

## Virginia Board of Veterinary Medicine

### Guidance for Continuing Education (CE) Audits and Sanctioning for Failure to Complete CE

#### Applicable Law, Regulation and Guidance

##### Code of Virginia

##### **§ 54.1-3805.2. Continuing education.**

*The Board shall adopt regulations which provide for continuing education requirements for relicensure and licensure by endorsement of veterinarians and veterinary technicians. After January 1, 1997, a veterinarian shall be required to complete a minimum of fifteen hours, and a veterinary technician shall be required to complete a minimum of six hours of approved continuing education annually as a condition for renewal of a license. Continuing education courses shall be approved by the Board or by a Board-approved organization. Regulations of the Board adopted pursuant to this section may provide for the waiver of such continuing education requirements upon conditions as the Board deems appropriate.*

##### Regulations Governing the Practice of Veterinary Medicine

##### **18VAC150-20-70. Licensure renewal requirements.**

*A. Every person licensed by the board shall, by January 1 of every year, submit to the board a completed renewal application and pay to the board a renewal fee as prescribed in 18VAC150-20-100. Failure to renew shall cause the license to lapse and become invalid, and practice with a lapsed license may subject the licensee to disciplinary action by the board. Failure to receive a renewal notice does not relieve the licensee of his responsibility to renew and maintain a current license.*

*B. Veterinarians shall be required to have completed a minimum of 15 hours, and veterinary technicians shall be required to have completed a minimum of eight hours, of approved continuing education for each annual renewal of licensure. Continuing education credits or hours may not be transferred or credited to another year.*

*1. Approved continuing education credit shall be given for courses or programs related to the treatment and care of patients and shall be clinical courses in veterinary medicine or veterinary technology or courses that enhance patient safety, such as medical recordkeeping or compliance with requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA).*

*2. An approved continuing education course or program shall be sponsored by one of the following:*

- a. The AVMA or its constituent and component/branch associations, specialty organizations, and board certified specialists in good standing within their specialty board;*
- b. Colleges of veterinary medicine approved by the AVMA Council on Education;*
- c. International, national or regional conferences of veterinary medicine;*
- d. Academies or species specific interest groups of veterinary medicine;*
- e. State associations of veterinary technicians;*
- f. North American Veterinary Technicians Association;*
- g. Community colleges with an approved program in veterinary technology;*
- h. State or federal government agencies;*
- i. American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) or its constituent and component/branch associations;*
- j. Journals or veterinary information networks recognized by the board as providing education in veterinary medicine or veterinary technology; or*

*k. An organization or entity approved by the Registry of Approved Continuing Education of the American Association of Veterinary State Boards.*

*3. A licensee is exempt from completing continuing education requirements and considered in compliance on the first renewal date following his initial licensure by examination.*

*4. The board may grant an exemption for all or part of the continuing education requirements due to circumstances beyond the control of the licensee, such as temporary disability, mandatory military service, or officially declared disasters.*

*5. The board may grant an extension for good cause of up to one year for the completion of continuing education requirements upon written request from the licensee prior to the renewal date. Such an extension shall not relieve the licensee of the continuing education requirement.*

*6. Licensees are required to attest to compliance with continuing education requirements on their annual license renewal and are required to maintain original documents verifying the date and subject of the program or course, the number of continuing education hours or credits, and certification from an approved sponsor. Original documents must be maintained for a period of two years following renewal. The board shall periodically conduct a random audit to determine compliance. Practitioners selected for the audit shall provide all supporting documentation within 10 days of receiving notification of the audit.*

*7. Continuing education hours required by disciplinary order shall not be used to satisfy renewal requirements.*

*8. Up to two hours of the 15 hours required for annual renewal of a veterinarian license and up to one hour of the eight hours required for annual renewal of a veterinary technician license may be satisfied through delivery of veterinary services, without compensation, to low-income individuals receiving health services through a local health department or a free clinic organized in whole or primarily for the delivery of those services. One hour of continuing education may be credited for three hours of providing such volunteer services, as documented by the health department or free clinic.*

*9. Falsifying the attestation of compliance with continuing education on a renewal form or failure to comply with continuing education requirements may subject a licensee to disciplinary action by the board, consistent with § 54.1-3807 of the Code of Virginia.*

