

Montana Board of Veterinary Medicine

COVID-19 FAQ

(FAQ updated 5/4/20)

This FAQ is specific to frequently asked questions from licensees and the public in the context of the COVID-19 situation. This FAQ will be updated on an as-needed basis. Check back periodically for updates. If you have a question regarding COVID-19 and Board of Veterinary Medicine licensing that is not on this FAQ you can e-mail department staff directly at dlibsdrvvet@mt.gov.

If you have general questions pertaining to licensure and the board that are not specifically related to the COVID-19 situation we recommend you review the board website at www.vet.mt.gov. For questions that are not specifically related to the COVID-19 situation you can continue to e-mail customer service staff at dlibsdrvhelp@mt.gov.

General Message Concerning the Governor's Directives

The Governor's Stay-at-Home Directive is no longer in effect and Montana is currently in Phase 1 Reopening.

Note that neither the department nor the board offer interpretation of the Governor's Directives. If you are a licensee and have questions about providing services or operating your business appropriately under the Governor's Directives during the COVID-19 declared emergency, please visit the [Governor's Coronavirus Task Force Joint Information Center](#) website and the [Phase One Reopening FAQs](#) or call 1-888-333-0461.

Question 1:

I am currently licensed as a veterinarian under the Montana Board Veterinary Medicine. Am I allowed to practice using telehealth/telemedicine in order to provide services to clients located in Montana?

Response 1:

The board does not specifically define telehealth/telemedicine which is a method of delivery of services. As a veterinarian licensed under this board you are held to all the board's laws, including the definition of a veterinary/client/patient/relationship in [ARM 24.225.301](#)(5) when you are engaging in the practice of veterinary medicine and delivering services.

[ARM 24.225.301](#)(5) "Veterinarian/client/patient relationship" exists when all of the following conditions have been met:

(a) the veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making clinical judgments regarding the health of the animal(s) and the need for medical treatment, and the client has agreed to follow the veterinarian's instructions;

(b) the veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animal(s) to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal(s). This means that the veterinarian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal(s) by:

(i) virtue of an examination of the animal(s); or

(ii) medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal(s) are kept; and

(c) the veterinarian is available for follow-up evaluation in the event of adverse reactions or failure of the treatment regimen.

Question 2:

Has the board changed any of its laws pertaining to its definition of VCPR? Has the federal definition of VCPR changed in order to facilitate telehealth/telemedicine? Specifically, are there changes to the FDA requirement for animal examination and premises visit relevant to the FDA regulations governing Extralabel Drug Use in Animals and Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) drugs?

Response 2:

The board has not changed its definition of VCPR which does not have specific requirements regarding physical examination, just "examination" (see Question/Response #1 for Montana's definition of VCPR). However, licensees must still follow all applicable state and federal laws pertaining to the practice of veterinary medicine, including state and federal drug laws.

With that said, the FDA sent out a press release on 3/24/20, which in part reads: "... In order to help veterinarians utilize telemedicine to address animal health needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, the FDA generally does not intend to enforce the animal examination and premises visit portion of the VCPR requirements relevant to the FDA regulations governing Extralabel Drug Use in Animals and Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) drugs. This will allow veterinarians to prescribe drugs in an extralabel manner or authorize the use of VFD drugs without direct examination of or making visits to their patients, which will limit human-to-human interaction and potential spread of COVID-19 in the community..."

For further information from the FDA on this issue and its increased flexibility see the [3/24/20 FDA press release concerning veterinary telemedicine](#). Generally speaking, other FDA press releases which may or may not be relevant to veterinarians can be found on its [newsroom page](#).

Question 3:

I am currently licensed as a veterinarian under the Montana Board Veterinary Medicine and may be engaging in telehealth/telemedicine for the first time. Does the board have any training requirements or recommend any particular types of training so I have more information on how to engage with clients and patients while complying with all of the laws under this board?

Response 3:

Staff and the board cannot give legal advice so we cannot recommend nor endorse any particular trainings or protocols/best practices. As stated in Response #1, the board does not specifically define telemedicine/telehealth and you are held to all the boards statutes and rules, including the definition of "VCPR" when engaging in the practice of veterinary medicine.

