

Veterinary Assistant Controlled Substance Permit Q&A

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Since 2013, the California Business and Professions Code Section 4836.2 requires veterinary assistants employed in veterinary practices who obtain or administer controlled substances to have a current and valid Veterinary Assistant Controlled Substance Permit (VACSP). The California Veterinary Medical Board (VMB) oversees permitting and has enforcement authority over VACSP laws, including the California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Sections 2087-2087.3. The following Q&A addresses common areas of confusion about VACSPs among permit holders and supervising veterinarians.

Q: Who applies for the VACSP?

A: Only the veterinary assistant may apply for a VACSP. An application cannot be completed by a third party.

Q: What is the best way to apply for a VACSP?

A: Applying online is most efficient. Visit vmb.ca.gov and click the "BreZE" icon at the bottom of the homepage. Create a user profile and once logged in, select the VACSP application from the dropdown menu in the Applications section.

Q: Can a third party pay for a VACSP on behalf of the applicant?

A: Yes. In the online application process, the payment page will accept a credit card from a third party.

Q: Does having a VACSP mean that a veterinary assistant may obtain or administer controlled substances?

A: Holding a VACSP does not automatically qualify a permit holder to access controlled substances. A supervisory relationship with a California Premises Licensee Manager must be filed with the VMB and the supervising veterinarian must determine that the VACSP holder is qualified to access controlled substances.

Q: What does a licensee manager need to do in order to create a supervisory relationship with a VACSP holder?

A: There are two forms that must be downloaded, completed, and remitted to the VMB in order to declare a supervisory relationship with a VACSP holder. These forms can be found under the Forms/Pubs tab at vmb.ca.gov.

The forms are:

Licensee Manager Acknowledgement Form – This is affirmation of the terms and conditions that a Licensee

Manager must abide by in order to supervise a VACSP holder.

Licensee Manager Agreement Form – This is a supervisory association agreement between the Licensee manager and the VACSP holder.

Q: What happens if a VACSP holder stops working at the practice of the supervising licensee manager or the licensee manager no longer wants to have a supervisory relationship with the VACSP holder?

A: The supervising licensee manager must report the termination of the supervisory relationship to the VMB within 10 days using the VACSP Supervisor Disassociation Application, also found on the VMB website in the Licensee Forms section.

Q: What ongoing obligations does a VACSP holder have to the VMB?

A: VACSP holders are required to keep a current address of record, work location, and their VACSP supervisor name on file with the VMB during all times that they are employed in an animal hospital setting and have access to controlled substances. The VMB must be notified within 30 days of any changes or the permit holder may be subject to monetary fines. Address and name changes may be completed online through BreZE.

Q: How long does a VACSP last?

A: For initial permits, the VMB utilizes a birth month renewal system. The month in which that applicant was born determines the initial permit period. Initial permits will not be issued for less than 13 months and no more than 24 months. Following an initial permit period, VACSPs will renew every two years.

Q: Do VACSPs need to be displayed?

A: Yes. According to the California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Section 2087.3, VACSPs should be either prominently displayed in the animal hospital setting or the permit holder shall wear a name tag identifying them as a VACSP holder.

For more information about VACSP compliance, visit the VMB website at vmb.ca.gov and search "Veterinary Assistant Controlled Substance Permit" in the search bar. ■