

Article 11.

Veterinarians.

**§ 90-179. Purpose of Article.**

In order to promote the public health, safety, and welfare by safeguarding the people of this State against unqualified or incompetent practitioners of veterinary medicine, it is hereby declared that the right to practice veterinary medicine is a privilege conferred by legislative grant to persons possessed of the personal and professional qualifications specified in this Article. (1973, c. 1106, s. 1.)

**§ 90-180. Title.**

This Article shall be known as the North Carolina Veterinary Practice Act. (1973, c. 1106, s. 1.)

**§ 90-181. Definitions.**

When used in this Article these words and phrases shall be defined as follows:

- (1) Accredited school of veterinary medicine. – Any veterinary college or division of a university or college that offers the degree of doctor of veterinary medicine or its equivalent and that conforms to the standards required for accreditation by the American Veterinary Medical Association.
- (2) Animal. – Any animal, mammal other than man and includes birds, fish, and reptiles, wild or domestic, living or dead.
- (2a) Animal dentistry. – The treatment, extraction, cleaning, adjustment, or "floating" (filing or smoothing) of an animal's teeth, and treatment of an animal's gums.
- (3) Board. – The North Carolina Veterinary Medical Board.
- (3a) Cruelty to animals. – To willfully overdrive, overload, wound, injure, torture, torment, deprive of necessary sustenance, cruelly beat, needlessly mutilate or kill any animal, or cause or procure any of these acts to be done to an animal; provided, that the words "torture," "torment," or "cruelty" include every act, omission, or neglect causing or permitting unjustifiable physical pain, suffering, or death.
- (3b) Impairment. – An individual's inability to practice veterinary medicine; the inability to assist in the delivery of veterinary services as a registered veterinary technician, or the inability to perform acts, tasks, and functions with reasonable skill and safety; and in a manner not harmful to the public or to animals, by reason of physical or mental illness or condition, or use of alcohol, drugs, chemicals, or any other type of substance or material.
- (4) Limited veterinary license or limited license. – A license issued by the Board under authority of this Article that specifically, by its terms, restricts the scope or areas of practice of veterinary medicine by the holder of the limited license; provided, that no limited license shall confer or denote an area of specialty of the holder of this limited veterinary license; and provided further, that unless otherwise provided by Board rule, the licensing requirements shall be identical to those specified for a veterinary license.
- (5) Person. – Any individual, firm, entity, partnership, association, joint venture, cooperative or corporation, or any other group or combination acting in concert; and whether or not acting as a principal, trustee, fiduciary, receiver, or as any

kind of legal or personal representative, or as the successor in interest, assignee, agent, factor, servant, employee, director, officer, or any other representative of such person.

- (6) Practice of veterinary medicine. – Any of the following:
  - a. To diagnose, treat, correct, change, relieve, or prevent animal disease, deformity, defect, injury, or other physical or mental conditions; including the prescription or administration of any drug, medicine, biologic, apparatus, application, anesthetic, or other therapeutic or diagnostic substance or technique on any animal.
  - b. To represent, directly or indirectly, publicly or privately, an ability and willingness to do any act described in sub-subdivision a. of this subdivision.
  - c. To use any title, words, abbreviation, or letters in a manner or under circumstances which induce the belief that the person using them is qualified to do any act described in sub-subdivision a. of this subdivision.
- (6a) Staff. – Any person performing duties under the direction and supervision of a veterinarian.
- (7) Veterinarian. – A person who has received a doctor's degree in veterinary medicine from an accredited school of veterinary medicine and who is licensed by the Board to practice veterinary medicine.
- (7a) Veterinarian-client-patient relationship. – Includes all of the following:
  - a. The veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making medical judgments regarding the health of the animal and the need for medical treatment, and the client (owner or other caretaker) has agreed to follow the instruction of the veterinarian.
  - b. There is sufficient knowledge of the animal by the veterinarian to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal. This means that the veterinarian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal by virtue of an examination of the animal, or by medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal is kept.
  - c. The practicing veterinarian is readily available or provides for follow-up in case of adverse reactions or failure of the regimen of therapy.
- (7b) Veterinary consulting. – When any person, whose expertise the veterinarian believes would benefit the veterinarian's patient, provides advice by any means of communication to a veterinarian at the veterinarian's direction or request. Veterinary consulting does not constitute the practice of veterinary medicine by that act alone.
- (7c) Veterinary license or license. – A license to practice veterinary medicine issued by the Board.
- (8) Veterinary medicine. – Includes veterinary surgery, obstetrics, dentistry, and all other branches or specialties of veterinary medicine.

- (9) Veterinary student intern – A person who is enrolled in an accredited veterinary college, has satisfactorily completed the second year of veterinary college education, and is registered with the Board as a veterinary student intern.
- (10) Repealed by Session Laws 2022-67, s. 1, effective October 1, 2022.
- (11) Veterinary technician. – Either of the following persons:
  - a. A person who has successfully completed a post-high school course in the care and treatment of animals that conforms to the standards required for accreditation by the American Veterinary Medical Association and who is registered with the Board as a veterinary technician.
  - b. A person who holds a degree in veterinary medicine from a college of veterinary medicine recognized by the Board for licensure of veterinarians and who is registered with the Board as a veterinary technician. (1961, c. 353, s. 2; 1973, c. 1106, s. 1; 1993, c. 500, s. 1; 2019-170, ss. 1(a), 3; 2022-67, s. 1.)

