



Home	Bill Information	California Law	Publications	Other Resources	My Subscriptions	My Favorites
------	------------------	----------------	--------------	-----------------	------------------	--------------

Code: Section:

[Up^](#) [Add To My Favorites](#)

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS CODE - BPC

DIVISION 2. HEALING ARTS [500 - 4999.129] (*Division 2 enacted by Stats. 1937, Ch. 399.*)

CHAPTER 11. Veterinary Medicine [4800 - 4920.8] (*Chapter 11 repealed and added by Stats. 1937, Ch. 933.*)

ARTICLE 3. Issuance of Licenses [4846 - 4857] (*Article 3 added by Stats. 1937, Ch. 933.*)

4846. (a) In order to obtain a license to practice veterinary medicine in California, an individual shall meet the following requirements:

(1) Graduate from a veterinary college recognized by the board or receive a certificate from the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG) or the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE). Proof of graduation shall be directly submitted to the board by the veterinary college or from the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB). Proof of certificate shall be directly submitted to the board by ECFVG or PAVE.

(2) Complete a board-approved license application.

(3) Pay the applicable fees specified in Section 4905.

(4) As directed by the board pursuant to Section 144, submit a full set of fingerprints for the purpose of conducting a criminal history record check and undergo a state and federal criminal offender record information search conducted through the Department of Justice, pursuant to subdivision (u) of Section 11105 of the Penal Code. The Department of Justice shall provide a state or federal response to the board pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (p) of Section 11105 of the Penal Code.

(5) Pass an examination consisting of the following:

(A) A licensing examination that is administered on a national basis. If the applicant passed the national licensing examination over five years from the date of submitting the California veterinarian license application, the applicant shall satisfy one of the following:

(i) Retake and pass the national licensing examination.

(ii) Submit proof of having practiced clinical veterinary medicine for a minimum of two years and completed a minimum of 2,500 hours of clinical practice in another state, Canadian province, or United States territory within the three years immediately preceding filing an application for licensure in this state.

(iii) Complete the minimum continuing education requirements of Section 4846.5 for the current and preceding year.

(B) A veterinary law examination administered by the board concerning the statutes and regulations of this chapter. The examination may be administered by regular mail, email, or by other electronic means. The applicant shall certify that the applicant personally completed the examination. Any false statement is a violation subject to Section 4831. Every applicant who obtains a score of at least 80 percent on the veterinary law examination shall be deemed to have passed. University of California and Western University of Health Sciences veterinary medical students who have successfully completed a board-approved course on veterinary law and ethics covering this chapter shall be exempt from this subparagraph.

(b) The applicant shall disclose each state, Canadian province, or United States territory in which the applicant currently holds or has ever held a license to practice veterinary medicine. License verification, including any disciplinary or enforcement history, shall be confirmed through electronic means or direct submission from each state, Canadian province, or United States territory in which the applicant has identified the applicant holds or has ever held a license to practice veterinary medicine.

(c) A veterinarian license application shall be subject to denial pursuant to Sections 480, 4875, and 4883.

(Amended by Stats. 2024, Ch. 497, Sec. 62. (SB 1526) Effective January 1, 2025.)

4846.1. If the veterinary college from which an applicant is graduated is not recognized by the board, the board shall have the authority to determine the qualifications of such graduates and to review the quality of the educational experience attained by them in an unrecognized veterinary college. The board shall have the authority to adopt rules and regulations to implement this provision.

(Added by Stats. 1975, Ch. 265.)

4846.2. If the board finds in evaluating the graduate described in Section 4846.1 that such applicant is deficient in qualification or in the quality of his educational experience the board may require such applicant to fulfill such other remedial or other requirements as the board, by regulation, may prescribe.

(Added by Stats. 1975, Ch. 265.)

4846.5. (a) Except as provided in this section, the board shall issue renewal licenses only to those applicants that have completed a minimum of 36 hours of continuing education in the preceding two years.

(b) (1) Notwithstanding any other law, continuing education hours shall be earned by attending courses relevant to veterinary medicine and sponsored or cosponsored by any of the following:

(A) American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) accredited veterinary medical colleges.

(B) Accredited colleges or universities offering programs relevant to veterinary medicine.

(C) The American Veterinary Medical Association.

(D) American Veterinary Medical Association recognized specialty or affiliated allied groups.

(E) American Veterinary Medical Association's affiliated state veterinary medical associations.

(F) Nonprofit annual conferences established in conjunction with state veterinary medical associations.