*C. A licensee who has requested that his license be placed on inactive status is not authorized to perform acts which are considered the practice of veterinary medicine or veterinary technology and, therefore, shall not be required to have continuing education for annual renewal. To reactivate a license, the licensee is required to submit evidence of completion of continuing education hours as required by §54.1-3805.2 of the Code of Virginia equal to the number of years in which the license has not been active for a maximum of two years.*

### Guidance

#### **Q: How do I request a CE extension?**

**A:** A written request for an extension must be received prior to the licensure renewal date of December 31 of each year. The Board will provide a written response indicating approval or disapproval of the extension request.

#### **Q: How do I request a CE exemption?**

**A:** A written request for an exemption should be submitted prior to licensure renewal date of December 31 of each year. The Board will provide a written response indicating approval or disapproval of the exemption request.

#### **Q: What are the CE audit procedures?**

**A:** After each renewal cycle, the Board may audit the following licensees for compliance with CE requirements:

- Licensees who fail to respond or respond “no” to the CE renewal question on the annual license renewal form; and

- Licensees selected for random audit using a statistically valid audit sample and a method that ensures randomness of those selected.
- For those selected for the audit
  - Board staff will notify licensees that they are being audited via email if an address is available or by postal carrier if an email address is not available.
  - The licensee is required to submit documentation of completion of required CE credits. Documentation must include:
    - Date of CE
    - Subject of the program or course
    - Number of CE credits
    - Certification from an approved sponsor
  - Documentation submitted to verify CE completion will be reviewed for compliance with the regulations.  
 NOTE: Veterinarians are required to complete a minimum of 15 CE hours and veterinary technicians are required to complete a minimum of eight CE hours. Approved CE credit is given for courses or programs related to the treatment and care of patients and shall be clinical courses in veterinary medicine or veterinary technology or courses that enhance patient safety, such as medical recordkeeping or Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) requirements. The Board accepts CE that is related to disaster or emergency preparedness, the U. S. Department of Agriculture’s National Veterinary Accreditation Program and communication development to strengthen the veterinarian-client-patient relationships, including but not limited to grief counseling and personal wellness. Courses in practice management related to improving business efficiency or profitability would not be considered clinical courses or courses that enhance patient safety.
  - Licensees who have not completed required CE will be referred for possible board action.

**Board Action for Non-Compliance with CE Requirements**

The Board adopted the following guidelines for resolution of cases of non-compliance with CE requirements:

**Veterinarian**

Cause	Possible Action
First offense; short 4 hours or less	Confidential Consent Agreement; 45 days to make up missing hours
First offense: short more than 4 hours	Consent Order; Monetary Penalty of \$500; 45 days to make up missing hours
Second offense; short up to 15 hours	Consent Order; Reprimand; Monetary Penalty of \$250 <b>per missing hour</b> up to a maximum of \$2000; 60 days to make up missing hours
No response to audit notifications or three or more offenses	Informal Fact-Finding Conference
First Offense: Failure to respond with CE documentation prior to initiation of board action	Confidential Consent Agreement
Second Offense: Failure to respond with CE documentation prior to initiation of board action	Consent Order; Monetary Penalty of \$500

**Veterinary Technician**

Cause	Possible Action
First offense; short 2 hours or less	Confidential Consent Agreement; 45 days to make up missing hours
First offense: short more than 2 hours	Consent Order; Monetary Penalty of \$200; 45 days to make up missing hours
Second offense; short up to 8 hours	Consent Order; Reprimand; Monetary Penalty of \$100 <b>per missing hour</b> up to a maximum of \$1000; 60 days to make up missing hours
No response to audit notifications or three or more offenses	Informal Fact-Finding Conference
First Offense: Failure to respond with CE documentation prior to initiation of board action	Confidential Consent Agreement
Second Offense: Failure to respond with CE documentation prior to initiation of board action	Consent Order; Monetary Penalty of \$200

Note: When probable cause is found that a licensee has falsely certified completion of the required CE for renewal of his license, the Board may offer a pre-hearing consent order or hold an informal fact finding conference.