**§ 90-181.1. Facility names and levels of service.**

(a) In order to accurately inform the public of the levels of service offered, a veterinary facility shall use in its name one of the descriptive terms defined in subsection (b) of this section. The name of a veterinary facility shall, at all times, accurately reflect the level of service being offered to the public. If a veterinary facility or practice offers on-call emergency service, that service must be as that term is defined in subsection (b) of this section.

(b) The following definitions are applicable to this section:

- (1) Animal health center or animal medical center. – A veterinary facility in which consultative, clinical, and hospital services are rendered and in which a large staff of basic and applied veterinary scientists perform significant research and conduct advanced professional educational programs.
- (1a) Boarding kennel. – A facility operating under a veterinary facility permit and which regularly offers to the public the service of boarding dogs or cats or both for a fee. Such a facility or establishment may, in addition to providing shelter, food, and water, offer grooming or other services for dogs and/or cats.
- (2) Emergency facility. – A veterinary medical facility whose primary function is the receiving, treatment, and monitoring of emergency patients during its specified hours of operation. At this veterinary facility a veterinarian is in attendance at all hours of operation and sufficient staff is available to provide timely and appropriate emergency care. An emergency facility may be an independent veterinary medical after-hours facility, an independent veterinary medical 24-hour facility, or part of a full-service hospital or large teaching institution.
- (3) Mobile facility. – A veterinary practice conducted from a vehicle with special medical or surgical facilities or from a vehicle suitable only for making house or farm calls; provided, the veterinary medical practice shall have a permanent base of operation with a published address and telephone facilities for making appointments or responding to emergency situations.
- (4) Office. – A veterinary facility where a limited or consultative practice is conducted and which provides no facilities for the housing of patients.

- (5) On-call emergency service. – A veterinary medical service at a facility, including a mobile facility, where veterinarians and staff are not on the premises during all hours of operation or where veterinarians leave after a patient is treated. A veterinarian shall be available to be reached by telephone for after-hours emergencies.
- (6) Veterinary clinic or animal clinic. – A veterinary facility in which the practice conducted is essentially an out-patient practice.
- (7) Veterinary hospital or animal hospital. – A veterinary facility in which the practice conducted includes the confinement as well as the treatment of patients.

(c) If a veterinary facility uses as its name the name of the veterinarian or veterinarians owning or operating the facility, the name of the veterinary facility shall also include a descriptive term from those listed in subsection (b) of this section to disclose the level of service being offered.

(d) Those facilities existing and approved by the Board as of December 31, 1993, may continue to use their approved name or designation until there is a partial or total change of ownership of the facility, at which time the name of the veterinary facility shall be changed, as necessary, to comply with this section. (1993, c. 500, s. 2; 2019-170, s. 5(a); 2023-63, s. 4(c).)

**§ 90-182. North Carolina Veterinary Medical Board; appointment, membership, organization.**

(a) In order to properly regulate the practice of veterinary medicine and surgery, there is established a Board to be known as the North Carolina Veterinary Medical Board which shall consist of eight members.

Five members shall be appointed by the Governor. Four of these members shall have been legal residents of and licensed to practice veterinary medicine in this State for not less than five years preceding their appointment. The other member shall not be licensed or registered under the Article and shall represent the interest of the public at large. Each member appointed by the Governor shall reside in a different congressional district.

The General Assembly, upon the recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, shall appoint to the Board one member who shall have been a resident of and licensed to practice veterinary medicine in this State for not less than five years preceding the appointment. The General Assembly, upon the recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, shall appoint to the Board one member who shall have been a legal resident of and registered as a veterinary technician in this State for not less than five years preceding the appointment.

In addition to the seven members appointed as provided above, the Commissioner of Agriculture shall biennially appoint to the Board the State Veterinarian or another veterinarian from a staff of a North Carolina department or institution. This member shall have been a legal resident of and licensed to practice veterinary medicine in North Carolina for not less than five years preceding his appointment.

Every member shall, within 30 days after notice of appointment, appear before any person authorized to administer the oath of office and take an oath to faithfully discharge the duties of the office.

(b) No person who has been appointed to the Board shall continue his membership on the Board if during the term of his appointment he shall:

- (1) Transfer his legal residence to another state; or

- (2) Own or be employed by any wholesale or jobbing house dealing in supplies, equipment, or instruments used or useful in the practice of veterinary medicine; or
- (3) Have his license to practice veterinary medicine revoked for any of the causes listed in G.S. 90-187.8.

(c) All members serving on the board on June 30, 1981, shall complete their respective terms. The Governor shall appoint the public member not later than July 1, 1981. No member appointed to the Board by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House of Representatives, or General Assembly on or after July 1, 1981, shall serve more than two complete consecutive five-year terms, except that each member shall serve until his successor is appointed and qualifies. The term of the veterinary technician appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall begin on June 30th of the year in which he or she is appointed.

(d) The appointing authority may remove his appointee for the reasons specified in subsection (b) or for any good cause shown and may appoint members to fill unexpired terms. (1903, c. 503, s. 2; Rev., s. 5432; C.S., s. 6755; 1961, c. 353, s. 3; 1973, c. 1106, s. 1; c. 1331, s. 3; 1981, c. 767, s. 1; 1993, c. 500, ss. 3, 4; 2001-281, ss. 1, 2; 2001-487, s. 104; 2012-120, s. 3.1.)

#### **§ 90-183. Meeting of Board.**

The Board shall meet at least four times per year at the time and place fixed by the Board. Other meetings may be called by the president of the Board by giving notice as may be required by rule. A majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum. Meetings shall be open and public except that the Board may meet in closed session to prepare, approve, administer, or grade examinations, or to deliberate the qualification of an applicant for license or the disposition of a proceeding to discipline a veterinarian.