(G) Educational organizations affiliated with the American Veterinary Medical Association or its state affiliated veterinary medical associations.

(H) Local veterinary medical associations affiliated with the California Veterinary Medical Association.

(I) Federal, state, or local government agencies.

(J) Providers accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) or approved by the American Medical Association (AMA), providers recognized by the American Dental Association Continuing Education Recognition Program (ADA CERP), and AMA or ADA affiliated state, local, and specialty organizations.

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), a total of six hours or less of the required 36 hours of continuing education may be earned by doing either of the following, or a combination thereof:

(A) Up to six hours may be earned by taking self-study courses, which may include, but are not limited to, reading journals, viewing video recordings, or listening to audio recordings.

(B) Up to four hours may be earned by providing pro bono spaying or neutering services under the supervision of a public animal control agency or shelter, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals shelter, humane society shelter, or rescue group. The services shall be administered at a facility that is appropriately equipped and staffed to provide those services. The service shall be provided to a household with a demonstrated financial need for reduced-cost services.

(3) The board may approve other continuing veterinary medical education providers not specified in paragraph (1).

(A) The board has the authority to recognize national continuing education approval bodies for the purpose of approving continuing education providers not specified in paragraph (1).

(B) Applicants seeking continuing education provider approval shall have the option of applying to the board or to a board-recognized national approval body.

(4) For good cause, the board may adopt an order specifying, on a prospective basis, that a provider of continuing veterinary medical education authorized pursuant to paragraph (1) or (3) is no longer an acceptable provider.

(c) A person renewing their license issued pursuant to Section 4846.4, or a person applying for relicensure or for reinstatement of their license to active status, shall submit proof of compliance with this section to the board certifying that the person is in compliance with this section. Any false statement submitted pursuant to this section shall be a violation subject to Section 4831.

(d) This section shall not apply to a veterinarian's first license renewal. This section shall apply only to second and subsequent license renewals granted on or after January 1, 2002.

(e) The board shall have the right to audit the records of all applicants to verify the completion of the continuing education requirement. Applicants shall maintain records of completion of required continuing education coursework for a period of four years and shall make these records available to the board for auditing purposes upon request. If the board, during this audit, questions whether any course reported by the veterinarian satisfies the continuing education requirement, the veterinarian shall provide information to the board concerning the content of the course; the name of its sponsor and cosponsor, if any; and specify the specific curricula that was of benefit to the veterinarian.

(f) A veterinarian desiring an inactive license or to restore an inactive license under Section 701 shall submit an application on a form provided by the board. In order to restore an inactive license to active status, the veterinarian shall have completed a minimum of 36 hours of continuing education within the last two years preceding application. The inactive license status of a veterinarian shall not deprive the board of its authority to institute or continue a disciplinary action against a licensee.

(g) Knowing misrepresentation of compliance with this article by a veterinarian constitutes unprofessional conduct and grounds for disciplinary action or for the issuance of a citation and the imposition of a civil penalty pursuant to Section 4883.

(h) The board, in its discretion, may exempt from the continuing education requirement any veterinarian who for reasons of health, military service, or undue hardship cannot meet those requirements. Applications for waivers shall be submitted on a form provided by the board.

(i) The administration of this section may be funded through professional license and continuing education provider fees. The fees related to the administration of this section shall not exceed the costs of administering the corresponding provisions of this section.

(j) For those continuing education providers not listed in paragraph (1) of subdivision (b), the board or its recognized national approval agent shall establish criteria by which a provider of continuing education shall be approved. The board shall initially review and approve these criteria and may review the criteria as needed. The board or its recognized agent shall monitor, maintain, and manage related records and data. The board may impose an application fee, not to exceed two hundred dollars (\$200) biennially, for continuing education providers not listed in paragraph (1) of subdivision (b).

(k) (1) Beginning January 1, 2018, a licensed veterinarian who renews their license shall complete a minimum of one credit hour of continuing education on the judicious use of medically important antimicrobial drugs every four years as part of their continuing education requirements.

(2) For purposes of this subdivision, "medically important antimicrobial drug" means an antimicrobial drug listed in Appendix A of the federal Food and Drug Administration's Guidance for Industry #152, including critically important, highly important, and important antimicrobial drugs, as that appendix may be amended.

(Amended by Stats. 2022, Ch. 511, Sec. 25. (SB 1495) Effective January 1, 2023.)

