



Brushing up on Continuing Education

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Veterinarians and registered veterinary technicians (RVTs) are mandated to complete specified continuing education (CE) as a condition of licensure renewal in California. The following are the most common CE questions and answers.

Q: What is the CE requirement for California?

A: Veterinarians must complete 36 units (36 hours) and RVTs must complete 20 units (20 hours) of CE during each two-year license renewal cycle. CE courses must be taken from approved providers and meet specified course content requirements. Examples of approved providers include the CVMA, the American Veterinary Medical Association, government institutions,

and courses included in the Registry of Approved Continuing Education (RACE) program through the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB), to name a few.

Q: How much CE must be taken live?

A: Thirty units of veterinarian CE and 16 units of RVT CE must be “live-interactive.” The VMB has clarified that, in order for a course to be considered “live-interactive,” the course instructor must be present throughout the instructional period. The course instructor must be available for interactive dialogue to answer attendee questions. Live-interactive courses may be taken online, provided that the aforementioned requirements are met.

Q: What qualifies as self-study courses?

A: Veterinarians are allowed up to six

units and RVTs are allowed up to four units per renewal cycle of self-study courses. Self-study is a form of orderly learning that does not offer interaction between the licensee and instructor during the instructional period. This self-study includes:

1. Independent study, reading journals, viewing video recordings, or listening to audio recordings. (California Code of Regulations (CCR 16), Section 2085(f))
2. Providing pro bono spay/neuter services at a qualified animal control agency or shelter. (California Business and Professions Code (BPC) 4846.5(b)(2)(B))

Q: Do courses in business management count as CE?

A: Veterinarians may take up to 24 units and RVTs up to 15 units per renewal cycle on courses in business practice management or stress seminars. (CCR, Title 16, Sections 2085.3(e) and 2086.4(e))

Q: Are veterinarians in California required to take CE on the judicious use of antibiotics?

A: Yes. Per BPC section 4846.5(k)(1), veterinarians must take at least a one-hour course on the judicious use of medically important antimicrobial drugs every four years as a condition of licensure.

Q: Are there any CE exemptions?

A: Veterinarians and RVTs are not required to obtain CE for their first license renewal. (BPC section 4846.5(d); CCR, Title 16, Section 2086.1(d)) Also, veterinarians with a university license are not required to complete CE as a condition of licensure renewal. While there was a temporary filing extension in place for a portion of the COVID-19 pandemic, it expired in October of 2021; thus, there are no COVID exemptions currently in effect.

Q: Who enforces CE laws in California?

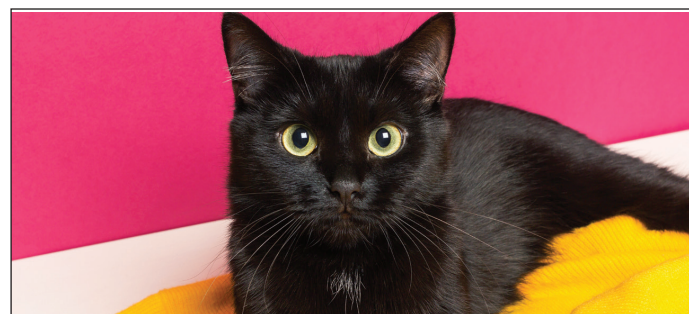
A: The Veterinary Medical Board (VMB) randomly but routinely audits licensees during license renewal by requiring submission of CE certificates to prove that minimum requirements are met. Failure to provide CE documentation can result in possible administrative action.

Q: Do licensees have to keep records of CE?

A: Yes. Upon completing qualified CE, the provider must issue attendees a certificate of course completion with the information specified in CCR, Title 16, Sections 2085.8 and 2886.7. Licensees are required to retain course completion certificates for a period of four years pursuant to CCR Title 16, Sections 2085.9(b) and 2086.8(a). The AAVSB RACetrack online CE tracker is free and easy to utilize. Users who upload their completed CE courses and certificates will benefit from a streamlined license renewal process, as the VMB has access to RACetrack to verify CE.

More information about CE may be accessed at the VMB's website: (vmb.ca.gov/licensees/continuing_ed.shtml) or by visiting the CVMA's website (cvma.net) and clicking on the Learning tab. ■

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