At its last meeting of the fiscal year the Board shall organize by electing, for the following fiscal year, a president, a vice-president, a secretary-treasurer, and such other officers as may be prescribed by rule. Officers of the Board shall serve for terms of one year and until a successor is elected, without limitation on the number of terms an officer may serve. The president shall serve as chairman of Board meetings. (1903, c. 503, ss. 3, 4, 6, 7; Rev., s. 5433; C.S., s. 6756; 1973, c. 1106, s. 1; 1993, c. 500, s. 5.)

#### **§ 90-184. Compensation of the Board.**

In addition to such reimbursement for travel and other expenses as is normally allowed to State employees, each member of the Board, for each day or substantial portion thereof that the member is engaged in the work of the Board may receive a per diem allowance, as determined by the Board in accordance with G.S. 93B-5. None of the expenses of the Board or of the members shall be paid by the State. (1903, c. 503, s. 9; Rev., s. 5434; C.S., s. 6757; 1961, c. 353, s. 4; 1973, c. 1106, s. 1; 1981, c. 767, s. 2; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1011, s. 4; 1993, c. 500, s. 6.)

#### **§ 90-185. General powers of the Board.**

The Board may:

- (1) Examine and determine the qualifications and fitness of applicants for a license to practice veterinary medicine in the State.
- (2) Issue, renew, deny, suspend, or revoke licenses and limited veterinary licenses, and issue, deny, or revoke temporary permits to practice veterinary medicine in

the State or otherwise discipline veterinarians consistent with the provisions of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes and of this Article and the rules adopted under this Article.

- (3) Conduct investigations for the purpose of discovering violations of this Article or grounds for disciplining veterinarians.
- (4) Employ full-time or part-time personnel – professional, clerical, or special – necessary to effectuate the provisions of this Article, purchase or rent necessary office space, equipment, and supplies, and purchase liability or other insurance to cover the activities of the Board, its operations, or its employees.
- (5) Appoint from its own membership one or more members to act as representatives of the Board at any meeting within or without the State where such representation is deemed desirable.
- (6) Adopt, amend, or repeal all rules necessary for its government and all regulations necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this Article, including the establishment and publication of standards of professional conduct for the practice of veterinary medicine.

The powers enumerated above are granted for the purpose of enabling the Board effectively to supervise the practice of veterinary medicine and are to be construed liberally to accomplish this objective. (1973, c. 1106, s. 1; c. 1331, s. 3; 1981, c. 767, s. 3; 1987, c. 827, s. 1; 1993, c. 500, s. 7.)

#### **§ 90-186. Special powers of the Board.**

In addition to the powers set forth in G.S. 90-185, the Board may do any of the following:

- (1) Fix minimum standards for continuing veterinary medical education for veterinarians and technicians. These standards are a condition precedent to the renewal of a veterinary license, limited license, veterinary faculty certificate, zoo veterinary certificate, or veterinary technician registration under this Article.
- (2) Inspect any boarding kennels, hospitals, clinics, mobile units, or other facilities used by any practicing veterinarian, either by a member of the Board or its authorized representatives, for the purpose of reporting the results of the inspection to the Board on a form prescribed by the Board and seeking disciplinary action for violations of health, sanitary, and medical waste disposal rules of the Board that affect the practice of veterinary medicine or the operation of a boarding kennel, or violations of rules of any county, state, or federal department or agency having jurisdiction in these areas of health, sanitation, and medical waste disposal that relate to or affect the practice of veterinary medicine or the operation of a boarding kennel;
- (3) Upon complaint or information received by the Board, prohibit through summary emergency order of the Board, prior to a hearing, the operation of any veterinary facility that the Board determines is endangering, or may endanger, the public health or safety or the welfare and safety of animals, and suspend the license of the veterinarian operating the veterinary facility. Upon the issuance of any summary emergency order, the Board shall initiate, within 10 days, a notice of hearing under the administrative rules issued pursuant to this Article and Chapter 150B of the General Statutes for an administrative hearing on the alleged violation.

- (4) Provide special registration for "veterinary technicians" and "veterinary student interns" and adopt rules concerning the training, registration, and service limits of these assistants while employed by and acting under the supervision and responsibility of veterinarians. The Board has exclusive jurisdiction in determining eligibility and qualification requirements for these assistants. Renewals of registrations for veterinary technicians shall be required at least every 24 months, so long as the certificate of registration for the veterinary technician is otherwise eligible for renewal.
- (5) Provide, pursuant to administrative rules, requirements for the inactive status of licenses and limited veterinary licenses.
- (6) Set and require fees pursuant to administrative rule. The Board may increase the following fees, so long as (i) no fee shall be increased more than fifteen percent (15%) within a calendar year and (ii) the cumulative total increases of any fee shall not exceed one hundred percent (100%) of the fee amounts set in this subdivision:
  - a. Issuance or renewal of a certificate of registration for a professional corporation, in the amount of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00).
  - b. Administering a North Carolina license examination for applicants for licensure, certification, and registration, in the amount of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00).
  - c. Administering competency examinations for applicants seeking licensure or registration, in amounts directly related to costs to the Board. Fees associated with administering national competency examinations shall be set in rules adopted by the Board.
  - d. Inspection of a veterinary facility, resulting from a serious inspection violation or as a result of a complaint, in the amount of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00).
  - e. Issuance or renewal of a license or a limited license, in the amount of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00).
  - f. Issuance or renewal of a veterinary faculty certificate, in the amount of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00).
  - g. Issuance or renewal of a zoo veterinary certificate, in the amount of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00).
  - h. Reinstatement of a revoked license, a limited license, a veterinary faculty certificate, a zoo veterinary certificate, a veterinary technician registration, or a professional corporation registration, in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100.00).
  - i. Issuance or renewal of a veterinary technician registration, in the amount of fifty dollars (\$50.00).
  - j. Issuance of a veterinary student intern registration, in the amount of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00).
  - k. Repealed by Session Laws 2022-67, s. 1, effective October 1, 2022.
  - l. Late fee for renewal of a license, a limited license, a veterinary technician registration, a veterinary faculty certificate, a zoo veterinary certificate, or a professional corporation registration, in the amount of fifty dollars (\$50.00).