4847.1. (a) If an applicant fails to complete their application within one year after it has been filed, the application shall be considered abandoned and the application fee forfeited.

(b) An application submitted subsequent to the abandonment of the former application shall be treated as a new application.

(c) An applicant shall notify the board of any changes in mailing or employment address that occur after filing the application.

(Added by Stats. 2021, Ch. 631, Sec. 15. (AB 1535) Effective January 1, 2022.)

4848.1. (a) A veterinarian engaged in the practice of veterinary medicine, as defined in Section 4826, employed by the University of California and engaged in the performance of duties in connection with the School of Veterinary Medicine or employed by the Western University of Health Sciences and engaged in the performance of duties in connection with the College of Veterinary Medicine shall be issued a university license pursuant to this section or hold a license to practice veterinary medicine in this state.

(b) An individual may apply for and be issued a university license if all of the following are satisfied:

(1) The applicant is currently employed by the University of California or Western University of Health Sciences, as defined in subdivision (a).

(2) The applicant passes an examination concerning the statutes and regulations of this chapter, administered by the board, pursuant to subparagraph (C) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 4848.

(3) The applicant completes and submits the application specified by the board and pays the application and the initial license fee, pursuant to Section 4905.

(c) A university license:

(1) Shall automatically cease to be valid upon termination or cessation of employment by the University of California or by the Western University of Health Sciences.

(2) Shall be subject to the license renewal provisions in Section 4900 and the payment of the renewal fee pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 4905.

(3) Shall be subject to denial, revocation, or suspension pursuant to Sections 480, 4875, and 4883.

(4) Authorizes the holder to practice veterinary medicine only at an educational institution described in subdivision (a) and any locations formally affiliated with those institutions.

(d) An individual who holds a university license is exempt from satisfying the license renewal requirements of Section 4846.5.

(Amended by Stats. 2024, Ch. 497, Sec. 63. (SB 1526) Effective January 1, 2025.)

4850. Every person holding a license under this chapter shall conspicuously display the license in his or her principal place of business.

(Amended by Stats. 2005, Ch. 621, Sec. 80. Effective January 1, 2006.)

4852. Every person holding a license issued under this chapter who changes his or her mailing address shall notify the board of his or her new mailing address within 30 days of the change. The board shall not renew the license of any person who fails to comply with this section unless the person pays the penalty fee prescribed in Section 4905. An applicant for the renewal of a license shall specify in his or her application whether he or she has changed his or her mailing address and the board may accept that statement as evidence of the fact.

(Amended by Stats. 1997, Ch. 642, Sec. 20. Effective January 1, 1998.)

4853. (a) All veterinary premises shall be registered with the board. The certificate of registration shall be on a form prescribed in accordance with Section 164.

(b) "Premises" for purposes of this chapter shall mean the location of operation where veterinary medicine, veterinary dentistry, veterinary surgery, and the various branches thereof is being practiced and shall include a building, kennel, mobile unit, or vehicle. Mobile units and vehicles shall be exempted from independent registration with the board if they are operated from a building or facility that is the licensee manager's principal place of business and the building is registered with the board, and the registration identifies and declares the use of the mobile unit or vehicle.

(c) The owner or operator of a veterinary premises shall submit a premises registration application to the board. The application shall set forth the name of each owner or operator of the premises, including the type of corporate entity, if applicable, the name of the premises, and the name of the responsible licensee manager who is to act for and on behalf of the registered premises. Substitution of the responsible licensee manager may be accomplished by application to the board if the following conditions are met:

(1) The person substituted qualifies by presenting satisfactory evidence that the person possesses a valid, unexpired, and unrevoked license as provided by this chapter and that the license is not currently under suspension.

(2) No circumvention of the law is contemplated by the substitution.

(d) If the owner or operator of a veterinary premises is a veterinary corporation practicing pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 4910), the application shall set forth the names and titles of each officer, director, or shareholder. Any changes in the officers, directors, or shareholders shall be reported to the board within 30 days.

(e) If the owner or operator of a veterinary premises is a corporation or other artificial legal entity other than a veterinary corporation as provided under subdivision (d), the application shall set forth the names and titles of all owners, officers, general partners, if any, and the agent for service of process. Any changes in the owners, officers, general partners, or agent for service of process shall be reported to the board within 30 days.

(f) The premises registration is nontransferable. In the event of change of an owner or operator of the premises, the premises registration holder shall notify the board of the change within 30 days after the change.

