Minimum Standards for Veterinary Facilities

General structural requirements

23.(1) A veterinary facility at or from which a person practises a veterinary profession shall -

(a) be a permanent structure. (This is not intended to exclude buildings, which are factory produced and site assembled, e.g. a prefabricated building as the word "permanent "relates to the materials used and not the building itself);

(b) have a source of lighting, which is adequate to ensure the completion of a procedure in progress;

(c) in the case of a referral veterinary facility or a veterinary facility where advanced surgical procedures are performed, have an alternate power supply to allow the veterinary facility to function in the event of a power failure and to meet the requirements of local authorities;

(d) have a fire extinguishing apparatus, which meets the requirements of local authorities;

(e) be so constructed as to prevent the escape of an animal and to ensure the effective confinement of animals at all times;

(f) have appropriate equipment, or access thereto, for the effective sterilisation of surgical packs and other equipment;

(g) have adequate storage for sterilised packs and employ acceptable techniques to indicate the effectiveness and expiry of sterilisation;

(h) have facilities and equipment or access thereto for the hygienic disposal of soiled dressings, animal tissue and any other contaminated or unwholesome matter or objects to prevent the contamination of the veterinary facility as well as the environment; and

(i) have equipment to determine the weight of patients adequately.

(2) Subject to any requirements of a local or other authority, a veterinary facility shall consist of -

(a) a reception and office area;

(b) a waiting room for clients with access to toilet facilities; and

(c) one or more examination rooms.
(3) The internal walls and floor surfaces, shelves and tables of a veterinary facility shall be of such a nature that they can be properly cleansed and disinfected so that hygienic conditions can be maintained.

(4) The drainage and washing water of a veterinary facility shall run into an adequate sewer and comply with the requirements of local authorities.

(5) The veterinary facility shall have a direct public entrance.

(6) Provision shall be made at a veterinary facility for the storage and disposal of carcasses in a manner, which will ensure that they will not start to decompose before being disposed of.

(7) Provision shall be made at a veterinary facility for hygienic, insect and rodent free storage of therapeutic and nutritional requirements.

(8) Adequate facilities shall be available for the preparation of food and washing and cleaning of all equipment.

**General procedural requirements**

24.(1) Personnel shall be trained in the basics of aseptic technique.

(2) Personnel responsible for the operation of sophisticated equipment and apparatus shall be adequately trained and available in case of emergencies after hours.

(3) A veterinary professional shall attend to animals accepted into a veterinary facility at least once a day.

(4) The telephone at a number or alternative number that is indicated in an official telephone directory in respect of a veterinary facility shall be answered at all times, and the use of an automatic answering service outside the normal consulting hours shall be permissible for this purpose as long as it states the normal consulting hours of that practice and refers the client to either a telephone number, cell phone number of the veterinary professional on duty or to the address and telephone number of an after hours veterinary facility.

**General requirements at veterinary facilities**

25.(1) A veterinary facility shall have the necessary facilities in order to ensure that -

(a) a diagnostic service, including imaging diagnosis, can be rendered there or access to such a service is readily available;

(b) an emergency and intensive care service can be rendered there;

(c) a laboratory service for its own requirements can be rendered there, which veterinary facility shall have at its disposal routine equipment including at least a
microscope, centrifuge and refractometer, or access to such service;

(d) a pharmacy service for its own requirements can be rendered there, and shall be
maintained as well as administered in accordance with relevant legislation; and

(e) post mortem examinations can be done there.

(2) During the consulting hours specified on a notice board the veterinary facility
shall be manned by a person registered to practise a veterinary profession.

(3) An animal with a contagious disease shall not be hospitalised at a veterinary
facility unless facilities for the isolation thereof exist.

(4) Only routine surgery that is not complicated abdominal, orthopaedic or cardio-
vascular surgery may be performed at a consulting room. If such routine surgery is
performed at a consulting room, the provisions of rule 31(1)(b) shall be complied
with.

Records at veterinary facilities

26.(1) The attending veterinary professional shall maintain records for each animal
or group of animals which are legible, accurate and permit prompt retrieval of
information.

(2) Records shall, where applicable, contain the following information -

(a) client’s identification;

(b) patient name, other forms of identification, as well as the specie, breed, gender
and age;

(c) clinical information;

(d) vaccination record;

(e) special procedures;

(f) diagnosis;

(g) treatment; and

(h) discharge instructions.

(12) Veterinary professionals attending to horses in training registered with the
Jockey Club of Southern Africa shall -

(a) complete a veterinary case sheet in duplicate containing the following information
-
(i) premise identification;
(ii) patient identification;
(iii) diagnosis;
(iv) treatment; and

(b) Retain the original completed case sheet and hand a copy of the case sheet to the person requesting the treatment.