- m. Issuance of a temporary permit to practice veterinary medicine, in the amount of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00).
- n. Repealed by Session Laws 2014-63, s. 1, effective October 1, 2014.
- o. Issuance of a veterinary facility permit, in the amount of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00).
- p. Issuance of a boarding kennel permit in the amount of seventy-five dollars (\$75.00), to be added to the veterinary facility permit fee.

The fees set under this subdivision for the renewal of a license, a limited license, a registration, a certificate, or a permit apply to each year of the renewal period.

- (7) Pursuant to administrative rule, to assess and recover against persons holding licenses, limited licenses, temporary permits, or any certificates issued by the Board, costs reasonably incurred by the Board in the investigation, prosecution, hearing, or other administrative action of the Board in final decisions or orders where those persons are found to have violated the Veterinary Practice Act or administrative rules of the Board issued pursuant to the Act. All recovered costs are the property of the Board.
- (8) Pursuant to administrative rule, the Board may establish all provisions and requirements for a veterinary facility permit, the issuance of which is required for any facility where veterinary medicine is practiced, except for animal shelters registered with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
- (9) Pursuant to administrative rule, the Board may establish all provisions and requirements for a supervising veterinarian for each veterinary facility maintaining a valid veterinary facility permit.
- (10) Pursuant to administrative rule, the Board may establish all provisions and requirements for the regulation of the practice of veterinary medicine through methods or modes of veterinary telehealth and its subcategories, including telemedicine, teleconsulting, and telemonitoring. The Board may also establish all provisions and requirements as to when and where veterinary telehealth or any of its subcategories may occur, who may provide veterinary care via telehealth or any of its subcategories, and the requirements for the veterinarian-client-patient relationship as it pertains to the methods or modes of veterinary telehealth and its subcategories. (1973, c. 1106, s. 1; 1981, c. 767, s. 4; 1987, c. 827, s. 1; 1993, c. 500, s. 8; 2014-63, s. 1; 2019-170, ss. 4(a), 5(b); 2022-67, s. 1; 2023-46, s. 10(a), (b); 2023-63, s. 4(d).)

**§ 90-187. Application for license; qualifications.**

(a) Any person desiring a license to practice veterinary medicine in this State shall make written application to the Board.

(b) The application shall show that the applicant is a graduate of an accredited veterinary school, a person of good moral character, and such other information and proof as the Board may require by rule. The Board may receive applications from senior students at accredited veterinary schools but an application is not complete until the applicant furnishes proof of graduation and such other information required by this Article and Board rules. The application shall be accompanied by a fee in the amount established and published by the Board.

(c) An application from a graduate of a program not accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association may not be considered by the Board until the applicant furnishes satisfactory proof of graduation from a college of veterinary medicine and of successful completion of a certification program developed and administered by (i) the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates of the American Veterinary Medical Association or (ii) the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE) of the American Association of Veterinary State Boards. The certification programs shall include examinations with respect to clinical proficiency and comprehension of and ability to communicate in the English language.

(d) If the Board determines that the applicant possesses the proper qualifications, it may admit the applicant to the next examination, or if the applicant is eligible for a license without examination under G.S. 90-187.3; the Board may grant the applicant a license. (1903, c. 503, ss. 3, 5, 8; Rev., s. 5435; C.S., s. 6758; 1951, c. 749; 1961, c. 353, s. 5; 1973, c. 1106, s. 1; 1981, c. 767, ss. 5, 6; 1993, c. 500, s. 9; 2013-356, s. 1.)

### **§ 90-187.1. Examinations.**

The Board shall hold at least one examination during each year and may hold such additional examinations as may appear necessary. The executive director shall give public notice of the time and place for each examination at least 90 days in advance of the date set for the examination. A person desiring to take an examination shall make application at least 60 days before the date of the examination. The Board shall determine the passing score for the successful completion of an examination.

After each examination the executive director shall notify each examinee of the result of the examination. The Board shall issue licenses to the persons successfully completing the requirements for licensure required by this Article and by Board rule. (1903, c. 503, ss. 3, 5, 8; Rev., s. 5435; C.S., s. 6758; 1951, c. 749; 1961, c. 353, s. 5; 1973, c. 1106, s. 1; 1993, c. 500, s. 10.)

### **§ 90-187.2. Status of persons previously licensed.**

Any person holding a valid license to practice veterinary medicine in this State on July 1, 1974, shall be recognized as a licensed veterinarian and shall be entitled to retain this status so long as he complies with the provisions of this Article, and Board rules adopted pursuant thereto. (1973, c. 1106, s. 1.)

