 - c. Ensure they only authorise the use of restricted veterinary medicines for clinical matters they have specifically consulted on;
 - d. Make provision for 24 hour emergency care in relation to their responsibilities around the matters consulted on.
3. Second opinions allow a client to have a diagnosis or treatment plan considered by another veterinarian.
 - a. When a second opinion is being considered for patients under their care veterinarians must:
 - i. Recognise the client's right to request a second opinion;
 - ii. Use their professional judgement to recognise when they should recommend a second opinion;
 - iii. Obtain the consent of the client before organising a second opinion;
 - iv. Provide appropriate case summaries for the second opinion veterinarian.
 - b. When providing second opinions veterinarians must:
 - i. Not discredit the first opinion veterinarian;
 - ii. Advise the client to return to the first opinion veterinarian once the diagnosis or treatment plan has been assessed;
 - iii. Communicate the outcome to the first opinion veterinarian where the client is returning to that veterinarian.
4. Referral of a client to a specialist, or veterinarian with particular expertise or equipment, occurs for the purposes of obtaining a diagnosis and/or carrying out treatment with the expectation that the client will return to the referring veterinarian.
 - a. Veterinarians must:
 - i. Recognise the client's right to request a referral;
 - ii. Be familiar with the referral options available;

- iii. Recognise when a case is outside their area of competence and refer it to a colleague whom they are satisfied is competent to carry out the investigations or treatment involved;
 - iv. Inform the client of the referral veterinarian's level of expertise and whether they are a registered specialist;
 - v. Before the referral, where possible, provide appropriate documentation and case records to the referral veterinarian;
 - vi. Document the referral appropriately in their own client records.
 - b. Referral veterinarians must:
 - i. Not discredit the referring veterinarian;
 - ii. Provide referring veterinarians with detailed reports on diagnoses, treatments and prognoses for animals which are referred. If the referral veterinarian provides a written statement for the client, the original veterinarian should also receive a copy.
 - iii. Limit the communication with the client to that relating to the specific case.
 - iv. Make provision for 24 hour emergency cover for their patients in relation to the matters consulted on.
- 5. Supersession is the act of taking over the clinical management of a case recently treated by another veterinarian.
 - a. Veterinarians must:
 - i. When an animal is seen for the first time, ascertain whether another veterinarian has recently provided treatment;
 - ii. Notify the superseded veterinarian (with the owner's consent) before consultation where possible, or as soon as practicable after the consultation in order to manage the risks identified in paragraph 1;
 - iii. Request from the superseded veterinarian any relevant clinical information which may have a bearing on the future clinical management of the patient.
 - b. Superseded veterinarians must:
 - i. Provide all of the requested and relevant clinical information in a manner and form appropriate for the circumstances;
 - ii. Not impede or delay the transfer of clinical information;
 - iii. Communicate with the superseding veterinarian in a professional manner in order to manage risks;
 - iv. Recognise a client's right to choose another veterinarian.
- 6. Veterinarians must not make malicious or unfounded criticisms of colleagues that may undermine the public's trust and bring discredit to the profession
- 7. Veterinarians must ensure that newly registered and/or inexperienced veterinarians they employ are appropriately supervised and supported at all times.