(4) All records including diagnostic images, laboratory and pathology results shall be retained by the principal of the veterinary facility for a period of three years from the patient’s last visit.

(5) Records referred to in Rule 26(4) relating to a complaint, charge or allegation lodged with Council in terms of section 31(1) of the Act shall be presented to Council on request.

(6) Proper security arrangements shall be made to protect medical records from loss, fire, alterations or unauthorised use.

(7) Diagnostic images shall, on request of the owner of a patient or his/her representative, be handed over to such owner or representative, who shall sign a release in exchange for receipt of such records. Provided that a register be kept of the transfer indicating the date thereof as well as the particulars of the owner concerned.

**Diagnostic imaging**

27.(1) Imaging facilities suitable and adequate for the needs of the type of practice or veterinary facility or access thereto shall be provided and be readily available at all times. Operation and maintenance of diagnostic imaging facilities and equipment shall comply with manufacturer stipulations.

(2) Equipment shall be capable of producing images of diagnostic quality appropriate to the range of animals seen in the practice.

(3) Structural requirements for facilities where radiation equipment is installed, as well as safety precautions for the use of this equipment shall comply with the relevant legislation.

(4) An imaging logbook shall be kept listing the identity of animal and owner, numerical number, exposure figures, anatomical position and diagnosis.

(5) A suitable range of cassettes, screens, grids and contrast materials shall be available.

(6) Suitable facilities for the processing, recording, viewing, filing and storage of
diagnostic images shall be available.

(7) Each radiograph shall have a permanent identification legibly exposed in the film emulsion and shall include the identity of animal and owner, practice identity, date, and indication of left or right.

(8) The use of self-adhesive labels for the identification of radiographs is not permissible.

(9) In the absence of a special agreement between the radiographer (veterinary professional) and client, a diagnostic image remains the property of the veterinary professional or the veterinary facility, which originally requested it.

(10) The diagnostic image shall be released immediately upon the request of another veterinary professional, provided he/she has been instructed by the owner to make such a request and furthermore that the expenses incurred in producing the diagnostic images are settled.

(11) Such image shall be returned to the original veterinary professional as soon as possible or, alternatively, at a date agreed upon by prior arrangement.

(12) The client/owner of an animal is entitled to a written report.

**General requirements for anaesthesia**

28.(1) Equipment for anaesthesia and facilities adequate and appropriate for the needs of the relevant practice and veterinary facility shall be provided at all times.

(2) An appropriate range of endotracheal tubes shall be available.

(3) Oxygen shall be available at all times to meet any emergency or other situation.

(4) Proper storage for all explosives shall be provided.

(5) A means to provide artificial ventilation shall be available.

(6) Intravenous fluids, administration sets and drugs for cardiopulmonary resuscitation shall be readily available for use in cases of emergency.

(7) Lock-up facilities shall be available for schedule drugs in accordance with the relevant laws.

(8) Where applicable, equipment for the control of body temperature shall be provided.

(9) Appropriate monitoring equipment shall be available to ensure the safe anaesthesia of all animals.

(10) Anaesthetic equipment shall be adaptable for variation in body weight within the
species range in which it is intended for use.

(11) Active or passive anaesthetic gas scavenging equipment shall be in use.

(12) All animals shall undergo a pre anaesthetic examination.

(13) An anaesthetic logbook shall be kept.

(14) All persons administering anaesthesia must be properly trained in the efficient use of all anaesthetic facilities and equipment.

(15) All anaesthetic equipment shall be properly maintained and serviced at regular intervals.

(16) The monitoring, maintenance and recovery from anaesthesia shall be effected by registered personnel or trained non-registered personnel under supervision of a veterinary professional who must be on the premises. The same person shall not do surgery, monitoring and maintenance of general anaesthesia.

(17) All animals shall be monitored after surgery and not discharged unless adequately recovered from anaesthesia. All animals must be fully conscious and ambulatory before discharging them from a veterinary facility.

(18) Adequately recovered from anaesthesia shall mean -

(a) In canines and felines - until the swallowing reflex of the patient has returned. In addition, in brachycephalic breeds until sternal recumbency can be maintained without assistance.

(b) In equines - until the patient is standing and assistance should be provided during recovery to compensate for physical disabilities.

(c) In ruminants - until sternal recumbency can be maintained without assistance.

(19) Adequate facilities shall be provided for the safe induction and recovery from anaesthesia. In the case of equines, the area to be used during the administration of general anaesthesia and for the recovery from such shall be padded with a material that is impervious and can be easily cleansed and disinfected, and which covers the whole floor area as well as the wall to a height of at least two metres.

(20) The said animal hospital shall be provided with a transportation system to be used in the transportation of animals to and from the area used during induction of general anaesthesia and for the recovery from such, and also the operating room.