### **§ 90-187.3. Applicants licensed in other states.**

(a) The Board may issue a license without written examination, other than the written North Carolina license examination, to applicants already licensed in another state provided the applicant presents evidence satisfactory to the Board that:

- (1) The applicant is currently an active, competent practitioner in good standing.
- (2) The applicant has practiced at least three of the five years immediately preceding filing the application.
- (3) The applicant currently holds an active license in another state.
- (4) There is no disciplinary proceeding or unresolved complaint pending against the applicant at the time a license is to be issued by this State.
- (4a) Any disciplinary actions taken against the applicant or his or her license by the other state in which he or she is licensed will not affect the applicant's competency to practice veterinary medicine as provided in this Article or any rules adopted by the Board.

- (5) The licensure requirements in the other state are substantially equivalent to those required by this State.
- (6) The applicant has achieved a passing score on the written North Carolina license examination.
  - (a1) Expired.
  - (b) The Board may issue a license without a written examination, other than the written North Carolina license examination, to an applicant who meets the requirements of G.S. 90-187(c).
  - (c) The Board may at its discretion orally or practically examine any person qualifying for licensure under this section, by administering a nationally recognized clinical competency test as well as the North Carolina license examination.
  - (d) The Board may issue a limited license to practice veterinary medicine to an applicant who is not otherwise eligible for a license to practice veterinary medicine under this Article, without examination, if the applicant meets the criteria established in subdivisions (1) through (6) of subsection (a) of this section. (1959, c. 744; 1973, c. 1106, s. 1; 1981, c. 767, s. 7; 1993, c. 500, s. 11; 1999-203, ss. 1, 2.)

**§ 90-187.3A: Expired pursuant to Session Laws 2018-113, s. 15.1(c), effective October 1, 2018.**

**§ 90-187.4. Temporary permit.**

- (a) The Board may issue, without examination, a temporary permit to practice veterinary medicine in this State:
  - (1) To a qualified applicant for license pending examination, provided that such temporary permit shall expire the day after the notice of results of the first examination given after the permit is issued.
  - (2) To a nonresident veterinarian validly licensed in another state, territory, or district of the United States or a foreign country, provided that such temporary permit shall be issued for a period of no more than 60 days.
  - (3) Temporary permits, as provided in (1) and (2) above, may contain any restrictions as to time, place, or supervision, that the Board deems appropriate. The State Veterinarian shall be notified as to the issuance of all temporary permits.
- (b) A temporary permit may be summarily revoked by majority vote of the Board without a hearing. (1903, c. 503, ss. 3, 5, 8; Rev., s. 5435; C.S., s. 6758; 1951, c. 749; 1961, c. 353, s. 5; 1973, c. 1106, s. 1; 1993, c. 500, s. 12.)

**§ 90-187.5. License renewal.**

All licenses and limited licenses shall expire annually or biennially, as determined by the Board, on December 31 but may be renewed by application to the Board and payment of the renewal fee established and published by the Board. The executive director shall issue a new certificate of registration to all persons registering under this Article. Failure to apply for renewal within 60 days after expiration shall result in automatic revocation of the license or limited license and any person who shall practice veterinary medicine after such revocation shall be practicing in violation of this Article. Provided, that any person may renew an expired license or limited license at any time within two years following its expiration upon application and compliance with Board requirements and the payment of all applicable fees in amounts allowed by this Article or

administrative rule of the Board; and further provided, that the applicant is otherwise eligible under this Article or administrative rules of the Board to have the license renewed. (1961, c. 353, s. 6; 1973, c. 1106, s. 1; 1993, c. 500, s. 13.)

**§ 90-187.6. Veterinary technicians and staff.**

(a) "Veterinary technicians" and "veterinary student interns," before performing any services otherwise prohibited to persons not licensed or registered under this Article, shall be approved by and registered with the Board. The Board shall be responsible for all matters pertaining to the qualifications, registration, discipline, and revocation of registration of these persons, under this Article and rules issued by the Board.

(a1) No person shall use the title "registered veterinary technician" or the title "veterinary technician," the abbreviation "R.V.T.," or any other words, letters, or symbols, with the intent to represent that the person is authorized to act as a registered veterinary technician, unless that person is licensed by or registered with the Board as a registered veterinary technician in accordance with this Article.

(b) The services of a technician, intern, or staff shall be limited to services under the direction and supervision of a veterinarian, and the technician, intern, or staff may participate in the operation of a branch office, clinic, or allied establishment only to the extent allowable under and as defined by this Article or by rules issued by the Board.

(c) Staff under the supervision of a veterinarian may perform such duties as are required in the physical care of animals and in carrying out medical orders as prescribed by the veterinarian, requiring an understanding of animal science but not requiring the professional services as set forth in G.S. 90-181(6)a. In addition, a veterinary technician may assist veterinarians in diagnosis, laboratory analysis, anesthesia, and surgical procedures. Neither the staff nor the veterinary technician may perform any act producing an irreversible change in the animal. Staff other than a veterinary technician or intern, may, under the direct supervision of a veterinarian, perform duties including collection of specimen; testing for intestinal parasites; collecting blood; testing for heartworms and conducting other laboratory tests; taking radiographs; and cleaning and polishing teeth, provided that the staff has had sufficient on-the-job training by a veterinarian to perform these specified duties in a competent manner. It shall be the responsibility of the veterinarian supervising the staff to ascertain that the staff performs these specified duties assigned to the staff in a competent manner. These specified duties shall be performed under the direct supervision of the veterinarian in charge of administering care to the patient.

(d) Veterinary student interns, in addition to all of the services permitted to veterinary technicians, may, under the direct personal supervision of a veterinarian, perform surgery and administer therapeutic or prophylactic drugs.

(e) Repealed by Session Laws 2022-67, s. 1, effective October 1, 2022.

