

**Veterinary Council of India
Standard of Professional Conduct,
Etiquette & Code of Ethics for Veterinary
Practitioners Regulations, 1992**



VETERINARY COUNCIL OF INDIA

(Statutory Body Constituted under an Act of Parliament, 1984)
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VETERINARY COUNCIL OF INDIA

Notification

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G.S.R. 395(E). - In exercise of the powers conferred by section 66 read with section 31 of Indian Veterinary Council Act, 1984 (52 of 1984) the Veterinary Council of India, with previous approval of the Central Government, hereby makes the following regulations, namely :-

1. Short title and commencement. -

- (1)** These regulations may be called, the Veterinary Council of India (Standard of Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Code of Ethics, for Veterinary Practitioners) Regulations, 1992
- (2)** They shall come into force on the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

2. Definitions -. (1) In these regulations, unless the context otherwise require. -

- (a)** 'Veterinary' means a registered veterinary practitioner as defined in the Act.
- (b)** 'Act' means the Indian Veterinary Council Act, 1984(52 of 1984).
- (c)** 'Regulations' means the Standard of Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Code of Ethics Regulations. This definition limits its meaning to the terms used within the said regulations.
- (d)** 'Patient' shall mean an animal, bird or a group of them being treated or managed or advised to be treated or managed by a veterinarian.
- (e)** 'Client' means the legal owner of the patient or his representative or the person or persons directly assigned responsibility of the patient.
- (f)** 'Profession' means veterinary profession covering all its branches, namely, animal health, animal production and technology, and shall include any sister profession wherein veterinary service is extended or is sought or is made use of, namely, laboratory animal medicine, animal experimentation and vaccine production.

3. Declaration and oath by a Veterinarian. - Being admitted to the profession of veterinary medicine, I solemnly swear to use my scientific knowledge and skills for the benefit of society through the protection of animal health, the relief of animal suffering, the conservation of livestock resources, the promotion of public health, and the advancement of knowledge in veterinary science.

I shall Practice my profession conscientiously, with dignity, and in keeping with the principles of veterinary medical ethics.

I accept as a lifelong obligation the continuous improvement of my professional knowledge and competence.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

4. Character of the veterinarian.- The primary object of the veterinary profession is to render service to humanity by facilitating better animal production, ensuring veterinary public health as also caring for the sick animals and alleviating their suffering; financial reward is always a subordinate consideration. Whosoever chooses the profession, assumes the obligation to conduct oneself in accordance with the noble ideals of serving the dumb and mute creatures. The veterinarian shall be an upright person and shall be sincere and diligent in caring for the sick and managing the healthy animals. He/she shall be modest, sober, and prompt in discharging his/her duties.

He/She shall conduct himself/herself with propriety in his/her profession and in all actions of his/her life.

5. Standards of character and morals.- The veterinary profession expects from its members the highest level of character and morals. Every veterinarian owes to the profession and the public a duty to achieve such a level. It shall be incumbent on veterinarians to be temperate in all matters of practice of the profession and to exercise clear and vigorous application of mind.

6. Veterinarian's responsibility.- A veterinarian shall merit the trust and confidence of his/her clients, rendering their animals full measure of service with devotion. The honoured ideals imply that responsibilities of a veterinarian extend not only to one client and the animals he brings but also to the entire society.

7. Advertising.- Solicitation of clients by a veterinarian directly or indirectly through an advertisement in news papers, circular cards,

placards, or handbills in a manner projecting himself/herself to be in a position of superiority which he/she himself/herself has not achieved, is unethical.

A veterinarian should not make use of or let others make use of him/her or his/her name as a subject of any form or manner of advertising or publicity through lay channels which shall be of such a character as to invite attention to him/her or his/her professional position or skill or as would ordinarily result in his/her self-aggrandisement; provided that a practitioner is permitted formal announcement in press about the following matters namely :

- (1) starting of his/her practice,
- (2) change of type of practice,
- (3) change of address,
- (4) temporary absence from duty,
- (5) resumption of practice,
- (6) succeeding to another's practice.

He/She shall further not advertise directly or indirectly through price lists or publicity materials of manufacturing firms or traders with whom he/she may be connected in any capacity, nor shall he/she publish cases, operations or letters of thanks from patients in non-professional newspapers or journals; provided that it shall be permissible for him/her to publish his/her name in connection with a technical expert's report or publication in a professional journal.

