



THE NEW ZEALAND
**VETERINARY
NURSING
ASSOCIATION**

NZVNA PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES

The New Zealand Veterinary
Nursing Association strives to **protect**,
promote and **provide** the highest
standard of veterinary nursing care

Introduction

The New Zealand Veterinary Nursing Association (NZVNA) has developed this *NZVNA Professional Guidelines*.

Professionalism underlies the standards of care that our patients receive and ensures their safety as well as the safety of our colleagues, clients and the public as well as ourselves.

It is important to stress that these *NZVNA Professional Guidelines* are not a legal code. These guidelines set out the principles of professional practice and personal responsibility that all members of the NZVNA must adhere to. This is not a guide on how to be an Allied Veterinary Professional, nor does it relate to job roles or scope of practice. For further information regarding the latter, please see the Allied Veterinary Professional Regulatory Council.

NZVNA would like to thank everyone that participated in our consultation process to update these guidelines. Without your insight and valuable contributions, we would not have been able to reflect such a wide range of views.

Definition of terms used in this guide

Allied Veterinary Professional (AVP)	Any person with an animal health qualification eligible for registration with the Allied Veterinary Professional Regulatory Council
Client	The person who requests veterinary services for an animal. This is usually in the context of a request for veterinary services to be provided by a veterinarian
Patient	Any animal cared for by an AVP acting in their professional capacity
Veterinarian	Any veterinarian appropriately qualified, currently registered by the Veterinary Council of New Zealand in terms of the Veterinarians Act 2005 and holding a current practicing certificate

Principles of Practice

AVP's must ensure that the health and welfare of animals within their care and maintain the five principles of practice to fulfil their professional responsibilities.

1. Professional competence
2. Honesty and Integrity
3. Independence and impartiality
4. Client confidentiality and trust
5. Professional accountability

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YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOUR PATIENTS

An AVP must:

- a. make animal welfare the primary consideration for all patients
- b. treat all patients, of whatever species, humanely and with respect, taking all reasonable care in using their professional skills to administer care and treatments to patients
- c. provide appropriate and suitable care to all patients
- d. assist with the maintenance of proper standards in relation to in-patient care and supervision
- e. advocate for all patients
- f. work within your area of competence and know when to ask for assistance

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YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS

An AVP must:

- a. ensure that clear information is provided to the client about the arrangements for the care of in-patients
- b. keep their skills and knowledge up to date
- c. treat the client with respect and observe professional courtesies
- d. facilitate communication between the veterinarian and the client, to assist the client's understanding of any issues relating to their animal's treatment
- e. recognise situations where the client should speak to the veterinarian in charge of the case
- f. give due consideration to the client's concerns and wishes where these do not conflict with the patient's welfare
- g. recognise that the client has freedom of choice
- h. respect the cultural needs and values of others
- i. Keep confidential any information acquired relating to a patient or client
 - a. The sharing of pictures or any other information on social media or any other outlet must have written consent from the owner

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OUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

An AVP must:

- a. promote responsible animal ownership
- b. at all times be trustworthy and honest and uphold the good reputation of allied veterinary professionals
- c. co-operate with other health professionals when appropriate
- d. use their professional status to provide only factual information to the public about veterinary products and services
- e. accurately represent their qualifications by using the post-nominal letters as per the NZVNA/AVPRC guidance.
- f. continue their professional education by keeping up to date with the changes and developments in evidence-based practice in animal health and welfare, particularly in their area of professional activity and should maintain a record of continuing professional development (CPD) undertaken as evidence of so doing

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YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO YOUR PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUES

An AVP must:

- a. communicate effectively with all colleagues involved in the care of a patient to facilitate treatment and care
- b. assist with the provision of all relevant clinical information promptly to colleagues taking over responsibility for a case
- c. assist with the provision of proper documentation for all referral or re-directed cases
- d. be satisfied that the person to whom a task is delegated is competent
- e. treat as confidential, and refrain from divulging, any information acquired during employment. Such information must not be disclosed to anyone except where they are required to do so in a court of law
- f. carry out a veterinarian's orders diligently, assisting in the provision of veterinary care. They shall, however, act always in the interests of the animal and in such a manner as to justify the trust and confidence of the public and to uphold the good standing of the veterinary profession
- g. be prepared to explain and justify to clients or colleagues any action or decision taken during their professional activities
- h. keep within their own areas of competence save for the requirement to provide emergency first aid
- i. always treat colleagues with respect

An AVP must not:

- a. speak or write disparagingly about another professional colleague
- b. obstruct a client from changing to another veterinary practice
- c. discourage a client from seeking a second opinion

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YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO THE LAW

An AVP must:

- a. be fully aware of, and abide by, all Acts and Regulations affecting them professionally and seek to clarify any areas that are of confusion or are not clearly understood
 - a. Professional conduct, scopes of practice and information about roles and responsibilities of various AVP roles is held by the AVPRC.
- b. be mindful of their responsibility to report to their employer any circumstances where the health and safety of staff or animals is put at risk
- c. when dispensing products or medications, ensure the client is aware of the correct method of use, route of administration, withholding times and special precautions relevant to that animal remedy
- d. not take part in any illegal or unethical conduct. Any AVP who may be in difficulty or trouble may contact the New Zealand Veterinary Nursing Association in confidence
- e. The NZVNA will provide support and advice to its members <https://nzvna.org.nz/about-us/>
- f. Address any complaints about an AVP's Professional Conduct to the Allied Veterinary Professional Regulatory Council (AVPRC) <https://www.avprc.org.nz/>

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YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOURSELF

An AVP must:

- a. Be proud of your profession
- b. Be proud of your qualification(s)
- c. Be proud of belonging to a membership organisation
- d. Undertake CPD on a regular basis in an area that you have an interest in. Reflect on this CPD to recognise the benefit that you have received and where you want to direct future studies
- e. speak up if you are asked to complete a task that is above and beyond your known level of competence and skill, regardless of who asks
- f. do not knowingly put yourself in a situation that may cause harm to yourself, patients or others
- g. NZVNA strongly encourages all its members to join the AVPRC register and hold an annual practicing certificate

The *Guide to Professional Conduct for Allied Veterinary Professionals* was adopted by the members of the New Zealand Veterinary Nursing Association on 5 August 1994 and updated in 2007 and 2023 (including the name change to encompass all AVP's). The NZVNA Professional Guidelines is issued to all members of the New Zealand Veterinary Nursing Association and all members of said Association must abide by these guidelines.



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