



## **AVA code of practice for management of hygiene and infection control for veterinarians.**

### **Preamble**

The Australian Veterinary Association recommends this code of practice is adopted in all areas of veterinary practice, teaching and research.

The Australian Veterinary Association recommends veterinarians apply their knowledge of infectious disease processes, risk management, professional obligations and correct barrier protection to the reduction of infectious and contagious risks to veterinarians, their patients, clients, staff and families while conducting any aspect of the practice of veterinary science in Queensland.

The Australian Veterinary Association acknowledges there is no current specific legislation requiring veterinarians to develop, undertake or comply with formal infection control plans and procedures while performing veterinary procedures in Queensland. There are however legislative requirements under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* and the *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936* that apply to the management of hygiene and infectious diseases relevant to veterinary surgeons in Queensland

There is a workplace health and safety obligation for every person in Queensland to manage and maintain a safe workplace and to protect workers, colleagues and public from risks that can be expected in the workplace. It is a requirement of all persons who are responsible for a workplace to be familiar with these provisions and to demonstrate compliance.

The Risk Management Code of Practice 2007, developed by Workplace Health and Safety Queensland provides a framework for veterinarians to meet their obligations under the Queensland *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*. This document can be accessed on the website. [Risk Management Code of Practice 2007 - Workplace Health and Safety Queensland](#)

The *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936* has requirements for veterinarians to competently perform their profession to a standard that conforms to accepted standards and to demonstrate a commitment to hygiene in the practice of the profession. The AVA Code of Practice for Hygiene and Infection Control has been adopted as a reference document by the Veterinary Surgeons Board of Queensland

Veterinarians who are members of the Australian Veterinary Association have adopted the following code of practice to demonstrate their commitment to the profession and the community and an ongoing commitment for the provision of best practice veterinary services for animals under their care.



# Australian Veterinary Association

## Code of Practice for Management of Hygiene and Infection Control

### 1. Workplace based infection control plan

Each workplace, including ambulatory service, attended by the veterinarian will be assessed for the risk of infection to all workers, clients and animals. The risk assessment will include development and audit of standard operational procedures to minimise the risk of adverse consequences from a foreseeable event at that workplace. The risk assessment will be documented and reviewed at least annually against published material for the control of infection in veterinary workplaces. A senior professional staff member should have responsibility for currency of the plan and inclusion of all staff in the development and application of the procedures to manage risks.

### 2. Standard Infection Control Procedures

All staff involved in the handling of animals, animal waste or material that may be contaminated with animal fluids or veterinary therapeutic agents will be regularly instructed in the correct use of standard infection control barriers and monitored for correct application of these practices.

### 3. High Risk Procedures

Veterinarians who are undertaking high risk procedures, where the risk of adverse consequences would be very likely or very severe due to the nature of the procedure or infectious agent need to ensure additional precautions are observed for themselves and any at risk human or animals. High risk procedures would include procedures where aerosol dispersion or gross contamination by body fluids could occur while undertaking the veterinary procedure. Additional protection levels including exclusion of non essential persons or animals and the use of specialised protective equipment are required.

### 4. Demonstrated commitment to infection control practices

Veterinarians must demonstrate a commitment for continual application of the principles of protection of themselves, and all other human and animals under their control. Verbal instruction and educational material is vital for all staff at their workplace. Written material must also be available for clients of high risk animals. Staff are required to actively participate in developing standard procedures for management of risks as well as reporting new risks and incident reporting.

### 5. Monitoring of infection control programs

The monitoring and documentation of participation by staff and clients in management and minimisation of risk of infection within the workplace must be encouraged through formal audit procedures. Demonstrated continued professional education programs as well as informal discussions with staff and clients should be documented as evidence of application of the infection control plan and a commitment to minimisation of the risks to all persons and animals.