Enforcement Action
The Board takes disciplinary action against licensed or unlicensed people who violate State laws regarding veterinary practice. Grounds for discipline focus on behaviors that place consumers and animals at risk of harm, including negligence, fraud or deception, incompetence, or unsanitary conditions. Disciplinary actions that may be taken include citation and fine, restrictions on practice, and even license revocation. Disciplinary action taken by the Board is public information and is available to consumers.

Laws and Regulations
Veterinarians and RVTs are responsible for knowing and following the California Veterinary Medicine Practice Act. For more about the laws, regulations, policies, and legal opinions relating to veterinary care, visit www.vmb.ca.gov/laws_regs.

Licensed Staff
Veterinarians are licensed to diagnose medical problems, prescribe therapies, and perform surgeries. Only currently licensed veterinarians may hold a permit to be the managing licensee at a veterinary facility.

Tip: Veterinary licenses and premise permits must be posted for public view at veterinary facilities.

Inside a Veterinary Hospital
Veterinary hospitals work a lot like human hospitals. Veterinarians are the doctors, and registered veterinary technicians are similar to registered nurses.

Most people know who the veterinarian is in a veterinary hospital, but sometimes consumers (even animal health professionals) may blur the lines between licensed and unlicensed staff.

It’s important for consumers to know who the licensed and unlicensed staff are and the roles they play in a pet’s care.

Here’s an overview of who’s who in veterinary healthcare, from the California Veterinary Medical Board and the Registered Veterinary Technician Committee.
Unlicensed staff may administer medications and assist with other tasks under the direct or indirect supervision of a DVM or under the direct supervision of an RVT, but are not allowed to perform tasks restricted to DVMs or RVTs. Unlicensed staff may not treat animals outside a hospital setting.

**Tip:** An RVT must be under direct supervision by a DVM when working with an anesthetized animal.

**Under direct supervision, an RVT may:**
- Administer anesthesia
- Suture skin and oral tissue
- Extract teeth
- Apply a splint or cast
- Create a relief hole in the skin for placement of an intravascular catheter

**Under indirect supervision, an RVT may:**
- Operate radiographic equipment
- Perform specific emergency lifesaving procedures
- Administer medications
- Apply or change bandages
- Draw blood and run lab tests

Like DVMs, RVTs must post their certification in the veterinary hospital in public view. DVMs and RVTs who provide services away from a hospital should carry the pocket version of their license. Consumers may ask to see the license before agreeing to any treatments.

**Tip:** Direct supervision means the DVM is present and is quickly available where the animal healthcare task is being performed. Indirect supervision means the DVM is not present, but has given instructions for the animal’s care.

**Complaints**
Many of the complaints received by the Board have little to do with the care the animal received. Often, complaints are due to communication problems and the complexity of veterinary healthcare. When a consumer files a complaint, the Board investigates to determine if there has been a violation of the California Veterinary Medicine Practice Act. Even if the investigation determines that no direct violation has taken place, the Board may make recommendations to the veterinarian to help avoid future complaints.

**Tip:** The Board has no control over fees charged for veterinary services or payment plans.