You might try contacting your state and/or national professional association(s) to see if they have any recommendations regarding training and best practices (e.g. [AVMA](#), [MVMA](#), etc.). As a licensee you are still held not only to the regulations cited in Response #1, but also all the other [statutes](#) and [rules](#) including unprofessional conduct, privacy, etc. regardless of the method you are using to deliver those services. If recommendations from other organizations conflict with Montana's laws you must adhere to Montana's laws.

Question 4:

I am licensed as a veterinarian in another jurisdiction. Can I practice in Montana without obtaining a Montana license?

Response 4:

Under [37-18-104\(1\)\(c\)](#), MCA, veterinarians licensed and in good standing in another jurisdiction are allowed to practice for three days without a license as defined under the board's occasional case exemption, ARM 24.225.301(3): "... veterinarian actively licensed and in good standing in another state or jurisdiction who practices veterinary medicine in this state no more than three days in any calendar year who is supervised by a veterinarian licensed in this state." It is an exemption, so no registration is required. Also see Question/Response #5.

Question 5:

I read your response to Question #4. Is there a way to obtain some type of temporary or emergency license as a veterinarian to provide services to clients who are located in Montana while under the states of emergency declared federally and in Montana?

Response 5:

As authorized by 10-3-118 MCA, and Governor Steve Bullock's directive, The Montana Department of Labor and Industry has implemented a COVID-19 emergency healthcare registration for out-of-state healthcare licensees requesting to actively work in Montana for a defined period of time. For more information and to register visit <http://bsd.dli.mt.gov/licensee-covid-19>. This registration will only enable people to work in Montana when they have registered appropriately with the department and have been **granted** a registration.

The registration is only valid until the current emergency directives are rescinded. If you are looking to work in Montana longer than the current state of emergency is in effect you must be licensed in Montana or fall under one of the exemptions listed in [37-18-104](#), MCA, including but

not limited to the occasional case exemption described in Question/Response #3. Information on applying for a Montana license can be found in Question/Response #11.

Question 6:

I was previously licensed as a veterinarian in Montana but my license has expired or terminated (i.e. expired more than two years ago). Can I get an emergency permit to practice in Montana during the state of emergency without applying for and being granted a new license through the normal licensing process?

Response 6:

If you are licensed in another state you may apply for an emergency healthcare registration as described in Question/Response #5 which will only be valid for the period of time during which Montana is under a declared state of emergency.

If your Montana license has expired and you wish to become licensed again you may choose to renew by renewing through the normal process and paying all the associated late renewal fees. If your license is terminated (i.e. expired for more than two years) you will need to reapply for a new license using the normal application process, including the application fee. If you apply you can ask department staff to check your old record to see if we still have your transcript and exam results on file since those would not change. You can access your record to renew or apply for a new license through your [online eBiz account](#).

Question 7:

I am licensed as veterinary technician in a jurisdiction(s) that licenses veterinary technicians. Can I engage in practice under that license in Montana?

Response 7:

Veterinary technicians are not licensed in Montana. In order to practice veterinary medicine in Montana you must be licensed as a veterinarian or fall under the exemptions listed in [37-18-104, MCA](#). Since veterinary technicians are not licensed in Montana you would be unlicensed support personnel and would need to be supervised by a Montana licensed veterinarian as described in [ARM 24.225.405](#).

Question 8:

Does the board have any recommendations on best practices for disinfectants, procedures that should or should not be performed during the pandemic, use of medical supplies, a fact sheet on the virus, etc.?

Response 8:

Staff and the board cannot give legal advice so we cannot recommend nor endorse any particular trainings or protocols/best practices as this is outside the scope of the board's statutes and rules. You might try contacting your state and/or national professional association(s) to see

if they have any recommendations best practice recommendations and links to other resources (e.g. [AVMA](#), [MVMA](#), etc.).

Question 9:

Are Montana veterinarians considered "essential" under the Governor's Stay-in-Place Directive which took effect on 3/27/20?

Response 9:

The 3/27/20 *Stay-in-Place Directive* is no longer in effect as described in the Governor's 4/22/20 [Directive on Phased Reopening of Montana and Establishing Conditions for Phase One](#) and its associated [Phase One Reopening FAQs](#). If you have questions you should contact the Governor's Office directly as described on page 1 of this FAQ under "General Messages Concerning the Governor's Directives."

Question 10:

Is the Department of Livestock Animal Health Bureau (i.e. state veterinarian's office) still open and conducting business (e.g. import permits, diagnostic laboratory, etc.)?

