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7 Ways CA Assembly Bill 1535 Impacts Veterinary Medicine



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Effective January 1, 2022, California Assembly Bill 1535 and related rulemaking have significantly revised the rules governing the practice of veterinary medicine in California. Key changes include:

#1 - Elimination of the California Board Examination. Veterinarians who wish to be licensed in California must only pass the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination and a take-home open book California veterinary law examination.

#2 - License and Permit Fees. AB 1535 revises and raises the statutory limits for license and permit fees and lowers Registered Veterinary Technician (RVT) fees.

#3 - Safeguards Related to the Corporate Practice of Veterinary Medicine. The new law also includes safeguards to prevent interference with the practice of veterinary medicine. Additionally, the California Veterinary Medical Board (VMB) may deny, suspend, or revoke a premises registration if an unlicensed person practices, influences, or exerts control over the provisions of veterinary medicine. The law also expressly prohibits an unlicensed premises registrant from interfering with the professional judgment of a veterinarian or registered veterinary technician.

#4 - Changes to Veterinary Premises Registration. Limited liability companies are eligible to hold a veterinary premises registration. Application for registration will need to name all owners, all officers, and an agent for service of process, and the registrant will need to report any changes to this information within 30 days.

#5 - Changes to Animal Shelter Veterinary Medicine. AB 1535 attempts to address concerns regarding the minimum standard care in animal shelters. The bill includes provisions that authorize public animal control agencies, shelters, and humane society shelters that are not registered to provide limited care. For example, animal shelters are now able to administer vaccinations to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and nonprescription medications for parasites without the presence of a veterinarian.

#6- RVT Name Tag Requirement. AB 1535 requires RVTs, veterinary assistants, and veterinary assistant-controlled substance permit holders to wear name identification tags in at least 18-point type that includes their license or permit numbers. This requirement becomes operative on January 1, 2023, to give veterinary practices time to comply with the name tag requirement.

#7 - RVT Amendments. Also impacting RVTs, effective April 1, 2021, California regulations were amended to expand the scope of practice for an RVT to permit them to apply casts and splints under indirect supervision, compound drugs from non-bulk substances under indirect supervision, and compound drugs from bulk substances under direct supervision.

All the new amendments to the VMB's enabling act, section 4800, et seq. of the Business and Professions Code in AB 1535, became effective on January 1, 2022, unless otherwise stated in this article.

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