



State of Wisconsin

Veterinary Examining Board

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Guidance Document VEB-GD-009 Anesthesia Monitoring

Wis. Stat. § 89.07

Wis. Admin. Code § VE 1.44 and 1.58

4/22/25

Topic

This guidance document clarifies expectations for anesthesia monitoring.

Relevant Statutes and Administrative Code

Wisconsin Stat. § 89.07 (1) (b) provides that “unprofessional conduct” includes violating Chapter 89 of the Wisconsin Statutes or any federal or state statute or rule that substantially relates to the practice of veterinary medicine.

Wisconsin Stat. § 89.07 (1) (f) provides that “unprofessional conduct” includes engaging in the practice of veterinary medicine which evidences a lack of knowledge or ability to apply professional principles or skills.

Wisconsin Stat. § 89.07 (2) (a) authorizes the board to, by order, reprimand any person holding a license, certificate, or permit under the chapter or deny, revoke, suspend, limit, or any combination thereof, the person’s license, certification, or permit if the person has engaged in unprofessional conduct.

Wisconsin Admin. Code § VE 1.44 (6) (a) allows a veterinarian to delegate the administration of local or general anesthesia, including induction and monitoring, to a certified veterinary technician under the supervision of the veterinarian when the veterinarian is personally present on the premises where the services are provided.

Wisconsin Admin. Code § VE 1.44 (9) allows, notwithstanding subs. (1) to (8), a veterinary student, certified veterinary technician or unlicensed assistant employed by a veterinarian to, under the supervision of the veterinarian and pursuant to mutually acceptable written protocols, perform evaluative and treatment procedures necessary to provide an appropriate response to life-threatening emergency situations for the purpose of stabilizing the patient pending further treatment.

Wisconsin Admin. Code § VE 1.02 (14) defines “supervision” to mean available at all times for consultation, either in person or within 15 minutes of contact by telephone, by video conference or by electronic communications device, except where other provisions are specified in rule.

Wisconsin Admin. Code § VE 1.58 (2) provides that “unprofessional conduct” includes conduct in the practice of veterinary medicine which evidences a lack of knowledge or ability to apply professional principles or skills.

Wisconsin Admin. Code § VE 1.58 (7) provides that “unprofessional conduct” includes violating or aiding and abetting the violation of any law or administrative rule or regulation substantially related to the practice of veterinary medicine.

Board Position

A veterinarian may not delegate anesthesia monitoring to an unlicensed assistant, unless necessary to provide an appropriate response to life-threatening emergency situations for the purpose of stabilizing the patient pending further treatment, pursuant to Wisconsin Admin. Code § VE 1.44 (9). Delegations in this situation must be made pursuant to mutually acceptable protocols and under supervision as defined in Wis. Admin. Code § VE 1.02 (14).

If a veterinarian monitors anesthesia, delegates anesthesia monitoring to a certified veterinary technician, or delegates anesthesia monitoring to an unlicensed assistant when necessary to provide an appropriate response to life-threatening emergency situations for the purpose of stabilizing the patient pending further treatment, the veterinarian must ensure a standard of care that does not evidence a lack of knowledge or ability to apply professional principles or skills, pursuant to Wisconsin Stat. § 89.07 (1) (f) and Wisconsin Admin. Code § VE 1.58 (2).

When reviewing cases involving anesthesia, the VEB may consider whether the veterinarian wrongfully delegated anesthesia monitoring to an unlicensed assistant, and whether the delegation evidenced a lack of knowledge or ability to apply professional principles or skills. For example, the VEB may consider who was present, the complexity of the surgery, whether the anesthesia was intubated gas anesthesia or injectable anesthesia, how anesthesia records were made, and other relevant information specific to the case.

The VEB may also consider whether the situation was an emergency or the result of inadequate planning. The veterinarian is responsible for ensuring appropriate staff (a certified veterinary technician or another veterinarian) are present to monitor anesthesia for surgeries in which the veterinarian could not readily stop the surgery and make adjustments to anesthesia without endangering the patient. In general, if the surgery itself is not necessary to provide an appropriate response to a life-threatening emergency situation for the purpose of stabilizing the patient pending further treatment, then anesthesia monitoring cannot be delegated to an unlicensed assistant.