Response 10:

The [Animal Health Bureau](#) is implementing contingency planning, just like this department and board and all state agencies. However, at this time the bureau is maintaining all of its services, including providing import permits, disease management, bison management, meat, milk, and egg inspection as well as the diagnostic laboratory, so veterinarians should not see any disruption—at least in the short term. We have been told that the Animal Health Bureau also intends to maintain contact with regard to with veterinarians regarding impacts related to its authority through its e-mail distribution list (i.e. MDOL update). For more information from the [Department of Livestock you can visit its COVID-19 webpage](#).

Question 11:

I am applying for a new "regular" Montana license. Will issues related to COVID-19 impact the amount of time it takes me to become licensed?

Response 11:

The department and board recognize that the current COVID-19 pandemic has created discord in the normal application, examination, and licensure process. We are striving to address these concerns and potential roadblocks as quickly as possible; however, please understand that this will not occur overnight. The board must continue its public safety mission while adapting to daily changes occurring from the pandemic. This will take time. Applicants are encouraged to begin their application for licensure and to complete as much of the required information as possible. Applications remain valid for one year under normal circumstances. If you submit your application and an item is missing, our licensing specialist will work with you to complete the application. We do not deny applicants for submitting an incomplete application. By completing

the application's remaining parts, exempting exams, etc., you can get ahead on the licensure process.

[Online applications](#) are always the most efficient application method and allow you to upload your own supplemental forms directly into your application at any time. Paying the fee triggers the beginning of the staff review process. Be aware that to verify authenticity, some documents such as exam results, transcripts, and background checks must be sent to the department directly from the source and cannot be uploaded by the applicant.

View the licensing requirements and application checklists which will assist you with your application process.

- [Veterinarian Licensing Requirements & Application Submission Checklist – veterinarian applicant NOT CURRENTLY licensed out-of-state](#)
- [Veterinarian Licensing Requirements & Application Submission Checklist - veterinarian applicant CURRENTLY licensed out-of-state](#)
- [Certified Euthanasia Technician Licensing Requirements & Application Submission Checklist](#)
- [Certified Euthanasia Agency Licensing Requirements & Application Submission Checklist](#)

Question 12:

I am applying for a license and have completed all requirements except for passing an approved national exam (veterinarians) or required training course and exam (certified euthanasia technicians). Can I be issued a full license without having passed the exam?

Response 12:

Testing centers are beginning to open up with limited appointments across the country for persons wishing to register for the NAVLE. For the most current information, visit the International Council for Veterinary Assessment's (ICVA) [news and updates webpage](#). Additionally, veterinarian applicants who meet all other licensing requirements with the exception of passing the NAVLE can be issued a temporary permit per the criteria described in [ARM 24.225.501](#).

Applicants for certified euthanasia technician should direct questions regarding inability to obtain required training directly to department staff dlibsdhhelp@mt.gov.

Question 13:

I am currently licensed as a [veterinarian/embryo transfer technician/certified euthanasia technician]. Many conferences and training courses are being cancelled or changed to online due to health and safety concerns, etc. What should I do if I cannot meet my annual continuing education (CE) requirements?

Response 13:

The issue of conferences and training courses being cancelled is affecting licensees nationwide in many professions. Based on guidance recently developed by this department for the licensing boards under it (including this one), licensing boards with CE requirements can consider options for extending the period of time licensees have to complete CE and/or the process for granting hardship waivers. Based on circumstances at present, this board will be considering those options at its August 31 board meeting.

There is no need for veterinarians or embryo transfer technicians to apply for a hardship exemption at this time unless they had already intended to do so for non-COVID-19 reasons. Veterinarians and embryo transfer technicians do not renew their licenses until November 1 and the board will be discussing and potentially voting on options at its August 31 board meeting.

Certified euthanasia technicians who are planning to renew their licenses during the current renewal which ends on May 29 should plan to renew as normal ([online renewal through your eBiz account](#) is recommend).

Question 14:

I own pets/animals/livestock. Does the board have any information regarding potential COVID-19 impacts to my pets/animals/livestock?

Question 14:

That question is outside the scope of authority of this board. However, the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration has posted some information to its consumer updates website](#) as has the [Montana Veterinary Medical Association](#) (MVMA) and the [American Veterinary Medical Association](#) (AVMA). You could also contact your veterinarian if you have questions concerning your pet's health.