

Safety Information Guide for Nova Scotia Veterinary Practice Entities

*An Interpretation of The Occupational Health and Safety Act
and Regulations*



With kind permission from the Nova Scotia Dental Association to utilize their interpreted version of The Occupational Health and Safety Act, so that the Nova Scotia Veterinary Medical Association may edit, adapt, or change as necessary.

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NSVMA Interpretation of The Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations

Disclaimer: This document is an Interpretation of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations. For specific questions and concerns about "the Act", please contact the Department of Labour.

The commentary found in this document is not intended to be an exhaustive interpretation or to constitute legal advice to Association Members. This document is prepared for convenience only, and for accurate reference, the reader should see the official volumes of the legislation.

If you have any concerns about your practice's level of compliance with the Act and the Regulations, you should consider engaging an Occupational Health & Safety consultant.

Introductory History:

On May 17, 1996, the new Occupational Health and Safety Act (The Act) was established to outline the roles of employers and employees in Nova Scotia with regards to workplace safety. This OH&S Act was developed to create a safe work environment for people in Nova Scotia. The OH&S Act applies to all Veterinary Practice Entities (VPEs) in Nova Scotia. The NSVMA has utilized and adapted a valuable document that was developed by the Nova Scotia Dental Association to clarify the veterinarian's role with regards to the Act.

Nova Scotia's Occupational Health and Safety Act is based on the idea that the primary responsibility for occupational health and safety is shared by everyone connected with their workplace — including veterinarians, technicians, assistants, reception workers, and suppliers. This is known as the Internal Responsibility System (IRS). Since some people at the workplace have more power to influence health and safety than others, they bear more responsibility than someone with less power.

The Employer/Owner assumes the ultimate responsibility to meet the regulations in the Act. The Safety Program that is attached should be placed in a binder in your office for easy retrieval by Staff, an OHS Officer and/or the Labour Department. It is the law that VPEs meet the standards set out by the OH&S Act. The Department of Labour Inspectors have the right to inspect your office at any time, within reason. **By law, they do not require your permission to enter your office.**

For specifics, please refer to an original copy of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Note: The Veterinarian may be subject to prosecution for failing to comply with the OH&S Act and/or associated Regulations.

Communicating Your Policy:

Communication of your policy is vital to realizing its benefits. It should be written in clear language and easily understood by all employees. It must be posted in a prominent area in the workplace and made available on request to an employee or to a Department of Labour Occupational Health and Safety Officer.

What Will Make the Policy Work? Putting Your Policy in Place

A key element in making sure that the policy works in your organization is to involve everyone in the process. That means the policy is drafted with input from all levels of the company. Also, your policy should have enough flexibility built in to adapt to the needs of diverse company applications.

To put your policy into effect, make sure that:

- everyone in the workplace is informed about the policy
- everyone understands their roles and responsibilities and accountability is clearly established
- adequate human and financial resources are provided
- a process for setting up and reviewing procedures and programs is established.

Please note: the bullets above represent summary requirements according to the Occupational Health and Safety Act. It should serve as an example only and may be used as a guide to develop a policy and a program to suit your own work environment. If you have any concerns about your practice's level of compliance with the Act and the Regulations, you should consider engaging an Occupational Health & Safety consultant.

What is the Department of Labour's role?

The Occupational Health and Safety Division of the Department of Labour promotes the importance of occupational health and safety, provides support to the people at the workplace as they carry out their occupational health and safety responsibilities and steps in when these responsibilities are not being carried out. However, ultimate responsibility for occupational health and safety remains with the people directly connected with the workplace.

What are the main responsibilities of the Veterinarian?

Veterinarians must take every reasonable precaution to ensure the health and safety of persons at or near the workplace. As an employer, some of your main responsibilities include:

- providing and maintaining equipment with proper safety devices
- providing employees with the training, information and supervision they need to do their jobs safely, including informing employees about any health or safety hazards in the workplace
- making sure employees wear personal protective equipment and know how to use it properly
- establishing a Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (staff and veterinarians) or ensuring that a Health and Safety Representative (staff) is selected where required by legislation
- cooperating with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee or Health and Safety Representative and with Health and Safety Officers from the Department of Labour
- preparing and maintaining an occupational health and safety policy and/or program, where required by legislation. (*A Policy is required when there are 5 or more employees; a Program is required when there are 20 or more employees*)
- preparing a list of hazardous chemicals present in the workplace
- following the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations and making sure the employees follow them
- The Occupational Health and Safety Act and regulations describe your responsibilities in detail, and you are encouraged to read these documents and learn more about what they mean for you and your workplace.

