



Guideline on Veterinary Telemedicine

This guideline is the minimum standard expected from a Northern Territory registered veterinary practitioner exercising reasonable skill and care in the course of providing treatment to animals. This guideline should be read in conjunction with other relevant guidelines and the Code of Conduct.

Application

It is the responsibility of veterinary practitioners who utilise telemedicine to be conversant with the current version of the Guidelines of the Veterinary Board of the Northern Territory.

Veterinarians and specialists must be registered in the state/territory in which they are conducting telemedicine and in the state/territory in which the patient is residing.

Telemedicine is the remote diagnosis and treatment of patients by means of remote consultations and should not replace an appropriate clinical examination.

Telemedicine should not be used as a substitute or as a replacement for clients attending a veterinary practice where it is reasonable to do so or in situations where a veterinarian practice easily accessible.

Telemedicine **does not** include consultation between veterinary practitioners in which colleagues in different physical locations consult remotely with each other.

Bona Fide Veterinary Practitioner/Client/Patient Relationship is defined to exist when:

1. *The veterinarian has assumed responsibility for making judgements regarding the health and welfare of the animal(s) and the need for treatment, with the owner's (client's) agreement;*
2. *The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animal(s) to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of their medical condition. This means that the veterinarian has up to date knowledge of the keeping and care of the animal(s) **by virtue of an appropriate clinical examination, and has assessed the general health of the animal(s) kept there;** and*
3. *The veterinarian is available, or has advised the client where they can obtain emergency coverage, for follow-up evaluation in the event of an adverse reaction or failure of the treatment regimen.*

Guidelines for providing veterinary telemedicine services

Veterinary practitioners who diagnose and treat patients using telemedicine should:

- Ensure that a bona fide veterinary practitioner/client/patient relationship has been established as described in the definitions above;
- Make a judgment about the appropriateness of telemedicine based on consultation and in particular whether a **direct physical examination is necessary;**
- Assess the animal(s) condition based on history, clinical signs and appropriate examination;
- Accept the ultimate responsibility for evaluating information used in assessment and treatment, irrespective of its source. This applies to information gathered by a third party who may have taken a history for the animal or examined the animal; and
- Make a compliant clinical record for the examination and treatment of the animal.

Emergency situations

If an alternative is not possible, a telemedicine consultation should be as thorough as possible until suitable arrangements can be made for the continuing care of the animal.

Version Control	V1
Approved By	Veterinary Board
Last Reviewed	July 2020
Next Review Date	July 2023