8. Fee for professional service.- A veterinarian engaged in practice/advisory service/consultancy, shall limit the source of his/her income to the fee received for services rendered to the client. Remuneration received for such services shall be in the form and amount specifically announced to the client at the time the service is rendered.

9. Patent and Copyrights.- A Veterinarian may patent surgical instruments, appliances and medicine or copyright applications of methods and procedure.

10. Running an Open Shop.- (Dispensing of drugs and appliances by veterinarians).

A veterinarian shall not run an open shop for sale of medicine for dispensing prescriptions by doctors other than himself.

11. Rebates, gifts and commissions.- A veterinarian shall not give, solicit or receive nor shall he/she offer to give, solicit or receive, any gift, gratuity, commission or bonus in consideration for the referring or procuring of, any client for specialist/expert service or exclusive treatment advice thereof; nor shall he/she receive any commission or other benefit from a professional colleague, trader of medicine or appliances or from a technologist.

12. Secret Remedies.- The prescribing or dispensing by a veterinarian of secret medicines or other secret remedial agents, of which he/she does not know the composition or the manufacture, or promotion of their use, is unethical.

13. Evasion of Legal Restrictions.- A veterinarian shall observe the laws of the country in regulating the practice of veterinary medicine and will not assist others to evade such laws. He/She should co-operate in the observance and enforcement of sanitary laws and regulations in the interest of public health. A veterinarian shall observe the provisions of the State Acts like Drugs Act, Pharmacy Act, Rules and Regulations made by the Central Government, State Governments or Local Self Governments and Administrative Bodies for protection and promotion of veterinary public health.

DUTIES OF VETERINARIANS TO THEIR CLIENTS AND PATIENTS

14. Obligation to the patient.- Though a veterinarian is not bound to treat cases of each and every one asking for his/her service, except in emergencies, he/she shall for the sake of humanity and the noble tradition of the profession, not only be ever ready to respond to the need of the sick and injured animals/birds, but shall also be mindful of the high character of his/her mission and the responsibility he/she incurs in the discharge of his/her professional duties.

15. Patient not to be neglected.- A veterinarian is free to choose whom he/she will serve, provided that he/she shall respond to any request for his/her assistance in an emergency or whenever temperate public opinion expects the service.

Once having undertaken a case, a veterinarian shall not neglect the patient nor shall he/she withdraw from the case without giving notice to the client sufficiently in advance, to allow him secure another professional veterinarian.

16. Termination of service.- (a) A veterinarian shall withdraw his/her service under following valid reasons :-

- (i) Where he/she finds another veterinarian in attendance.
- (ii) Where remedies/advice other than those prescribed by him/her are being used.
- (iii) Where his/her remedies/advice and instructions are refused.
- (iv) Where he/she feels that the illness or the need of his/her service is an imposture and that he/she is being made a party to a false pretence.
- (v) Where a client is resorting to the use of intoxicating drugs, means of quackery or witchcraft against medical advice; and
- (vi) Where complete information/history concerning the fact and circumstances of the case are not supplied by a client.

(b) The discovery that the malady is incurable/the client's problems are unsolvable, is no excuse to discontinue attendance by a veterinarian as long as his/her desire the service.

17. Act of negligence.- (1) No veterinarian shall willfully commit an act of negligence that may deprive patient of the care that is absolutely necessary.

- (2) A veterinarian is expected to show such diligence and skill in service as would be expected of another veterinarian of similar qualifications, experience and attainments.
- (3) His/Her acts of commission or omission shall not be judged by any non-veterinary standards, but as those expected from a veterinarian of his/her training, standing and experience.
- (4) A veterinarian shall use any drug prepared under standard pharmacological principles and shall adopt all 'necessary preparations/precautions, like sterilization and verification of doses as are normally prescribed for that drug.

18. Behaviour to patients.-

The demeanour of a veterinarian towards his/her patient shall always be kind, tender and full of patience. Every patient shall be treated with attention, consideration and concentration.

19. Visit.-

Notwithstanding the fact that a veterinarian is not bound to visit his/her patient/client, he/she shall make it at the indicated hour, once he/she had committed to do so.

20. Prognosis.

- (a) A veterinarian shall neither exaggerate nor minimise the gravity of a patient's condition. He/she shall ensure that the legal owner of the patient has such knowledge of the patient's condition as will serve the best interest of the patient and its owner (client).
- (b) In case of dangerous manifestations, or when grave and highly communicable diseases are encountered he shall not fail to inform the client and those to whom the disease can be of potent danger.