What are the main responsibilities of employees?

Employees must take every reasonable precaution to protect their own health and safety and the health and safety of other people at or near the workplace. As an employee, some of your main responsibilities include:

- reporting anything in the workplace that may be dangerous
- co-operating with your employer and fellow employees to protect health and safety
- wearing personal protective equipment and following safety procedures
- co-operating with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee or Health and Safety Representative and with Health and Safety Officers from the Department of Labour.
- Following the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Regulations

Regardless of the number of employees in your office, you may still need to develop a safety procedure to create a system for safe work. The need should be determined by the Employer and the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

Category 1 - Under 5 employees

Category 2 - 5 to 19 Employees — must comply with Section 27 of The Act

Category 3 - 20 or more — comply with both Section 27 and 28 of The Act

SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE VPE

Category #1 — (less than 5 Employees)

All offices must have an office manual/binder which would include the following:

1. Occupational Health and Safety General Regulations **and** OH&S Act
2. First Aid Regulations – Ensure at least one employee per shift holds a valid emergency first aid certificate.
 - a. Type 2 First Aid Kit (see Appendix 1 at back);
 - b. Type 3 First Aid Kit is required if 20 or more per shift
3. WHMIS Regulations - Training for all employees handling hazardous materials. Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) - updated at least every 3 years; if by electronic means, systems should be tested periodically
4. Violence in the Workplace Regulations – conduct a risk assessment and prepare a violence prevention statement for binder and have it posted
5. Workplace Health and Safety Regulations

The following needs to be **posted** in a prominent place for access by employees (such as the bulletin board on a wall of the lunchroom):

1. Copy of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* must be **posted** in a prominent place or contained in a binder that is easily accessed by employees; or a bookmarked page on a computer, provided every employee has access to a computer and knows how to find the information. (*Note: The electronic storage of information does not apply to the posting of the OH&S Division phone number. It is not a mandatory requirement for posting the Violence in the workplace number.*)
2. Phone Number of Labour Board Occupational Health and Safety Division **posted** in the office -(1- 800-952-2687) (902 -424-5400 Halifax only)
3. Prepare and **post** a Violence Prevention Statement (see Appendix 2 for Sample Statement at back).

Category #2 — (5 to 19 Employees)

Include all criteria in Category 1, plus the following:

1. Occupational Health and Safety Policy – section 27 of the OH&S Act - The employers shall prepare and review at least annually a written occupational health and safety policy. The development of the policy should include discussion with the employees. The policy is to be **posted**.
2. Once an employer has at least 5 employees, a Health and Safety representative is required as per Section 33 of the Act,

Category #3 — (20 or more Employees – The requirements for a Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee is mandatory)

Include all criteria in Category 1 & 2 plus the following:

1. Safety Program (See below) - section 28 of the OH&S Act - The employers must establish and maintain a written Occupational Health and Safety Program in consultation with a committee or representative.

What must an Occupational Health and Safety Program Binder contain?

The Occupational Health and Safety Program Binder must have all the criteria in Category #2, plus the following:

1. Safe Work Practices – a method by which safe work procedures are written/generated to make sure that healthy and safe work practices are used. An evaluation/analysis of work practices is required to determine those procedures.
2. Veterinary Employee Safety Sign-off Sheet – a method of ensuring that employees are trained on how to protect themselves when dealing with health and safety issues and that supervision of employees by the employer is maintained
3. Hazard Assessment Sheets – an Internal system of identifying hazards including (Assessment carried out by Veterinarians and Staff) evaluating/inspecting the work areas for hazards on an annual schedule, a reporting method with someone given the job to ensure that the problem(s) is fixed.
4. Hazard Correction System – a monitoring follow-up and control system for hazards that may be identified in the workplace.
5. Safety Data Sheets – maintain all relevant SDS info.
6. Accident Report Sheets – a system to keep all records concerning health and safety, and any reports of inspectors or orders written by the Department of Labour or test performed on the workplace. This documentation must be made available on request to an employee and/or to a Department of Labour Occupational Health and Safety Officer.
7. Occupational Health and Safety Committee – Establish a Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) in a workplace with 20 or more regularly employed employees. They must maintain minutes of the meetings. The JOHSC must have access to the employer or a representative who can remedy a health and safety problem. Meetings should take place monthly and minutes of meetings should be maintained. According to the OH&S Act, the staff is entitled to be paid regular wages for attending these meetings.
8. Occupational Health and Safety Representative – a representative chosen by the employees.

The Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee is to be established and functioning as required by sections 29, 30 & 31 of the ACT. The JOHSC should establish a written Rules of Procedure.

Note: Due Diligence – It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that all records related to occupational health and safety in the workplace are maintained. Category 2 & 3 – (5 or more employees); as well as ensuring all health and safety risks are identified and managed in a reasonable and responsible manner.

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Veterinary Practice Entity (VPE) Health and Safety Policy

Occupation Health & Safety Division
(toll free: 1-800-952-2687) (Halifax 902-424-5400)

Scope

This policy will apply to the *Veterinary Practice Entity of* _____

Policy

The Veterinary Practice Entity of _____ is committed to providing a healthy and safe work environment for its employees and preventing occupational illness and injury. The following policy on occupational health and safety will be issued to express our commitment.

The VPE Employers are responsible for the health and safety of its employees. They will make every effort to provide a healthy and safe work environment. We are dedicated to the objective of eliminating the possibility of injury and illness.

As a Veterinarian and/or owner, I give you my personal promise to take all reasonable precautions to prevent harm to workers.

Managers and supervisors will be trained and held responsible for ensuring that the employees, under their supervision, follow this policy. They are held accountable for ensuring that employees use safe work practices and receive training to protect their health and safety. Managers and supervisors also have a general responsibility for ensuring the safety of equipment and facility.

The Veterinary Office employers, through all levels of management, will co-operate with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee, or the safety representative and their employees to create a healthy and safe work environment. Co-operation should also be extended to others such as contractors, owners, officers, etc.

The employees of our **VPE** will be required to support this organization's health and safety initiative and to co-operate with the occupational health and safety committee or representative and with others exercising authority under the applicable laws.

It is the duty of each employee to report to the supervisor or manager, as soon as possible, any hazardous condition, injury, accident or illness related to the workplace. Also, employees must protect their health and safety by complying with applicable Acts and Regulations and to follow policies, procedures, rules and instructions as prescribed by our **VPE**.

Our VPE will, where possible, eliminate occupational hazards. If there is a hazard, employees will consider the hierarchy of control, where elimination of the hazard is the top control and the use of personal protective equipment is the bottom control. In between those controls are opportunities to use substitution (replaced with a less hazardous product), engineering controls (these operate automatically, e.g. ventilation), administrative controls (e.g. restricted access to an area where hazard exists). **Your VPE Employer** recognizes the employees' duty to identify hazards and supports and encourages employees to play an active role in identifying hazards and to offer suggestions or ideas to improve the health and safety program.

Signed:

Veterinarian/Owner

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Staff Protection - Zoonosis Control

The safe work practices are designed to protect the veterinary staff.

All blood, saliva and other body fluids must be considered as potentially infectious. To protect yourself you must reduce the number of pathogens, so that a person's normal resistance can prevent infection, and by breaking the cycle of infection and by eliminating cross-contamination. Since medical history and examination cannot reliably identify potential zoonosis risks, infection control procedures should be consistently used for all patients.

1. Each office should appoint an Infection Control Officer and a record of needlestick/percutaneous injuries to staff should be established.
2. Up-to-date immunization status should be maintained for veterinarians and staff with patient related duties. This includes rabies and tetanus. It is recommended that immunization status be known for all diseases as stated. If a staff member refuses to disclose this information, accept the refusal and record it in the employee's file.
3. Hands should be washed with hand soap prior to and immediately after the use of gloves
4. A high temperature wash cycle, with normal bleach concentration, followed by machine drying is recommended for surgical drapes and equipment.
5. Counter tops, working surfaces and operatory furniture, especially if aerosols and or blood spatter will be generated, should be protected by disposal covers and/or disinfected by a suitable liquid
6. Disposable materials should be discarded appropriately. Sharp items, such as needles and scalpel blades, should be placed in puncture resistant containers prior to disposal and discarded according to municipal requirements
7. Proper personal protective wear, such as designated gowns, gloves, eye wear and footwear should be worn while working with all patients suspected of zoonotic diseases such as leptospirosis, lyme, ring worm, parasites, giardia, coccidia, and more.

Policy on Needle Use, Recapping, and Discarding Sharps

1. An injection needle should be capped prior to use.
2. Injection needles should be recapped after use, using approved and accepted safety methods.
3. It is an accepted standard veterinary procedure to employ one needle for multiple subcutaneous, venous, and intramuscular injections of the same patient.
4. All sharps (needles, scalpel blades, etc.) must be discarded in a plastic sealable container. Sharps are to be disposed of properly according to regional municipality regulations.