(f) Any person registered as a veterinary technician or veterinary student intern, who shall practice veterinary medicine except as provided herein, shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor, and shall also be subject to revocation of registration. Any staff under subsection (c) who practices veterinary medicine except as provided under that subsection shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(g) Any veterinarian directing or permitting a veterinary technician, intern, or staff to perform a task or procedure not specifically allowed under this Article and the rules of the Board shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1973, c. 1106, s. 1; 1981, c. 767, ss. 8-11; 1993, c. 500, s. 14; c. 539, ss. 634, 635; 1995, c. 509, s. 42; 2022-67, s. 1; 2023-81, s. 1.)

**§ 90-187.7. Abandonment of animals; notice to owner; relief from liability for disposal; "abandoned" defined.**

(a) Any animal placed in the custody of a licensed veterinarian for treatment, boarding or other care, which shall be unclaimed by its owner or his agent for a period of more than 10 days after written notice by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the owner or his agent at his last known address, shall be deemed to be abandoned and may be turned over to the nearest humane society, or dog pound or disposed of as such custodian may deem proper.

(b) The giving of notice to the owner, or the agent of the owner, of such animal by the licensed veterinarian, as provided in subsection (a) of this section, shall relieve the licensed veterinarian and any custodian to whom such animal may be given of any further liability for disposal.

(c) For the purpose of this Article the term "abandoned" shall mean to forsake entirely, or to neglect or refuse to provide or perform the legal obligations for care and support of an animal by its owner, or his agent. Such abandonment shall constitute the relinquishment of all rights and claims by the owner to such animal. (1973, c. 1106, s. 1.)

**§ 90-187.8. Discipline of licensees.**

(a) Upon complaint or information, and within the Board's discretion, the Board may revoke or suspend a license issued under this Article, may otherwise discipline a person licensed under this Article, or may deny a license required by this Article in accordance with the provisions of this Article, Board rules, and Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. As used in this section, the word "license" includes a license, a limited license, a veterinary faculty certificate, a zoo veterinary certificate, and a registration of a veterinary technician and a veterinary student intern.

(b) The Board may impose and collect from a licensee, or a veterinary facility permittee, a civil monetary penalty of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for each violation of this Article or a rule adopted under this Article. The clear proceeds of these civil penalties shall be remitted to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2.

The amount of the civil penalty, up to the maximum, shall be determined upon a finding of one or more of the following factors:

- (1) The degree and extent of harm to the public health or to the health of the animal under the licensee's care.
  - (2) The duration and gravity of the violation.
  - (3) Whether the violation was committed willfully or intentionally or reflects a continuing pattern.
  - (4) Whether the violation involved elements of fraud or deception either to the client or to the Board, or both.
  - (5) The prior disciplinary record with the Board of the licensee.
  - (6) Whether and the extent to which the licensee profited by the violation.
- (c) Grounds for disciplinary action shall include but not be limited to the following:
- (1) The employment of fraud, misrepresentation, or deception in obtaining a license.
  - (2) An adjudication of insanity or incompetency.
  - (3) The impairment of an individual holding a license or registration issued by the Board, when the impairment interferes with that individual's ability to practice within the scope of the license or registration with reasonable skill and safety,

and in a manner not harmful to the public or to animals under the individual's care.

- (4) The use of advertising or solicitation which is false, misleading, or deceptive.
- (5) Conviction of a felony or other public offense involving moral turpitude.
- (6) Incompetence, gross negligence, or other malpractice in the practice of veterinary medicine.
- (7) Having professional association with or knowingly employing any person practicing veterinary medicine unlawfully.
- (8) Fraud or dishonesty in the application or reporting of any test for disease in animals.
- (9) Failure to keep veterinary premises and equipment in a clean and sanitary condition, violating an administrative rule of the Board concerning the minimum sanitary requirements of veterinary hospitals, veterinary clinics, or other practice facilities, or violating other State or federal statutes, rules, or regulations concerning the disposal of medical waste.
- (10) Failure to report, as required by the laws and regulations of the State, or making false report of, any contagious or infectious disease.
- (11) Dishonesty or gross negligence in the inspection of foodstuffs or the issuance of health or inspection certificates.
- (12) Conviction of a criminal offense involving cruelty to animals or the act of cruelty to animals.
- (13) Revocation of a license to practice veterinary medicine by another state, territory or district of the United States only if the grounds for revocation in the other jurisdiction would also result in revocation of the practitioner's license in this State.
- (14) Unprofessional conduct as defined in regulations adopted by the Board.
- (15) Conviction of a federal or state criminal offense involving the illegal use, prescription, sale, or handling of controlled substances, other drugs, or medicines.
- (16) The illegal use, dispensing, prescription, sale, or handling of controlled substances or other drugs and medicines.
- (17) Failure to comply with regulations of the United States Food and Drug Administration regarding biologics, controlled substances, drugs, or medicines.
- (18) Selling, dispensing, prescribing, or allowing the sale, dispensing, or prescription of biologics, controlled substances, drugs, or medicines without a veterinarian-client-patient relationship with respect to the sale, dispensing, or prescription.
- (19) Acts or behavior constituting fraud, dishonesty, or misrepresentation in dealing with the Board or in the veterinarian-client-patient relationship. (1903, c. 503, s. 10; Rev., s. 5436; C.S., s. 6759; 1953, c. 1041, s. 16; 1961, c. 353, s. 7; 1973, c. 1106, s. 1; c. 1331, s. 3; 1981, c. 767, ss. 12, 13; 1987, c. 827, s. 1; 1993, c. 500, s. 15; 1998-215, s. 136; 2019-170, s. 1(b); 2022-67, s. 1; 2022-75, s. 4(a).)

