

TITLE 26
LEGISLATIVE RULE
WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

SERIES 3
REGISTRATION OF VETERINARY TECHNICIANS

§26-3-1. General.

1.1. Scope. -- This rule establishes the procedures by which Veterinary Technicians may be registered and regulated by the West Virginia Board of Veterinary Medicine.

1.2. Authority. -- W. Va. Code §30-10-6

1.3. Filing Date. -- April 1, 2020

1.4. Effective Date. -- July 1, 2020

1.5. Sunset Provision. -- This rule shall terminate and have no further force or effect on July 1, 2030.

§26-3-2. Definitions.

2.1. "Board" means the West Virginia Board of Veterinary Medicine.

2.2. "Initial registration" means obtaining a registration in West Virginia for the practice of veterinary technology for the first time.

2.3. "Registration" or "registrant" means the official authorization by the board to engage in the practice of veterinary technology.

2.4. "Unreversed", as that term refers to a criminal conviction, means that a conviction has not been set aside, vacated, pardoned, or expunged.

§26-3-3. Registration of Veterinary Technicians.

3.1. The West Virginia Board of Veterinary Medicine shall examine and register persons who have graduated with a degree in veterinary technology from a school approved by the Board.

3.2. No person may use the term, be addressed as or referred to with respect to veterinary medicine as a "veterinary technician" or a "technician" unless he or she has complied with the requirements for registration by the Board, and is currently authorized by the Board to use the title of "Registered Veterinary Technician, or "R.V.T."

§26-3-4. Applications and Examinations for Veterinary Technicians.

4.1. Before a person may take the jurisprudence examination for a registration to practice veterinary technology, he or she shall submit an application, along with the non-refundable required

fees, or qualify for a waiver of fees, to the Board. The application shall contain the following information, which shall be retained in the applicant's file:

4.1.1. Applicant's name, address, and certified copy of the applicant's birth certificate or official record of birth;

4.1.2. Verification of US citizenship or written documentation of applicants' authority to reside and work in the United States;

4.1.3. Certified transcript showing applicant's educational qualifications, including the name, location of the school, and the date the degree was awarded;

4.1.4. Applicant shall indicate whether he or she has ever been denied a registration or had a registration restricted or disciplined in any other state or jurisdiction with the name of the state or jurisdiction;

4.1.5. Verification of applicant's status as a registrant from each state or jurisdiction where he or she now holds or ever held a registration;

4.1.6. Certified written verifications of name changes;

4.1.7. A document provided in language other than English shall be accompanied by an English translation copy with the name and address of the translator listed;

4.1.8. A current photograph of the applicant. Applicant shall be alone in the photograph;

4.1.9. The applicant shall state in the application that he or she will abide by the laws of this State regulating the practice of veterinary technology and that he or she will abide by the rules of the Board;

4.1.10. The application shall be signed by the applicant.

4.2. An applicant furnishing false information in an application shall be denied the right to take the examination. If the applicant has been registered before the Board becomes aware of the falseness of the information, the registration is subject to disciplinary action.

4.3. Once the application is complete and all fees have been received, the Board will notify the applicant within 14 days of their eligibility to take the jurisprudence examination.

4.4. If an applicant is found not qualified to take the examination, the Board shall notify the applicant in writing at the applicant's address as listed on the application of the finding and the grounds upon which the finding is based. An applicant found not qualified may demand a hearing. The application fee of any applicant found not qualified to take the examination is non-refundable.

4.5. The applicant must complete the jurisprudence exam within 30 days of notice. The Board may waive this requirement upon written confirmation from a federal or state agency stating applicant has been called to immediate active duty.

4.6. An applicant must have a passing score on the Veterinary Technician National Examinations (VTNE). The authorized examination provider shall be the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB).

4.7. It is the applicant's responsibility to have the national score reporting service of AAVSB forward a copy of his or her score directly to the Board at the applicant's expense.

4.8. Where available, all evidence and information required for application as described in this section may be provided through AAVSB.

4.9. Except where AAVSB is providing the information directly to the Board, completed verification forms must be provided directly from selected institutions to the Board and not from the applicant.

§26-3-5. Veterinary Technician Jurisprudence Examination Procedure.