Needle Stick injuries are a possibility in veterinary medicine, all injuries should be recorded.

Handling Photocopier and Printer Inks

The Ink from photocopier machines and computer printers is hazardous to your health.

1. Use rubber gloves and masks when changing the cartridges.
2. Avoid breathing any ink dust from the photocopier or printer (review safety data sheet – if one exists)

Use of Fire Extinguishers/Location

The Fire Extinguishers in the VPE are located:

General: The type of fire will indicate the type of fire extinguisher that you should use to put the fire out. Where temperature is a factor, ensure that care is taken in selecting the right extinguisher. Fire extinguishers must be maintained to manufacturer’s specifications. This requires inspection of the equipment on a set schedule.

Types of Fires

Class A – Solid Materials of Organic nature (e.g. wood, paper, cloth)

Recommended Extinguishers: Water from a hose, pump type water can or pressurized extinguisher and soda acid extinguisher

Fighting the fire: Soak the fire completely – even soak the embers

Class B – Liquid Material (including petrol, diesel, oils)

Recommended Extinguishers: ABC units, dry chemical, foam and carbon dioxide extinguishers. **Fighting the fire:** Start at the base of the fire and use a swinging motion from left to right, always keep the fire in front of you.

Class C – Involves Electricity

Recommended Extinguishers: Carbon Dioxide and Dry Chemical (ABC) unit extinguishers

Fighting the fire: Use short bursts on the fire. When the electrical current is shut off on a class C fire, it can become a class A fire if the materials around the fire are ignited.

*for further info see the OH&S Act, Regulations

Handling Cleaning Solvents and Flammables

Cleaning solvents are used in the day-to-day activity to clean tools and equipment. Special care must be taken to protect the worker from hazards, which may be created from the use of these products. Wherever possible, solvents should be non-flammable and nontoxic.

The veterinarian must be aware of all solvents/flammables that are used on the job and be sure that all employees who use these materials have taken WHMIS training.

1. Use non-flammable solvents for general cleaning.
2. When flammable liquids are used, make sure that no hot work is permitted in the area. (Class IV lasers can ignite combustible material and should not be operated in that area)
3. Store flammables and solvents in an appropriate area.
4. Check toxic hazard of all solvents before use (SDS info)
5. Provide adequate ventilation where all solvents and flammables are being used
6. Use goggles or face shield to protect the face and eyes from splashes or sprays.
7. Use rubber, latex, plastic gloves to protect the hands.
8. Wear protective clothing to prevent contamination of workers clothes.
9. When a breathing hazard exists, use the appropriate respiratory protection.
10. Ensure all employees using or in the vicinity of controlled solvents are trained and certified in the **Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS)**
11. Ensure all WHMIS requirements are met and proper labeling is present on all products.

Use of a Step Ladder

Section 147 - 152 of the Occupational Health and Safety General Regulations

General: Ladders must be CSA Grade 1 or 2. A Grade 3 ladder is not acceptable.

Make sure ladder is in good condition and is the right ladder for the job being done. Step ladders are to be used only on clean and even surfaces.

1. No work is to be done from the top two steps of a step ladder, counting the top platform as a rung.
2. When in the open position ready for use, the incline of the front step section shall be one (1) horizontal to (6) vertical
3. The step ladder is only to be used in the fully open position with the spreader bars locked.
4. Tops of the ladders are not to be used as a support for scaffolds
5. Don't overreach while on the ladder. Climb down and move the ladder to a new position.

6. Only CSA standard ladders will be used
7. Do not stand on chairs to extend your reach

Use of Grinders, Drills and Lathes

Abrasive wheels, rotary grinders etc. can cause severe injury.

1. Familiarize yourself with sharpening tools and surgical equipment before commencing work
2. Ensure proper guards are in place and that safety glasses or safety shields are used when grinding or drilling – Safety glasses must be within arm's length of the equipment
3. Check for defects or cracks in the equipment prior to use
4. Do not use grinders near flammable materials
5. Do not stand directly in front of the wheel when it is first started
6. Avoid placing fingertips too close to the sharpening or cutting equipment
7. Ensure the grinding area has proper ventilation
8. Use proper safety protection
9. Tie back long hair and secure any loose clothing that may get caught in machinery

Ergonomic Injuries

Practicing veterinary medicine often requires accommodating patients to the degree that the operator's ergonomic comfort is jeopardized. Too much of this can result in operator injury.