#### **§ 90-187.9. Reinstatement.**

(a) A person licensed or registered as a veterinary technician under this Article who has had his or her license or registration revoked for failure to apply for renewal may be reinstated at

any time within three years following revocation upon filing an application for reinstatement and paying all accrued renewal fees and the reinstatement fee. As a condition of reinstatement, the applicant shall submit proof to the Board that the applicant has earned the continuing education credits required under this Article and rules adopted by the Board for each year the license or registration was revoked.

(b) A person whose license has been revoked for more than three years for failure to apply for license renewal may qualify for licensure upon filing an application with the Board and meeting the requirements of G.S. 90-187 or G.S. 90-187.3.

(c) A person whose registration has been revoked for more than three years for failure to apply for registration renewal may qualify for registration upon filing an application with the Board and meeting the requirements of G.S. 90-186(4) and any applicable rules adopted by the Board.

(d) Subject to conditions as may be imposed by the Board, any person whose license or registration is revoked for reasons other than failure to apply for renewal may, in the Board's discretion, be relicensed or reregistered at any time by majority vote of the Board upon submitting written application to the Board showing cause for justifying relicensure or reregistration. (1961, c. 353, s. 8; 1973, c. 1106, s. 1; 2014-63, s. 2.)

#### **§ 90-187.10. Necessity for license; certain practices exempted.**

No individual shall engage in the practice of veterinary medicine without having a veterinary license from the Board. No person, as defined in G.S. 90-181(5), may own a veterinary facility without having a veterinary facility permit from the Board.

Nothing in this Article shall be construed to prohibit:

- (1) Any person from administering to food animals or to animals maintained for the production of food or fiber; administering first aid, not including surgical or invasive procedures, to companion animals in emergency situations; or administering routine disease prevention pharmaceuticals to companion animals; provided that the animals are owned by the person or the person's employer, except when the ownership is asserted for the purpose of circumventing the provisions of this Article;
- (2) Any person who is a regular student or instructor in a legally chartered college from the performance of those duties and actions assigned as the person's responsibility in teaching or research;
- (3) Any veterinarian not licensed by the Board who is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States or who is an employee of the United States Department of Agriculture, the United States Public Health Service or other federal agency, or the State of North Carolina, or political subdivision thereof, from performing official duties while so commissioned or employed;
- (4) Any person from such practices as permitted under the provisions of G.S. 90-185, House Bill 659, Chapter 17, Public Laws 1937, or House Bill 358, Chapter 5, Private Laws 1941;
- (5) Any person from dehorning or castrating male food animals;
- (6) Any person from providing for or assisting in the practice of artificial insemination;
- (7) Any physician licensed to practice medicine in this State, or the physician's assistant, while engaged in medical research;

- (8) Any certified rabies vaccinator appointed, certified and acting within the provisions of G.S. 130A-186;
- (9) Any veterinarian licensed to practice in another state from examining livestock or acting as a consultant in North Carolina, provided the consulting veterinarian is directly supervised by a veterinarian licensed by the Board who must, at or prior to the first instance of consulting, notify the Board, in writing, that he or she is supervising the consulting veterinarian, give the Board the name, address, and licensure status of the consulting veterinarian, and also verify to the Board that the supervising veterinarian assumes responsibility for the professional acts of the consulting veterinarian; and provided further, that the consultation by the veterinarian in North Carolina does not exceed 10 days or parts thereof per year, and further that all infectious or contagious diseases diagnosed are reported to the State Veterinarian within 48 hours; or
- (10) Any person employed by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as a livestock inspector or by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as an animal health technician from performing regular duties assigned to him or her during the course and scope of that person's employment.
- (11) Any farrier or person actively engaged in the activity or profession of shoeing hooved animals as long as his or her actions are limited to the art of shoeing hooved animals or trimming, clipping, or maintaining hooves.
- (12) Any person licensed pursuant to G.S. 19A-28 from operating a boarding kennel.
- (13) Emergency medical services personnel, as defined in G.S. 131E-155, except that individuals solely credentialed as emergency medical dispatchers shall not be considered emergency medical services personnel for purposes of this subdivision, who may provide emergency medical transport or emergency medical services to an injured K-9 police unit animal or an injured certified search and rescue dog deployed by or contracted to work with a federal, State, or local agency or department at the scene of an emergency. (1903, c. 503, s. 12; Rev., s. 5438; C.S., s. 6761; 1961, c. 353, s. 9; 1973, c. 1106, s. 1; 1983, c. 891, s. 11; 1993, c. 500, s. 16; 1995, c. 509, s. 43; 1997-261, s. 11; 2011-183, s. 62; 2017-10, s. 3.6; 2017-146, s. 1; 2019-170, ss. 2(a), 6(a); 2023-63, s. 4(e); 2025-42, s. 2(a).)

**§ 90-187.11. Repealed by Session Laws 2019-170, s. 6(b), effective August 16, 2024.**

**§ 90-187.12. Unauthorized practice; penalty.**

An individual shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor if the individual engages in any of the following activities:

- (1) Practices or attempts to practice veterinary medicine in this State without first having obtained a license or temporary permit from the Board.
- (2) Practices veterinary medicine without renewing the individual's license, as provided in G.S. 90-187.5.
- (3) Practices or attempts to practice veterinary medicine while the individual's license is revoked, or suspended, or when a certificate of license has been refused.

- (4) Violates any of the provisions of this Article. (1913, c. 129, s. 2; C.S., s. 6762; 1961, c. 353, s. 10; c. 756; 1973, c. 1106, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 636; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2019, c. 170, s. 6(c).)

