

VIRGINIA BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

Duties of an Unlicensed Veterinary Assistant

Applicable Regulations

Regulations

18VAC150-20-172. Delegation of duties.

A. A licensed veterinarian may delegate the administration (including by injection) of Schedule VI drugs to a properly trained assistant under his immediate supervision. The prescribing veterinarian has a specific duty and responsibility to determine that the assistant has had adequate training to safely administer the drug in a manner prescribed.

B. Injections involving chemotherapy drugs, subgingival scaling, intubation, or the placement of intravenous catheters shall not be delegated to an assistant. An assistant shall also not be delegated the induction of sedation or anesthesia by any means. The monitoring of a sedated or anesthetized patient may be delegated to an assistant, provided a veterinarian or licensed veterinary technician remains on premises until the patient is fully recovered.

C. Tasks that may be delegated by a licensed veterinarian to a properly trained assistant include:

- 1. Grooming;*
- 2. Feeding;*
- 3. Cleaning;*
- 4. Restraining;*
- 5. Assisting in radiology;*
- 6. Setting up diagnostic tests;*
- 7. Prepping a patient or equipment for surgery;*
- 8. Dental polishing and scaling of teeth above the gum line (supragingival);*
- 9. Drawing blood samples; or*
- 10. Filling of Schedule VI prescriptions under the direction of a veterinarian licensed in Virginia.*

D. A licensed veterinarian may delegate duties electronically, verbally, or in writing to appropriate veterinary personnel provided the veterinarian has physically examined the patient within the previous 36 hours.

E. Massage therapy, physical therapy, or laser therapy may be delegated by a veterinarian to persons qualified by training and experience by an order from the veterinarian.

F. The veterinarian remains responsible for the duties being delegated and remains responsible for the health and safety of the animal.

18VAC150-20-190. Requirements for drug storage, dispensing, destruction, and records for all establishments, full service and restricted.

D. All veterinary establishments shall maintain drugs in a secure manner with precaution taken to prevent theft or diversion. Only the veterinarian, veterinary technician, pharmacist, or pharmacy technician shall have access to Schedules II through V drugs, with the exception provided in subdivision 6 of this subsection.

- 1. In a stationary establishment, the general stock of Schedules II through V drugs shall be stored in a securely locked cabinet or safe that is not easily movable.*
- 2. The establishment may also have a working stock of Schedules II through V drugs that shall be kept in (i) a securely locked container, cabinet, or safe when not in use or (ii) direct possession of a veterinarian or veterinary technician. A working stock shall consist of only those drugs that are necessary for use during a normal business day or 24 hours, whichever is less.*
- 3. Whenever the establishment is closed, all general and working stock of Schedules II through V drugs and any dispensed prescriptions that were not delivered during normal business hours shall be securely stored as required for the general stock.*
- 4. Prescriptions that have been dispensed and prepared for delivery shall be maintained under lock or in an area that is not readily accessible to the public and may be delivered to an owner by an unlicensed person, as designated by the veterinarian.*
- 5. Whenever a theft or any unusual loss of Schedules II through V drugs is discovered, the veterinarian-in-charge, or in his absence, his designee, shall immediately report such theft or loss to the Board of Veterinary Medicine and the Board of Pharmacy and to the DEA. The report to the boards shall be in writing and sent electronically or by regular mail. The report to the DEA shall be in accordance with 21 CFR 1301.76(b). If the veterinarian-in-charge is unable to determine the exact kind and quantity of the drug loss, he shall immediately take a complete inventory of all Schedules II through V drugs.*
- 6. Access to drugs by unlicensed persons shall be allowed only under the following conditions:*
 - a. An animal is being kept at the establishment outside of the normal hours of operation, and a licensed practitioner is not present in the facility;*
 - b. The drugs are limited to those dispensed to a specific patient; and*

c. The drugs are maintained separately from the establishment's general drug stock and kept in such a manner so they are not readily available to the public.

Guidance

Question: May an unlicensed assistant induce anesthesia?

Response: A licensed veterinarian may delegate to an unlicensed assistant the prepping of an animal for surgery. Surgery prepping includes clipping, scrubbing and attaching monitoring equipment. It does not include sedating an animal, intubation or induction of anesthesia. During surgery, an unlicensed assistant under the direction of a licensed veterinarian may adjust dials on gas-flow or drip anesthesia equipment.

Question: May an unlicensed assistant access Schedule II – V drugs?

Response: An unlicensed assistant may not have access to Schedule II, III, IV and V drugs to inventory, prepare, administer or dispense the drugs. An unlicensed assistant may receive and open packages with unknown contents that may potentially contain Schedule II – V drugs. However, once it is determined that the contents include Schedule II, III, IV or V drugs, the handling of the package contents must be turned over to a license veterinarian or licensed veterinary technician.