Every Operator and employee should:

1. Assess stools, tables and operatory set-up for their ergonomic optimization. This may also apply to the non-clinical areas of the veterinary office
2. When using chairs, stools and all veterinary equipment and instruments, proper positioning and use is paramount. The best possible ergonomic outcomes should be used to avoid musculoskeletal and joint injuries.

Latex Allergies

Latex allergy is caused by repeated exposure to the protein from the natural rubber in latex. The powdery starch can absorb the protein and become airborne. Latex allergy can affect the skin causing redness, itching, rashes and hives. More severe reactions affect the respiratory system causing asthma symptoms such as chest tightness, wheezing, coughing and shortness of breath. Occupational asthma affects 5-18% of healthcare workers.

To reduce the risk of latex allergy-

1. Use reduced protein/powder free latex gloves
2. Control latex containing dust through good housekeeping and proper ventilation
3. Use non latex products, such as nitrile

Radiographs

Ensure proper patient and staff protection

1. Due to shorter radiation exposure times and no chemicals for developing, a digital system is beneficial
2. Routine inspections and maintenance of all radiographic equipment must be scheduled by a qualified technician (this should be once per year or according to manufacturer's specifications)
3. Dosimeters for employees is recommended. There is no legislation that specifically states a need for the wearing of dosimeters however, Section 4 of the Occupational Health Regulations states that there is a threshold value limit (TVL) for physical substances. This means that you, the employer, must be able to prove that employees have NOT been exposed to radiation levels above the threshold limit. A recommended way to prove this is to monitor exposure through the use of dosimeters.
4. An eyewash unit needs to be installed and maintained near a chemical developer.
5. Ensure all x-ray chemicals have the proper controlled product label and Safety Data Sheet
6. Have a certified hazardous waste carrier collect used fixer or recaptured silver collected from a silver recovery system
7. Recycle unused x-ray film, lead foil from packets and old lead aprons
8. Pregnant staff are not recommended to aid with radiographs.

Use of Compressed Air

Compressed air can pose a serious hazard if not used properly. Compressed air is used for handpiece power, sand blasting, and in the air water syringe. "On *rare* occasions, some of the compressed air can enter the blood stream through a break in the skin or through a body opening. An air bubble in the blood stream is known medically as an embolism, a dangerous medical condition in which a blood vessel is blocked. An embolism of an artery can cause coma, paralysis or death depending upon its size, duration and location. While air embolisms are usually associated with incorrect diving procedures, they are possible with compressed air due to high pressures. While this seems improbable, the consequences of even a small quantity of air or other gas in the blood can quickly be fatal." Source -

http://gala.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety_haz/emer_showers.html

Recommendations:

1. Wear protective eye/mask equipment around air driven drills & tools
2. A proper pressure regulator and relief device must be in the system to ensure that the desired pressures are maintained.
3. Avoid directing pressurized air towards the skin surface.

Defective Tools Instruments and Equipment

Report all defective tools, instruments or equipment to your supervisor. If a tool or instrument is defective, then do not use it.

Recommendations:

1. Use proper safety eye protection while operating or using tools, instruments and equipment
2. Never use a defective tool
3. Ensure defective tools are repaired or disposed of
4. Check your instruments prior to use
5. Ensure that electrical equipment is grounded

Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls

In Canada some sixty thousand workers get injured annually due to fall accidents.

Slips

Slips happen where there is too little friction or traction between the footwear and the walking surface. Common causes of slips are:

1. Wet or oily surfaces
2. Occasional spills
3. Weather hazards
4. Loose, unanchored rugs or mats
5. Flooring or other walking surfaces that do not have the same degree of traction in all areas

Trips

Trips happen when your foot collides (strikes, hits) an object causing you to lose your balance and, eventually fall. Common causes of tripping are:

1. Obstructed view
2. Poor lighting
3. Clutter in your way
4. Wrinkled carpeting
5. Uncovered cables
6. Bottom drawers not being closed
7. Uneven (steps, thresholds) walking surfaces

What can you do to avoid falling at work?