**§ 90-187.13. Injunctions.**

The Board may appear in its own name in the superior courts in an action for injunctive relief to prevent violation of this Article and the superior courts shall have power to grant such injunctions regardless of whether criminal prosecution has been or may be instituted as a result of such violations. Actions under this section shall be commenced in the superior court district or set of districts as defined in G.S. 7A-41.1 in which the respondent resides or has his principal place of business or in which the alleged acts occurred. (1981, c. 767, s. 14; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 102.)

**§ 90-187.14. Veterinary faculty certificates and zoo veterinary certificates.**

(a) The Board may, upon application, issue veterinary faculty certificates in lieu of a license that otherwise would be required by this Article.

(b) The Board may, upon application, issue zoo veterinary certificates in lieu of a license that otherwise would be required by this Article, to veterinarians employed by the North Carolina State Zoo.

(c) The Board shall determine by administrative rule the application procedure, fees, criteria for the issuance, continuing education, renewal, suspension or revocation, and the scope of practice under the veterinary faculty certificate or the zoo veterinary certificate. There shall be an annual renewal of each certificate and all persons holding these certificates shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Board in all respects under this Article. (1993, c. 500, s. 18.)

**§ 90-187.15. Board agreement for programs for impaired veterinary personnel.**

(a) The Board may enter into agreements with organizations that have developed programs for impaired veterinary personnel. Activities to be covered by these agreements may include investigation, review, and evaluation of records, reports, complaints, litigation, and other information about the practices or the practice patterns of veterinary personnel licensed or registered by the Board as these matters may relate to impaired veterinary personnel. Organizations having programs for impaired veterinary personnel may include a statewide supervisory committee or various regional or local components or subgroups.

(b) Agreements authorized under this section shall include provisions for the impaired veterinary personnel organizations to: (i) receive relevant information from the Board and other sources; (ii) conduct any investigation, review, or evaluation in an expeditious manner; (iii) provide assurance of confidentiality of nonpublic information and of the process; (iv) make reports of investigations and evaluations to the Board; and (v) implement any other related activities for operating and promoting a coordinated and effective process. The agreement shall include provisions assuring basic due process for veterinary personnel who become involved.

(c) Organizations entering into agreements with the Board shall establish and maintain a program for impaired veterinary personnel licensed or registered by the Board for the purpose of identifying, reviewing, and evaluating the ability of those veterinarians or veterinary technicians to function as veterinarians or veterinary technicians and provide programs for treatment and rehabilitation. The Board may provide funds for the administration of these impaired veterinary personnel peer review programs. The Board may adopt rules pursuant to Chapter 150B of the

General Statutes to apply to the operation of impaired veterinary personnel programs, with provisions for: (i) definitions of impairment; (ii) guidelines for program elements; (iii) procedures for receipt and use of information of suspected impairment; (iv) procedures for intervention and referral; (v) arrangements for monitoring treatment, rehabilitation, posttreatment support, and performance; (vi) reports of individual cases to the Board; (vii) periodic reporting of statistical information; (viii) assurance of confidentiality of nonpublic information and of the process; and (ix) other necessary measures.

(d) Upon investigation and review of a veterinarian licensed by the Board or a veterinary technician registered with the Board, or upon receipt of a complaint or other information, an impaired veterinary personnel organization that enters into an agreement with the Board shall report to the Board detailed information about any veterinarian licensed or veterinary technician registered by the Board if:

- (1) The veterinarian or veterinary technician constitutes an imminent danger to the public, to patients, or to himself or herself.
- (2) The veterinarian or veterinary technician refuses to cooperate with the program, refuses to submit to treatment, or is still impaired after treatment and exhibits professional incompetence.
- (3) It reasonably appears that there are other grounds for disciplinary action.

(e) Any confidential information or other nonpublic information acquired, created, or used in good faith by an impaired veterinary personnel organization or the Board regarding a participant pursuant to this section shall remain confidential and shall not be subject to discovery or subpoena in a civil case, nor subject to disclosure as a public document by the Board pursuant to Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. No person participating in good faith in an impaired veterinary personnel program developed under this section shall be required in a civil case to disclose any information, including opinions, recommendations, or evaluations, acquired or developed solely in the course of participating in the program.

(f) Impaired veterinary personnel activities conducted in good faith pursuant to any program developed under this section shall not be grounds for civil action under the laws of this State, and the activities are deemed to be State-directed and sanctioned and shall constitute "State action" for the purposes of application of antitrust laws. (2003-139, s. 1.)

#### **§ 90-187.16. Practice of veterinary medicine allowed at registered animal shelters.**

Notwithstanding any rule adopted by the Board prescribing minimum facility and practice standards for any location where veterinary medicine is practiced, a licensed veterinarian may practice veterinary medicine, including surgery and invasive procedures, at an animal shelter registered with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, consistent with any rules adopted by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services concerning animal shelters. (2019-170, s. 2(b).)

#### **§ 90-187.17. Inspection process.**

At least one week prior to conducting any inspection pursuant to G.S. 90-185(3) or G.S. 90-186(2), the Board shall provide written notice of the upcoming inspection to the veterinarian. The written notice may be provided via an electronic communication. The veterinarian may contact the Board to reschedule the inspection, but the inspection shall be rescheduled no later than one week after the originally scheduled date of the inspection. Along with the written notice of inspection, the Board shall provide the veterinarian with a checklist of all

standards adopted by rule for which the inspector may issue a violation and, with as much specificity as possible, conditions that violate the standards. (2023-63, s. 4(a).)