(g) This section does not authorize any person, corporation, or artificial legal entity, other than a California-licensed veterinarian or a veterinary corporation practicing pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 4910) and the Moscone-Knox Professional Corporation Act (Part 4 (commencing with Section 13400) of Division 3 of Title 1 of the Corporations Code), to furnish to any person or animal patient any veterinary services, diagnosis, or treatment within the scope of California veterinarian licensure under this chapter. This section does not authorize any person, other than a California-licensed veterinarian within the scope of their license, to engage directly or indirectly in the practice of veterinary medicine, veterinary surgery, veterinary dentistry, and the various branches thereof in accordance with Section 4826. This section does not regulate, govern, or affect in any manner the practice of veterinary medicine, veterinary surgery, or veterinary dentistry by any person duly licensed to engage in such practice.

(h) The location where a veterinarian practices telehealth shall be exempt from the requirement that it be registered pursuant to this section if all of the following requirements are satisfied:

- (1) The veterinarian does not perform in-person examination or treatment of animal patients at the location.
- (2) No veterinary drug, medicine, appliance, or medical equipment is kept at the location.
- (3) The veterinary medical records required pursuant to Sections 4855 and 4856 are created, maintained, and stored so as to protect the veterinary medical records from access by unauthorized individuals, damage, or loss.
- (4) The following information shall be provided on any electronic publication, including any internet website, through which the veterinarian provides or offers to provide veterinary medical services:
 - (A) The veterinarian's name, contact information, and California veterinarian license number, prominently displayed.
 - (B) Contact information and instruction for obtaining a copy of the animal patient's medical records.
 - (C) A statement that a client may contact the Veterinary Medical Board if the client has any questions or complaints regarding the veterinarian.

(Amended by Stats. 2024, Ch. 80, Sec. 5. (SB 1525) Effective January 1, 2025.)

4853.1. Each application to register a premises pursuant to Section 4853 shall be made on a form provided by the board.

(Amended by Stats. 2021, Ch. 631, Sec. 21. (AB 1535) Effective January 1, 2022.)

4853.5. When it has been adjudicated in an administrative hearing that the licensee manager has failed to keep the premises and all equipment therein in a clean and sanitary condition as provided for in subdivision (h) of Section 4883, or is in violation of any of the provisions of Section 4854, the board may withhold, suspend, or revoke the registration of veterinary premises, or assess a fine of not less than fifty dollars (\$50) nor more than five hundred dollars (\$500) per day until such violation has been rectified, or by both such suspension and fine. The total amount of any fine assessed pursuant to this section shall not exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000).

(Amended by Stats. 1980, Ch. 471, Sec. 8.)

4853.6. (a) The board shall deny, suspend, or revoke registration of a veterinary premises if any of the following occur:

- (1) The licensee manager set forth in the application in accordance with Section 4853 ceases to become responsible for management of the registered premises and no substitution of the responsible licensee manager has been made by application as provided for in Section 4853.
- (2) The premises registration holder or the licensee manager has, under proceedings conducted in accordance with Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 11500) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code, the license to practice veterinary medicine, surgery, and dentistry revoked or suspended.
- (3) Unless licensed pursuant to Section 4825, the premises registration holder has practiced, influenced, or exerted control over the provision of veterinary medicine, veterinary dentistry, veterinary surgery, and the various branches thereof.

(b) The board shall not renew the premises registration if there is no licensee manager associated with the premises.

(c) The board may deny, suspend, or revoke registration of the veterinary premises for unlicensed practice of veterinary medicine, veterinary dentistry, veterinary surgery, and the various branches thereof by the premises registration holder.

(Amended by Stats. 2021, Ch. 631, Sec. 22. (AB 1535) Effective January 1, 2022.)

4853.7. A premise registration that is not renewed within five years after its expiration may not be renewed and shall not be restored, reissued, or reinstated thereafter. However, an application for a new premise registration may be submitted and obtained if

both of the following conditions are met:

- (a) No fact, circumstance, or condition exists that, if the premise registration was issued, would justify its revocation or suspension.
- (b) All of the fees that would be required for the initial premise registration are paid at the time of application.

(Added by Stats. 2016, Ch. 484, Sec. 50. (SB 1193) Effective January 1, 2017.)

4854. All premises where veterinary medicine, veterinary dentistry, or veterinary surgery is being practiced, and all instruments, apparatus and apparel used in connection with those practices, shall be kept clean and sanitary at all times, and shall conform to those minimum standards established by the board.