Safety is everybody's business. However, it is the employer's responsibility to provide a safe work environment for all employees. Employees can improve their own safety too. You can reduce the risk of slipping on a wet floor by:

1. Taking your time and paying attention to where you are going
2. Adjusting your stride to a pace that is suitable for the walking surface and the tasks you are doing
3. Walking with feet pointed slightly outward
4. Making wide turns at corners

(Source: http://ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety_haz/falls.html)

Housekeeping

Good housekeeping is the first and the most important (fundamental) level of preventing falls due to slips and trips. It includes:

1. Cleaning all spills immediately
2. Marking spills and wet areas
3. Mopping or sweeping debris from floors
4. Removing obstacles from walkways and always keeping them free from clutter
5. Securing (taking taping etc.) mats, rugs and carpets that do not lay flat
6. Always closing file cabinets and storage drawers
7. Covering cables that cross walkways
8. Keeping work areas and walkways well lit

Injury from patients

Patients are often painful and scared while being examined. Veterinarians and staff must assess each patient and determine proper use of protective equipment such as gloves, muzzels, proper handling techniques and, if required, sedation, to maintain the safety of staff.

Heavy Lifting

Veterinary staff often are required to lift heavy patients and objects to aid in medical treatment. Safety of staff must be a priority. It is up to the individual staff member to ensure they are taking all safety measures such as

help when needed, proper lifting technique, and lifting aids such as stretchers when required. It is up to the employer to provide reasonable equipment available and promote proper and frequent usage

Chemotherapy

1. Chemotherapy agents must be stored, handled and discarded properly if in use in the VPE. Handling, storage and disposal of each of these agents must be followed completely as per the manufacturer's recommendations.
2. Staff must be properly trained to work with chemotherapy agents.
3. It is recommended that pregnant staff do **not** work with chemotherapy agents.

Gaseous Anesthetics

1. All gas anesthetics used in a VPE must be stored, used and discarded in a safe manner according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
2. Proper PPE must be worn when handling gaseous anesthetics such as gloves and a mask while handling or refilling anesthetic machines.
3. If an anesthetic leak occurs, the area must be properly ventilated.
4. It is recommended that pregnant staff do **not** work with gaseous anesthetics.

Loud Noises

All veterinary staff are to be conscious of the noisy environment in which they find themselves and wear hearing protection as required. These are to be provided by the employer if levels of noise in the work environment exceed what is healthy for hearing health.

Sign-off Sheet

Veterinary Office: _____ **Veterinarian:** _____

Employee's Name: _____ **Position:** _____

Please read the required Safe Work Practice documents and then sign the appropriate areas on the Sign- Off Sheet. Your signature demonstrates that you have read and understand the Safe Work Practices outline.

Safe Work Practice	Date	Employee Signature	Dentist Initials
WHMIS Training (if applicable)			
First Aid Training (if applicable)			
Infection Control for Staff			
Handling Needles			
Location / Use of Fire Extinguishers			
Location of Fire Exits & Routes			
Location/Use/Maintenance of Eyewash Stations			
Cleaning Solvents and Flammables			
Use of Step Ladder			
Grinding			
Use of Compressed Air			
Detective Tools, Instruments, Equipment			
Prevention of Slips, Trips, Falls			
CPR			
Radiation Safety			

Safety Data Sheets – SDS

There are a number of materials that are used in the Veterinary office that are considered hazardous materials. The manufacturer/supplier is **required by law** to provide a **Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for all hazardous materials** used in the workplace. A SDS sheet is a document that has information about the safe handling of the listed material. Most often this document is shipped with the products that you are receiving in your office. You may have to ask the supplier for any SDS info that is not included upon receiving the material. This list of SDS info must be updated every three years and be accessible to staff. It is recommended to keep the SDS info in the binder for easy access in case of emergency or by electronic means provided all employees have access to computers. Offices relying on computer access to SDS information should test their systems periodically to show that the regulation is being met.

If your staff is **using SDS materials**, then they are **required by law** to have **WHMIS training** (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System). This training provides your staff with knowledge about using materials safely in the work environment.

There are two categories of employees that require WHMIS training. The first is employees that use chemicals. The second is employees that work in proximity to chemicals. Both require training.

Employees that work with chemicals, require additional training that involves teaching them what the specific hazards are for the chemicals that they use and how to protect themselves using control measures outlined in the SDS for those specific chemicals.

Training is often not veterinary specific, so workplace training is also needed.

Some Hazardous materials in Veterinary offices that have MSDS info Sheets

(Please note this list is a starting point and it does not cover all hazardous materials)

1. Photocopy Ink
2. Printer Ink
3. Cleaning Substances
4. Medications and Vaccinations
5. Laboratory Solutions - formaldehyde, stains, etc.