5.1. Jurisprudence examinations shall be taken online.

5.2. Jurisprudence examinations shall cover the laws governing veterinary technology in the State of West Virginia.

5.3. The Board shall notify the applicant of the jurisprudence examination results the day of the examination.

5.4. If an applicant fails the examination, the test may be retaken once within 30 days and no sooner than 7 days.

5.5. Examinations are the property of the Board and shall not be duplicated in any form.

§26-3-6. Veterinary Technician Registrations.

6.1. The Board shall issue a certificate of registration to any person who has successfully completed the requirements of this rule. The registration shall be displayed in the principal office of the veterinary facility where the veterinary technician is employed. Any person registered has the right to use the title "Registered Veterinary Technician" and the abbreviation "R.V.T."

6.2. Upon payment of the registration fee or qualifying for a waiver of fees, the Board shall issue a registration to a qualified candidate who passes the examinations and meets the requirements of the Board to practice the profession of veterinary technology. If any veterinary technician desires that a duplicate registration certificate be issued, the Board shall issue such certificate upon payment of the duplicate registration certificate fee as set forth in the Schedule of Fees.

6.3. The registration certificate issued by the Board shall include the registrant's full name, a registration number, the Board seal, the effective date and the expiration date, and shall bear the signatures of the Chairperson and Secretary-Treasurer of the Board.

§26-3-7. Veterinary Technician Registration Renewal.

7.1. The Board shall notify each registered veterinary technician that his or her registration will expire on December 31. However, failure to receive the notification does not exempt a registrant from meeting the requirements of this rule. The Board shall issue a certificate of renewal to all registrants renewing their registrations under the provisions of this rule.

7.2. A veterinary technician may renew his or her registration from October 1 through December 31 of each year. Registration renewal requires completion of the required registration renewal form, payment of the annual renewal fee as specified in the Schedule of Fees, and certification to the Board that he or she has completed all continuing education requirements.

7.3. A registration that is not renewed will automatically be placed on expired status unless a specific request was made to place the registration on inactive status.

7.3.1. To renew a registration up to one year after the expiration date, the applicant must complete the required registration renewal form, pay the late renewal fee as specified in the Schedule of Fees, and submit evidence of completion of continuing education hours.

7.3.2. To reactivate an expired registration exceeding 1 year, the applicant must meet the requirements of §26-3-3, pay the late renewal fee as specified in the Schedule of Fees, and submit evidence of completion of the required continuing education hours, for a maximum of 16 hours. The board may require additional documentation of clinical competency and professional activities.

7.4. A registrant may request that their registration be placed on inactive status by completing the required registration renewal form, selecting the inactive option, and paying the inactive status fee as specified in the Schedule of Fees.

7.4.1. To reactivate an inactive registration, the applicant must complete the required registration renewal form, pay the renewal fee, and certify to the Board that he or she has completed continuing education hours for each year the registration has been expired, for a maximum of 16 hours.

7.5. A registrant shall undertake at least 8 (50 minute) units of approved continuing education in the field of veterinary technology during each calendar year. A minimum of 4 hours shall be related to the practice of veterinary technology to include scientific, laboratory, regulatory, and medical record keeping. No more than 4 hours shall be related to practice management. Classroom or online courses are permitted. No units may be accumulated, carried forward, or held over past the calendar year in which the hours of continuing education were completed.

7.5.1. Continuing Education approved providers/programs:

7.5.1.a. AVMA accredited colleges of veterinary technology;

7.5.1.b. Board approved national veterinary associations;

7.5.1.c. AVMA approved official state veterinary associations;

7.5.1.d. State or federal government agencies;

7.5.1.e. Registry of Approved Continuing Education (RACE);

7.5.1.f. Reviewed and approved by the West Virginia Board of Veterinary Medicine once fee is received pursuant to the Schedule of Fees.

7.5.2. A registrant is required to attest to compliance with continuing education requirements on his or her annual registration renewal and is required to maintain original documents verifying the date and subject of the program or course, the number of continuing education hours or credits, and certification from an approved sponsor. Original documents must be maintained for a period of two years following renewal. The Board shall conduct a random yearly audit to determine compliance. A registrant selected for the audit shall provide all supporting documentation within 20 days of receiving notification of the audit.

7.5.2.a. If registrant is non-compliant to the continuing education audit, the Board will initiate a complaint against the registrant and the registrant will be audited again the following year.

7.5.3. Continuing education hours required by disciplinary orders shall not be used to satisfy renewal requirements.

7.6. New graduates of the current year are exempt from the continuing education requirements until the beginning of the immediately succeeding reporting period after registration.

