

Veterinary Technologist Scope of Practice, Supervision Requirements, AHAs and Individual Competence

Veterinary Technologist Scope of Practice

The scope of practice of Veterinary Technologists is articulated in Sections 2-9-10 through 2-9-12 of the MVMA General By-Law No 1 (<https://www.mvma.ca/legislation-and-by-laws/>). The Veterinary Technologist scope of practice refers to the procedures, actions and processes that a Veterinary Technologist is permitted to perform.

For ease of reference:

Scope of practice under direct supervision

2-9-10 A Practicing Veterinary Technologist Member may, only under direct supervision,

- (a) utilize chemical restraint;
- (b) administer and maintain anesthetic and analgesia;
- (c) intubate an animal;
- (d) euthanize animals using humane and acceptable practices;
- (e) perform dental prophylaxis;
- (f) assist in surgery; and,
- (g) administer enemas

Scope of practice under indirect supervision

2-9-11 A Practicing Veterinary Technologist Member may, only under direct supervision or indirect supervision,

- (a) collect, prepare, and analyze laboratory samples, such as blood samples by venipuncture; fecal samples; urine by free flow, catheterization, or cystocentesis; milk samples; body secretions, abscesses, and visible sores by swabbing; and, skin scrapings;
- (b) administer medication and veterinary biologics (including rabies vaccines) via intramuscular, subcutaneous or intravenous routes or stomach tubing;
- (c) administer and monitor fluid therapy;
- (d) bandage and apply splints;

- (e) take radiographs and ultrasonic images;
- (f) administer laser and ultrasonic therapy;
- (g) perform contrast procedures on the gastrointestinal tract and lower urinary tract;
- (h) express anal sacs internally;
- (i) utilize E.K.G. machines;
- (j) tattoo and microchip animals;
- (k) clean and irrigate external ear canals;
- (l) administer local anesthetic for the purpose of dehorning food animals;
- (m) dehorn food animals;
- (n) remove skin sutures or staples; and,
- (o) perform a final check of dispensed prescription products as per Division 6 of this by-law.

No other scope of practice

2-9-12 Except to the extent set out in this by-law at ss. 2-9-10 and 2-9-11 of this by-law, a Practicing Veterinary Technologist Member may not engage in the practice of veterinary medicine.

Supervision Requirements

Levels of supervision are also defined in the MVMA General By-Law No 1.

For ease of reference:

“Direct supervision” means the direction by a licensed member of another individual who is performing a veterinary medical procedure, where the licensed member is on the premises at which the procedure is being performed;

“Indirect supervision” means the direction by a licensed member of another individual who is performing a veterinary medical procedure, where the licensed member need not be on the premises at which the procedure is being performed but must be at least available to receive and respond to any communications from that individual in a manner and with timeliness that are reasonable given the nature and the circumstances of the procedure;

Other Considerations:

- **Student Veterinary Technologist** - must always practice under the Direct Supervision of a Practicing Veterinarian or Practicing Veterinary Technologist (who is supervised by a Practicing Veterinarian)
- **Restricted Veterinary Technologists**- must always practice under the Direct Supervision of a Practicing Veterinarian

Animal Health Assistants (AHAs)

- All AHAs are required to maintain a permit with the MVMA.
- This is a closed category, meaning that new Animal Health Assistant permits are not issued (and have not been issued for over a decade).
- AHAs have the same scope of practice as a veterinary technologist, **with the exception that AHAs are not allowed to assist in surgery.**
- There are roughly 10 AHA's in Manitoba.

Individual Competence

While each Veterinary Technologist is permitted to engage in the scope of practice as is articulated in the MVMA general By-Law No. 1, each Veterinary Technologist is under a professional obligation to practice solely within their personal competence. Personal competence is not static and can change based on time, experience, level of supervision, status of patient, etc.

Helpful Questions to Ask When Engaging in Practice

When engaging in practice, the following questions may be helpful in determining whether you should engage in a proposed act.

- Am I permitted to engage in the act under sections 2-9-10 or 2-9-11 of the MVMA General By-Law No 1 (exception or assisting in surgery for AHAs)?
- If so, what level of supervision is required?
- What level of supervision is currently in place?
- When did I last engage in the proposed act?
- When did I last engage in the proposed act on the same or similar species?
- Does the patient exhibit behavior (like aggression) that may require a higher level of experience?
- Am I competent to engage in the proposed act on this specific patient?

Questions?

Please feel free to contact the MVMA at mvmainfo@mvma.ca.