Some of the hazardous materials in veterinary offices are exempt from the requirements of a supplier label and SDS, but still require workplace education and maintenance of labels arriving on the product. For details, see the *Interpretation Guide for NS WHMIS Regulations*.

Minutes of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee Meeting

Date: _____

Location: _____

People Present:

Safety Issues Discussed:

Actions:

Important note on the inspections of your office

Department of Labour inspectors have the right to inspect your office at any time. By law they do not require your permission to enter your office. If you fully cooperate, the Inspector will likely help your office to meet the compliance to the OH&S Act. Many times, they may give you a -Timed Issue Order which gives your veterinary office a specific time allowance to complete the compliance order. The employer is required to send a written notice of compliance to the orders issued. There is an Appeal process if you do not agree with the compliance officer's orders or inspection assessment. (See FAQ Sheet on OH&S website)

A penalty may result from a compliance order. They are usually only issued for high risk areas.

Note: If you do not agree with the Inspection Officer's assessment or compliance order, you can seek a stay of the order, pending approval, and you should do so within 14 days of the first notice from the officer. If you do not appeal the order but wish to appeal the penalty, you will have a difficult time challenging the penalty as it will have been determined, in large part, based on the findings which led to the order.

Note: The Veterinary Owner may be subject to prosecution for failing to comply with the OH&S Act or associated Regulations.

Some Safety Issues the OH&S Inspector may check

OH&S inspectors will require you to meet the standards according to how many employees you have in your office (As discussed in Category 1, 2 and 3).

Other Possible Safety Concerns in the Veterinary Office:

1. Electrical Cords – secured and grounded i.e. no loose cords to trip over
2. Fire Extinguishers – tagged, inspected and accessible
3. Fire Exits – marked
4. Store Rooms – Tidy
5. Ladders and step stools
6. Electrical Rooms – empty, not to be used for any other type of use, including storage
7. Personal and Protective Equipment – safety glasses, gloves, UV shields, dosimeter badges etc.
8. Hazardous Materials – labeled and properly stored – mark dispensable materials
9. Eyewash stations – they need to be maintained, consider location in proximity to hazardous chemicals
10. Washrooms – clean, maintained and accessible
11. Lighting – adequate for the task being performed
12. Furniture – in good condition
13. Sharps – regulation containers in use – disposal procedures in place
14. Electrical Panels – no open spaces
15. Electrical Plan – wiring diagram of the entire office – on site, may be require in certain circumstances. For example, if the electrical installation is rated at greater than 250 V phase-to-phase or 250 A or has multiple service entrances. It is not always required
16. Lockout – physical methods to do this on the electrical panel
17. First Aid Kit – Type #2 or Type #3
 - No medications in it
 - All drugs need to be stored separately from the first aid kit
 - Do not supply medications to staff
18. First Aid Training – Ensure at least one employee per shift holds a valid emergency first aid certificate
 - Certification must be verifiable on inspection
 - If the worksite is not an office, the employer may need to ensure that the appropriate number of staff with first aid training are present - Please consult the *Occupational Health and Safety First Aid Regulations*

19. Violence in the Workplace – copy of legislation on hand and policy statement posted, as well as a copy of written violence risk assessment
20. Due Diligence – Records to show that the appropriate OH&S Regulations have been met.

Where can I get Copies of the Required Acts and Regulations?

Note: The NSVMA would encourage members to access and download these documents and store them electronically in order to be cost-effective and environmentally friendly. However, if you need to obtain hard copies and encounter difficulties with the OH&S Division of the Department of Labour, please contact:

General Inquiries and Reporting

Toll-free: 1-800-952-2687 (24 hours)

Halifax Metro: 902-424-5400(Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. only)

E-mail: ohsdivision@novascotia.ca

Single copies of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Occupational Health and Safety General regulations, WHMIS regulations, First Aid regulations and related publications are available from the Occupational Health and Safety Division of the Department of Labour at **no charge**.