7.7. The Board may grant continuing education hardship extensions by request of the registrant. The Board shall only consider hardship extensions from registrants who the Board determines were prevented from completing the required continuing education hours within the year due to verified medical emergencies or military obligations beyond the registrant's control. Requests for a hardship extension must be received in the Board's office by December 15.

7.8. If an extension is granted by the Board for completion of approved continuing education hours, the registrant shall file the renewal application with the renewal fee. The Board shall renew the registration contingent upon the registrant completing the mandatory continuing education within a period determined by the Board from the current year's expiration date of December 31.

7.9. When a hardship registration is issued, the renewal registration shall be valid for the period required to complete the mandatory continuing education and shall be extended to December 31 upon receipt of acceptable documentation of completion of the required continuing education. The continuing education hours completed during the extension period may not be applied toward satisfaction of continuing education in the year completed and shall be separate from continuing education requirements for current year renewals.

7.10. A registered veterinary technician issued a hardship extension for completion of continuing education shall submit documentation of completion prior to the end of the Board approved extension period. Continued practice past the authorized extension period without a written renewal certificate from the Board constitutes the practice of veterinary technology without a registration.

7.11. By December 31 of each year, the registrant shall certify on the renewal application that he or she has successfully completed the continuing education requirement for that calendar year. It is the responsibility of the registrant to maintain evidence of meeting the continuing education requirements for registration renewal for random audit by the Board.

7.12. Upon receipt of the completed renewal application and fee, the Board shall issue a renewal registration.

7.13. A Registration issued by the Board shall be posted in a place conspicuous to the public at the establishment where veterinary technology is being provided.

7.14. A registrant shall notify the Board in writing or online of any change of address, conviction of a misdemeanor or felony, and/or disciplinary action by another federal or state agency no later than 30 days from the action.

§26-3-8. Registered Veterinary Technician Disciplinary Action.

8.1. The Board may deny, suspend or revoke a registration, impose a civil penalty, place a person's registration on probation, reprimand a registrant, refuse to examine an applicant or issue a registration or renew a registration, as provided by law and as provided in these rules if it finds an applicant or registrant:

8.1.1. Has presented to the Board false or fraudulent evidence of qualification or has been found to be guilty of fraud or deception in the process of examination, or for the purpose of securing a registration;

8.1.2. Is chronically or habitually intoxicated, has a chemical dependency or is addicted to drugs;

8.1.3. Has engaged in dishonest, unethical, or illegal practices in or connected with the practice of veterinary technology, or has been convicted of a misdemeanor related to the practice of veterinary technology or animal abuse or neglect;

8.1.4. Has been convicted of a felony under the laws of the State of West Virginia or any other state or jurisdiction of the United States or of the federal government of the United States;

8.1.5. Has engaged in practices or conduct in connection with the practice of veterinary technology which violate the standards of professional conduct as established by the Board;

8.1.6. Has permitted or allowed another to use his or her authorization to practice veterinary technology in this or any other state;

8.1.7. Has committed fraud in the application or reporting of a test of animal disease;

8.1.8. Has received any kickback for referring a client to another provider of veterinary services or goods;

8.1.9. Has performed unnecessary or unauthorized treatment;

8.1.10. Has been convicted of cruelty to animals;

8.1.11. Has committed an act or acts of unprofessional conduct;

8.1.12. Has committed gross malpractice or is guilty of a pattern of acts indicating consistent malpractice, negligence, incompetence in the practice of veterinary technology;

8.1.13. Has received disciplinary action in another jurisdiction, including the suspension, probation or revocation of a registration as a veterinary technician issued by another jurisdiction;

8.1.14. Has represented himself or herself as a specialist without completing the process of certification in a recognized veterinary technician specialty area.

8.2. The Board may also suspend or revoke the registration of a registrant who is found to be mentally incompetent by a court of competent jurisdiction. If the registrant is later determined to be mentally competent by a court, the Board may reinstate the registration.

8.3. On conviction of or determination of conviction of a person registered by the Board of any felony, the Board may, after an administrative hearing in which the facts of conviction are determined, suspend or revoke the person's registration. The Board may not reinstate or reissue a registration to a person whose registration is suspended or revoked under this section except on an express determination of the Board based on substantial evidence contained in an investigative report, indicating that the reinstatement or reissuance of the registration is in the best interests of the public and of the person whose registration has been suspended or revoked.