DUTIES OF VETERINARIANS TO THE PROFESSION

21. Upholding the honour of the profession.

A veterinarian is expected to uphold the dignity and honour of his profession.

22. Membership of societies.

For the advancement of his/her profession a veterinarian may affiliate himself/herself with professional societies and contribute his/her time, means and energy to their progress, so that they may represent and promote the ideals of the profession better.

23. Safeguarding the profession.

Every veterinarian shall laid in safeguarding the profession against admission to it of those who are deficient in moral character or education. He/she should not employ in connection with his/her professional practice any unqualified personnel to treat or perform operation upon patients.

24. Exposure of unethical conduct.

Exposure of unethical conduct on the part of any member of the profession shall be done without fear of favour. The incompetent, corrupt, dishonest or unethical conduct on the part of any member of the profession shall be discouraged at any cost.

25. Appointment of substitute.

Whenever a veterinarian (hereinafter mentioned as absent veterinarian) requires an appointment to attend clients during his absence from practice, the appointment requires an appointment. The veterinarian shall give utmost consideration to the interest and reputation of the 'absent' veterinarian. He/she shall not charge either the patient or the absent veterinarian or his/her services, except in case of special arrangement between them. All such patients shall be restored to the care of the absent veterinarian upon his/her return.

26. Professional services of veterinarians to one another.

(1) There is no rule that a veterinarian shall not charge another veterinarian or a member of a sister profession for service rendered. But a veterinarian shall consider it a pleasure and privilege to render gratuitous service to his/her professional brethren, if they are in his/her vicinity, or to a veterinary student.

(2) When a veterinarian is called from a distance to attend to a case of a fellow veterinarian or a member of a sister profession reimbursement shall be made for travelling and other incidental expenses.

(3) A veterinarian called in any emergency to visit a patient under the care of another veterinarian, shall when the emergency is over, retire in favour of the latter; but shall be entitled to charge the client for his/her services.

(4) When a veterinarian is called to attend to a patient under the care of another veterinarian, he/she shall, while ascertaining history, go through the treatment followed if any. However, it is unethical that his information be used to malign or instigate against, directly or indirectly, the veterinarian who happened to attend on the patient previously. When a veterinarian sees a patient at the request of another veterinarian, it shall be the duty of the first veterinarian to write a letter to the veterinarian making the request stating his/her opinion of the case with the modes of treatment he/she thinks proper to be adopted.

27. (1) If a veterinarian is engaged to attend on a patient of dystokia or a similar distress he/she shall do so. Refusal to do so under excuse of

another engagement is unethical except when he/she is already engaged in similar or another serious case(s).

(2) When a veterinarian engaged to attend a serious case is absent and another veterinarian is sent for, the latter shall be entitled to legitimate fees; provided that he/she shall secure the client's consent to withdraw on arrival of the former at a mutually consented or logical phase.

28. When it becomes the duty of a veterinarian occupying an official position to see and report on an illness or injury or any other professional problems concerning a patient, he/she shall do so, but communicate to the veterinarian in attendance, so as to give him/her an option to be present. The former shall avoid remarks on the diagnosis or treatment that has been adopted. This does not prevent him/her from discussing the matter with the later in isolation.

DUTY OF PRACTITIONERS IN CONSULTATION

29. Consultation shall be encouraged.

In case of serious illness/doubtful or difficult conditions, a veterinarian shall always request consultation; he/she shall also do so in the case of major surgical interventions, out break of herd diseases, poisoning, endemics or undiagnosible situations.

30. Punctuality in consultations.

Punctuality shall be observed by a veterinarian in attending a consultation. If a consultant veterinarian does not arrive within reasonable time, keeping in view the distance he/she to travel and other relevant factors the consulting veterinarian shall be at liberty to see the patient; provided that he/she shall leave his/her conclusion in writing in a closing envelope. The same rule is applicable if the consulting veterinarian fails to turn up in time.

31. Patient referred to another veterinarian.

(1) When a patient is referred to another veterinarian, a statement of the history, observation, clinical and laboratory examination as well as the tentative treatments undertaken shall be given.

(2) On receipt of the above statement the veterinarian receiving the referred case shall communicate his/her opinion to the attending veterinarian and either shall continue the treatment as per his/her opinion or return the case along with his/her opinion communicated.