To find out more about your responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and regulations, contact:

Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education

Occupational Health & Safety Division

103 Garland Ave., 3rd fl

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

B3B 0K5

Phone: (902) 424-5400 (Halifax area) or 1-800-9LABOUR (in NS)

Fax: (902) 422-2282

Website: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/lae/healthandsafety/>

Hazardous Materials Information Review Commission

427 Laurier Avenue West, 7th Floor

Ottawa, ON K1A 1M3

Phone: (613) 993-4331 Fax: (613) 993-4686

Email: hmirc-ccrmd@hc-sc.gc.ca

Website: <http://www.hmirc-ccrmd.gc.ca/contact-contactez-eng.shtml>

INTERNET Resources to Print Your Required Document

1. **OH&S Act:** http://nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/occp_h_s.htm
 2. **OH&S General Regulations:** <http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/regs/ohsgensf.htm>
 3. **OH&S Administrative Penalties Regulations:**
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/regs/ohspenalties.htm>
 4. **OH&S Administrative Penalties Regulations, **FAQ Sheet**:**
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/lwd/healthandsafety/docs/FAQSheetAdminPenalties.pdf>
 5. **First Aid Regulations:** <http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/regs/ohsfirst.htm>
 6. **WHMIS Regulations:** <http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/regs/ohs6489.htm>
 7. **WHMIS training for the Dental Office:** <http://www.dentalwhmis.com/>
 8. **Violence in the Workplace:** <http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/regs/ohsviolence.htm>
 9. **Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety :** <http://www.ccohs.ca/>
 10. **Interpretation Guide for NS WHMIS Regulations:**
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/lae/healthandsafety/docs/WHMISRegsInterpretGuide.pdf>
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Appendix 1

First Aid Kit #2

1. Where there are more than one and fewer than 20 employees regularly employed on any one shift at a worksite, the employer shall provide a Number 2 First Aid Kit.
2. A Number 2 First aid Kit shall contain:
 - a) 1 first aid guide;
 - b) 1 first aid record book or instructions on how first aid treatment records are to be maintained.
 - c) 1 pencil;
 - d) 12 safety pins;
 - e) 1 splinter tweezers;
 - f) 1 pair of 100mm scissors;
 - g) 2 pairs of disposable latex gloves or gloves made of material that provides an equivalent level of protection against the spread of infections or contagious conditions;
 - h) at least following individually wrapped dressings:
 - i. 2 sterile bandage compresses (100mm x 100mm)
 - ii. 24 sterile adhesive dressings (25mm wide)
 - iii. 16 sterile pads (75mm x 75mm)
 - iv. 6 triangular bandages (1m)
 - v. 2 roller bandages (50mm wide x 2.5 m long)
 - i) one roll of adhesive tape (25mm wide x 2.5 m long)
 - j) at least the following antiseptics:
 - i. disinfectant in the form of
 - A. a 100 ml bottle of an adequate antiseptic, or
 - B. 12 individually wrapped towelettes with an adequate antiseptic, and
 - ii. 24 hand cleaners
 - k) one marked plastic bag for disposal of biohazardous waste
 - l) one airway barrier device for rescue breathing

Appendix 2

First Aid Kit #3

1. Where there are more than 20 and fewer than 50 employees regularly employed on any one shift at a worksite, the employer shall provide a Number 3 First Aid Kit.
2. A Number 3 First aid Kit shall contain:
 - a) 1 first aid guide;
 - b) 1 first aid record book or instructions on how first aid treatment records are to be maintained.
 - c) 1 pencil;
 - d) 12 safety pins;
 - e) 1 splintertweezers;
 - f) 1 pair of 100mm scissors;
 - g) 4 pairs of disposable latex gloves or gloves made of material that provides an equivalent level of protection against the spread of infections or contagious conditions;
 - h) at least following individually wrapped dressings:
 - i. 6 sterile bandage compresses (100mm x 100mm)
 - ii. 32 sterile adhesive dressings (25mm wide)
 - iii. 32 sterile pads (75mm x 75mm)
 - iv. 6 triangular bandages (1m)
 - v. 3 roller bandages (50mm wide x 2.5 m long)
 - i) 2 rolls of adhesive tape (25mm wide x 2.5 m long)
 - j) at least the following antiseptics:
 - i. disinfectant in the form of
 - A. a 100 ml bottle of an adequate antiseptic, or
 - B. 12 individually wrapped towelettes with an adequate antiseptic, and
 - ii. 24 hand cleaners
 - k) one marked plastic bag for disposal of biohazardous waste; and
 - l) one airway barrier device for rescue breathing

APPENDIX 3

Violence in the Workplace Sample Prevention Policy Statement

Veterinary Office XYZ recognizes that violence is an occupational health and safety hazard at the workplace; and recognizes the physical and emotional harm resulting from violence.

Veterinary Office XYZ recognizes that any form of violence in the workplace is unacceptable; and is committed to minimize and, to the extent possible, eliminate the risk of violence in the workplace.

Signed: _____ Date Posted: _____
Employer