(Added by Stats. 1978, Ch. 1314.)

4854.1. A premises registration holder who is not a California-licensed veterinarian pursuant to Section 4825 shall not interfere with, control, or otherwise direct the professional judgment of any California licensed veterinarian or registered veterinary technician. The board may require any information, including, but not limited to, employment contracts between the premises registration holder and a California-licensed veterinarian or registered veterinary technician, the board deems is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of this section.

(Added by Stats. 2021, Ch. 631, Sec. 23. (AB 1535) Effective January 1, 2022.)

4854.5. (a) Every off-campus educational program site shall display in a conspicuous place a consumer notification specifying that the veterinary facilities are also being used for diagnosis and treatment of animals by graduate students enrolled in a veterinary medicine program.

(b) Notwithstanding Section 4831, or any other provision of law, a violation of subdivision (a) shall not be a crime.

(Added by Stats. 2002, Ch. 131, Sec. 3. Effective January 1, 2003.)

4855. A veterinarian subject to the provisions of this chapter shall, as required by regulation of the board, keep a written record of all animals receiving veterinary services, and provide a summary of that record to the owner of animals receiving veterinary services, when requested. The minimum amount of information which shall be included in written records and summaries shall be established by the board. The minimum duration of time for which a licensed premise shall retain the written record or a complete copy of the written record shall be determined by the board.

(Added by Stats. 1978, Ch. 1314.)

4856. (a) All records required by law to be kept by a veterinarian subject to this chapter, including, but not limited to, records pertaining to diagnosis and treatment of animals and records pertaining to drugs or devices for use on animals, shall be open to inspection by the board, or its authorized representatives, during an inspection as part of a regular inspection program by the board, or during an investigation initiated in response to a complaint that a licensee has violated any law or regulation that constitutes grounds for disciplinary action by the board. A copy of all those records shall be provided to the board immediately upon request.

(b) Equipment and drugs on the premises, or any other place, where veterinary medicine, veterinary dentistry, veterinary surgery, or the various branches thereof is being practiced, or otherwise in the possession of a veterinarian for purposes of that practice, shall be open to inspection by the board, or its authorized representatives, during an inspection as part of a regular inspection program by the board, or during an investigation initiated in response to a complaint that a licensee has violated any law or regulation that constitutes grounds for disciplinary action by the board.

(Amended by Stats. 1997, Ch. 642, Sec. 22. Effective January 1, 1998.)

4857. (a) A veterinarian licensed under this chapter shall not disclose any information concerning an animal patient receiving veterinary services, the client responsible for the animal patient receiving veterinary services, or the veterinary care provided to an animal patient, except under any one of the following circumstances:

(1) Upon written or witnessed verbal authorization by knowing and informed consent of the client.

(2) Upon authorization received by electronic transmission when originated by the client.

(3) In response to a valid court order or subpoena.

(4) As may be required to ensure compliance with any federal, state, county, or city law or regulation, including, but not limited to, the California Public Records Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Title 1 of the Government Code).

(5) If the care or service was for a horse that has participated in the previous year, or is intended to participate, in a licensed horse race. In these situations, the entire medical record for the horse shall be made available upon request to anyone responsible for the direct medical care of the horse, including the owner, trainer, or veterinarian, the California Horse Racing Board or any other state or local governmental entity, and the racing association or fair conducting the licensed horse race.

(6) As otherwise provided in this section.

(b) This section shall not apply to the extent that the client responsible for an animal patient or an authorized agent of the client responsible for the animal patient has filed or caused to be filed a civil or criminal complaint that places the veterinarian's care and treatment of the animal patient or the nature and extent of the injuries to the animal patient at issue, or when the veterinarian is acting to comply with federal, state, county, or city laws or regulations.

(c) A veterinarian shall be subject to the criminal penalties set forth in Section 4831 or any other provision of this code for a violation of this section. In addition, any veterinarian who negligently releases confidential information shall be liable in a civil action for any damages caused by the release of that information.

(d) Nothing in this section is intended to prevent the sharing of veterinary medical information between veterinarians and peace officers, humane society officers, or animal control officers who are acting to protect the welfare of animals.

(e) Nothing in this section is intended to prevent the sharing of veterinary medical information between veterinarians and facilities for the purpose of diagnosis or treatment of the animal patient that is the subject of the medical records.

(Amended by Stats. 2024, Ch. 497, Sec. 64. (SB 1526) Effective January 1, 2025.)