32. Consultation for patient's benefit.

In every consultation, the benefit of the patient shall be of prime importance. It should not be done with an ulterior motive of evasion of responsibilities or on monetary considerations.

33. Conduct of consultation.

(1) In consultation there shall be no place for insincerity, rivalry or envy. All due respect shall be shown to the veterinarian in charge of the case and no statement or remark shall be made which would impair the confidence reposed in him/her by the client. For this purpose no such discussion shall, therefore, be made before the client.

(2) All statements to the client shall be made in the presence of consulting veterinarian, except as otherwise agreed. Announcement to the client also shall be made by the consulting veterinarian to the extent possible.

(3) Difference of opinion shall not be divulged unless both feel that it would be in the interest of the patient or dignity of the profession.

(4) It shall be open to the client to take further advice and the consulting veterinarian with the consent of the client may consult yet another veterinarian, the rules of ethics remaining the same.

34. Cessation of consultation.

Attendance of consulting veterinarian shall cease when consultation is concluded; unless another appointment is arranged by the attending veterinarian.

35. Treatment after consultation.

(1) No decision shall restrain the attending veterinarian from making such subsequent variation in the treatment as any unexpected change or development may demand; provided that at the next consultation, reasons for variations are stated.

(2) The same privilege, with its obligations, belongs to the consultant when sent for in an emergency during the absence of attending veterinarian. The attending veterinarian may prescribe at any time; but the consultant only in case of emergency or instant need. All treatments by both shall be stated to each other.

36. Consultant not to take charge of the case.

When a consultant veterinarian is called upon to be consulted, none but the rarest and most exceptional circumstances shall justify the consultant taking charge of the case. He must not do merely on solicitation of the client or his representative.

37. Bar on consulting non-registered veterinary practitioners.

No veterinarian shall have consultation with a veterinary practitioner who is not registered.

DUTIES OF VETERINARIANS TO THE PUBLIC

38. Veterinarian as citizen.

Veterinarians as good citizens possessed of special training, shall advise concerning the health and husbandry of the animals, in the localities wherein they dwell. They shall play their part in enforcing the laws of the community (not favouring any communal overtones or prejudices) and in substantiating the institutions that advance the interests of humanity. They shall cooperate with the authorities in the observance and enforcement of sanitary laws and the laws relating to drugs poisons and pharmacy, made for the protection of health.

39. Public health.

A veterinarian engaged in public health work shall enlighten the public concerning quarantine regulations and measures for the prevention of epizootic, zoonotic and food borne diseases and intoxications and communicable diseases. At all times, the veterinarians shall notify the respective authorities of every case of communicable diseases under their care in accordance with the laws, rules and regulations of the authorities. When an epidemic prevails, the veterinarian shall continue his/her labour without regard to the risk to his/her own health. He/she shall endeavour to ensure hygienic handling of animal products and wastes thereof and educate the public of food-borne diseases and intoxications.

40. Livestock production and technology.

A veterinarian shall strive for the betterment of animal production through timely advice/propaganda on scientific management involving economically viable and hygienic housing, adoption of scientific breeding schedule, disease prevention of routines, reproductive health monitoring, hygienic and systematic care before, at and following parturition, care of

new born, hygienic collection of farm products and proper disposal of animal products and wastes thereof

He/She should strive to educate the public and paraveterinary staff personnel regarding timely insemination and aseptic handling during A.I. and discourage the unscientific unhygienic inseminations.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

41. The Veterinary Council of India brings to the notice of the registered veterinary practitioners the following :

In matters regarding offences and form of professional misconduct, which may be brought before the appropriate Veterinary Council for disciplinary action, in view of the authority conferred by section 31 of the Act, the appropriate Veterinary Councils may award such punishments as deemed necessary or may direct the removal altogether, or for a specific period, from the register, the name of any registered veterinary practitioner, who has been convicted of any such offence as implies in the opinion of the Veterinary Council(s), a defect of character or who after an enquiry at which opportunity has been given to such registered veterinary practitioners to be heard in person or through a pleader, has been held by the appropriate Veterinary Council to have been guilty of serious professional misconduct. The appropriate Veterinary Council may also direct that any name so removed shall be restored.

