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**AB-463 Emergency medical services: dogs and cats.** (2025-2026)

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**Assembly Bill No. 463**

**CHAPTER 98**

An act to amend Section 1799.109 of, and to add Section 1797.10 to, the Health and Safety Code, relating to emergency medical services.

[ Approved by Governor August 28, 2025. Filed with Secretary of State August 28, 2025. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AB 463, Michelle Rodriguez. Emergency medical services: dogs and cats.

Existing law authorizes a private ambulance owner to operate an emergency ambulance service upon obtaining a license from the Department of the California Highway Patrol, as specified.

This bill would authorize those license holders or a person who operates ambulances owned or operated by a fire department of a federally recognized Indian tribe to transport a police canine, as defined, or a search and rescue dog, as defined, that is injured in the line of duty, to a veterinary clinic or similar facility if there is no other person requiring medical attention or transport at that time. The bill would require an ambulance operator, except as specified, that provides transport to police canines or search and rescue dogs injured in the line of duty to develop policies regarding the transport of these dogs. The bill would require these policies to be submitted to, and approved by, the local emergency medical services agency.

Existing law requires emergency services and care to be provided to any person requesting the services or care, as specified. Existing law authorizes an emergency responder to provide basic first aid to dogs and cats, as specified, and exempts from civil liability specified emergency personnel who, in good faith and not for compensation, render emergency medical or nonmedical care, including to dogs and cats, at the scene of an emergency, as specified, resulting from any act or omission.

This bill would authorize an emergency responder to provide basic first aid to a police canine or search and rescue dog that is injured in the line of duty while the police canine or search and rescue dog is being transported to a veterinary clinic or similar facility, and would exempt that person from civil or criminal liability if they act in good faith and not for compensation to provide basic first aid to an injured police canine or search and rescue dog while the police canine or search and rescue dog is being transported to a veterinary clinic or similar facility, subject to a specified limitation.

Existing law makes it unlawful for any person to practice veterinary medicine unless the person holds a valid license, as specified, subject to specified exemptions, including that an emergency responder may provide basic first aid to dogs and cats, as defined, to the extent that the provision of that care is not prohibited by the responder's employer.

This bill would make clarifying changes to those provisions authorizing an emergency provider to provide basic first aid to dogs and cats.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

**SECTION 1.** Section 1797.10 is added to the Health and Safety Code, to read:

**1797.10.** (a) For the purposes of this section, "police canine" means a canine that is owned, or the service of which is employed, by a state or local law enforcement agency, a correctional agency, a fire department, a special fire district, or the State Fire Marshal for the principal purpose of aiding in the detection of criminal activity, flammable materials, or missing persons, the enforcement of laws, the investigation of fires, or the apprehension of offenders.

(b) For the purposes of this section, "search and rescue dog" has the same meaning as in Section 54.25 of the Civil Code.

(c) A person licensed to operate an ambulance pursuant to Section 2510 of the Vehicle Code or a person who operates ambulances owned or operated by a fire department of a federally recognized Indian tribe may transport a police canine or a search and rescue dog that is injured in the line of duty to a veterinary clinic or similar facility if there is no other person requiring medical attention or transport at that time. To the extent feasible, the handler of the police canine or search and rescue dog shall accompany the animal during transport to maintain control of the animal during transport.

(d) (1) Notwithstanding Section 4825 of the Business and Professions Code, an emergency responder may provide basic first aid to a police canine or search and rescue dog that is injured in the line of duty while the police canine or search and rescue dog is being transported to a veterinary clinic or similar facility.

(2) An emergency responder who acts in good faith and not for compensation to provide basic first aid to an injured police canine or search and rescue dog while the police canine or search and rescue dog is being transported to a veterinary clinic or similar facility is not subject to criminal or civil liability for any injury to the canine that occurs during the emergency transportation or administration of medical care described in this section, subject to the limitation described in paragraph (3).

(3) This subdivision does not apply to an act or omission by an emergency responder that constitutes gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct.

(4) An emergency responder who provides basic first aid to an injured police canine or search and rescue dog while the police canine or search and rescue dog is being transported to a veterinary clinic or similar facility does not render the transportation or care "for compensation" for the purpose of this section, notwithstanding their receipt of compensation for other services as a result of their employment.

(e) This section does not require an ambulance to transport, or an emergency responder to provide first aid to, a police canine or search and rescue dog. A contract for the provision of emergency medical response or transport shall not contain, as a condition of award, a requirement to provide care or transport to police canines or search and rescue dogs.

(f) (1) An ambulance operator that elects to provide transport to police canines or search and rescue dogs pursuant to this section shall develop policies regarding the transport of canines, including, but not limited to, what additional equipment should be carried by the ambulance and any necessary decontamination procedures following the transport of the animal before returning the ambulance to human patient use. The policies shall be submitted to, and approved by, the local emergency medical services agency.

(2) This subdivision does not apply to ambulances owned or operated by a fire department of a federally recognized Indian tribe.

**SEC. 2.** Section 1799.109 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

**1799.109.** (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) California residents receive comfort and unconditional love on a daily basis from their household pets, particularly dogs and cats.

(2) California residents benefit from the special support, comfort, guidance, companionship, and therapy provided by dogs and cats.

(3) Pets provide critical support to many California residents with disabilities.

(4) Pets provide assistance and aid in the official duties of military personnel, peace officers, law enforcement agencies, fire departments, and search-and-rescue agencies.

(5) In enacting this section, it is the intent of the Legislature to authorize emergency responders to provide, on a voluntary basis, basic first aid to dogs and cats without exposure to criminal prosecution or professional discipline for the unlawful

practice of veterinary medicine.

(b) An emergency responder may provide basic first aid to dogs and cats to the extent that the provision of that care is not prohibited by the responder's employer, and the responder shall not be subject to criminal prosecution for a violation of any provision of Chapter 11 (commencing with Section 4800) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code resulting from the provision of care described in this subdivision.

(c) Civil liability for a person who is not a veterinarian who provides care to a pet or other domesticated animal during an emergency is governed by the following:

(1) Subdivision (a) of Section 1799.102 governs care provided by an emergency responder, or law enforcement and emergency personnel specified in this chapter.

(2) Subdivision (b) of Section 1799.102 governs care provided by any person other than an individual described in paragraph (1).

(d) Notwithstanding any other law, this section does not impose a duty or obligation upon an emergency responder or any other person to transport or provide care to an injured pet or other domesticated animal during an emergency.

(e) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Cat" means a small domesticated feline animal that is kept as a pet. "Cat" does not include nondomesticated wild animals.

(2) "Dog" means a domesticated canine animal owned for companionship, service, therapeutic, or assistance purposes.

(3) "Emergency responder" means a person who is certified or licensed to provide emergency medical services.

(4) "Employer" means an entity or organization that employs or enlists the services of an emergency responder.

(5) "Basic first aid to dogs and cats" means providing immediate medical care to a dog or cat by an emergency responder, in an emergency situation to which the emergency responder is responding, that is intended to stabilize the dog or cat so that the dog or cat can be transported by the owner as soon as practical to a veterinarian for treatment and which is provided through the following means:

(A) Administering oxygen.

(B) Managing ventilation by mask.

(C) Manually clearing the upper airway, not including tracheal intubation or surgical procedures.

(D) Controlling hemorrhage with direct pressure.

(E) Bandaging for the purpose of stopping bleeding.

(f) This section does not require or authorize the provision of emergency services to dogs or cats in response to a telephone call to the 911 emergency system and is not a basis for liability for the failure to provide emergency services to dogs or cats in response to a telephone call to the 911 emergency system.