It must be clearly understood that the instances of offences and of professional misconduct which are given do not constitute and are not intended to constitute a complete list of the infamous acts which may be punished by erasure from the register and that by issuing this notice the Veterinary Council of India and/or State Veterinary Council(s) is/are in no way precluded from considering and dealing with any professional misconduct on the part of a registered veterinary practitioner. Circumstances may and do arise from time to time in relation to which may occur questions of professional misconduct which do not come within any of these categories. Every care should be taken that the code is not violation in letter or spirit. In such instance, as in all others the Veterinary Council of India and/or State Veterinary Council(s) has/have to consider and decide upon the facts brought before the Veterinary Council of India and/or State Veterinary Council(s).

42. Professional Misconduct

The following actions shall constitute professional misconduct :

1. Improper conduct with a patient or maintaining an improper association with a client.

2. Conviction by a Court of law of offences involving moral turpitude.

3. Tampering with or falsely providing professional certificates, reports and other documents :- The registered veterinary practitioners are in certain cases bound by law to give or may from time to time be called upon or requested to give signed certificates, reports and other documents of kindred character by courts, administrative offices, banks as part of veterinary service. (See section 30 of the Act).

(1) Notwithstanding the existence of other similar and/or kindred documents such documents shall include :-

(a) A vaccination certificate for licensing of pets.

(b) A vaccination certificate for transport across border from one state to another.

(c) A vaccination certificate for export of animals.

(d) A soundness certificate for a horse or health certificate for cattle for the purpose of insurance, registration, etc.

(e) A certificate indicating results of test (diagnostic) like tuberculin test.

(f) Post-mortem reports in vetrolegal cases, for purpose of insurance claims etc.

(g) Trauma certificate indicating the extent and nature of damage and/or deterioration, in veteo legal cases involving accidents, cruelty or vindication.

(h) Birth certificated required at times for purposes of insurance, registrations, loans etc.

(i) A certificate indicating, reproductive defects, diseases and other conditions rendering an animal uneconomic (fit for culling).

(j) A certificate for euthanasia where treatment is unlikely to be rewarding and; a certificate of performance of euthanasia.

- (k) Quarantine clearance certificate for having cleared quarantine at places of disembarkation of animals/birds/livestock products.
- (2) Any registered veterinary practitioner who shall be proved to have signed or given under his/her name and authority any such certificate, report or document of a kindred character which is untrue, misleading or improperly relating to the several matters, some of which are specified above, is liable to have his/her name erased from the Indian Veterinary Practitioners' Register.
- (3) A registered veterinary practitioner shall maintain a Register of Veterinary Medical Certificates giving full details of certificates issued.
- (4) When issuing such a certificate the identification mark of the patient, name or number, if any, age and other details including owner's name and keep a copy of the Certificate for record with him. The client's signature and/or thumb impression and declaration that he is genuine owner of the patient or is his authorised representative shall invariably be obtained.
4. Contravention of the provisions of law relating to drugs and regulations made thereunder.
5. Selling a drug or poison regulated by law to the public or his/her clients, save as provided by that law.
6. Performing, or enabling an unqualified person to perform, any illegal operation for which there is no medical, surgical or psychological indication.
7. Affixing a signboard on a chemist's shop or in places where the veterinarian does not reside or work. This should not be construed to mean announcement, boards or direction indicators.
8. While displaying a board or a name plate, to write anything other than his/her name, qualifications obtained from a University or a statutory body, titles and names of his/her speciality if any (such name being the content of his/her prescription papers), and the registration number.
9. Before euthanasia or before performing an operation not obtaining in writing the consent from the client.

10. Using touts or agents for procuring patients.

43. Disciplinary Committees

There shall be a Disciplinary Committee charged with the duty of considering and determining :-

- (a) Any case of indiscipline referred to them by State Veterinary Council or appeal by aggrieved registered veterinary practitioners.**
- (b) Any other case of which the Disciplinary Committee has cognizance.**

44. The State Veterinary Council shall investigate, through Committee(s)/Sub Committee(s) (by fact-finding and receiving complaints), regarding :-

- (a) Registered veterinary practitioners being convicted of any criminal offence which in the opinion of the committee renders unfit to practise veterinary profession.**
- (b) any such veterinarian detected/judged to have been guilty of disgraceful conduct in any professional respect.**
- (c) any person whose name is fraudulently entered in the register.**

45. The State Veterinary Council(s) shall on receipt of complaints regarding any unregistered individual and individuals who while rendering minor veterinary services described under sub-section (b) of section 30 of the act. Undertake unsupervised treatment/veterinary service assuming himself/herself to be a veterinarian, shall make necessary investigations and advise the concerned State government to take appropriate action or shall themselves initiate action under the law.

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