8.4. If a person violates this rule in a manner that constitutes grounds for disciplinary action by the Board, the Board may assess the costs of the investigation, hearing, hearing examiner, legal fees and all other reasonable and necessary costs incurred by or on behalf of the Board to the veterinary technician who was the subject of the disciplinary action.

§26-3-9. Petition for Registration Eligibility Determination.

9.1. An individual with a criminal record who has not previously applied for registration may petition the Board at any time for a determination of whether the individual's criminal record will disqualify the individual from obtaining a registration.

9.2. The petition shall be submitted on an application form prescribed by the Board and shall include sufficient details about the individual's criminal record to enable the Board to identify the jurisdiction where the conviction occurred, the date of the conviction, the date of the release from incarceration if applicable, and the specific nature of the conviction. Where the records are sealed, the applicant shall sign a waiver authorizing the Board to access the criminal records of the applicant in order for the Board to make the eligibility determination.

9.3. The applicant may submit with the petition evidence of rehabilitation, letters of reference, and any other information the applicant deems relevant to show fitness and the ability to practice veterinary technology.

9.4. The Board shall provide the determination within 60 days of receiving the petition and the applicable fee from the applicant.

9.5. The fee for an applicant petitioning for a registration eligibility determination is specified in the Schedule of Fees and upon acknowledgement of eligibility by the Board and upon the submission of an application for registration, the eligibility fee shall be deducted from the applicable initial registration application fee.

§26-3-10. Criminal History Record Check

10.1. Beginning July 1, 2020, and in addition to all of the requirements for registration, an applicant for an initial registration to practice as a veterinary technician in West Virginia shall submit to a State and a national criminal history record check and authorize the release of information to the Board.

10.2. The purpose of the criminal history record check is to assist the Board in obtaining information that may relate to the applicant's fitness for registration.

10.3. In addition to the State Police, the Board may contract with and designate a company specializing in the services required by this section instead of requiring the applicant to apply directly to the West Virginia State Police or similar out-of-state agency for the criminal history records checks. Provided, that any such company must utilize protocols consistent with standards established by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact.

10.4. The applicant shall furnish to the State Police, or other organization designated by the Board, a full set of fingerprints and any additional information required to complete the criminal history record check.

10.5. The applicant is responsible for any fees required by the State Police, or other organization duly designated by the Board, for the actual costs of the fingerprinting and the actual costs of conducting a complete criminal history record check.

10.6. The Board may require the applicant to obtain a criminal history records check from a similar Board approved agency or organization in the state of the applicant's residence, if outside of West Virginia.

10.7. The applicant shall authorize the release of all records, not sealed, obtained by the criminal history record check to the Board. Criminal history record checks shall be verified by a source acceptable to the Board, other than the applicant.

10.8. A criminal history record check submitted in support of an application for registration must have been requested by the applicant no earlier than twelve (12) months immediately prior to the Board's receipt of the applicant's electronic application for registration.

10.9. An initial registration application is not complete until the Board receives the results of a state and a national criminal history record check conducted by the State Police or another entity duly authorized by the Board. The Board shall not grant an application for registration submitted by any applicant who fails or refuses to submit the criminal history record check required by this section.

10.10. The Board may not disqualify an applicant from initial registration because of a prior criminal conviction unless that conviction bears a rational nexus to the practice of veterinary technology. The Board shall consider at a minimum:

10.10.1. The nature and seriousness of the crime;

10.10.2. The passage of time since the commission of the crime;

10.10.3. The relationship of the crime to the ability, capacity, and fitness required to perform the duties and discharge the responsibilities attendant to the practice of veterinary technology; and

10.10.4. Any evidence of rehabilitation or treatment undertaken by the applicant

10.11. The results of the State and national criminal history record check may not be released to or by a private entity except:

10.11.1. To the individual who is the subject of the criminal history record check;

10.11.2. With the written authorization of the individual who is the subject of the criminal history record check; or

10.11.3. Pursuant to a court order.

10.12. Criminal history record checks and related records are not public records for the purposes of W.Va. Code §29B-1-1. *et seq.*

10.13. Notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, if an applicant is disqualified from registration because of a prior criminal conviction, the Board shall permit the applicant to apply for initial registration if:

10.13.1. A period of five years has elapsed from the date of conviction or the date of release from incarceration, whichever is later;

10.13.2. The individual has not been convicted of any other crime during the period of time following the disqualifying offense; and

10.13.3. The conviction was not for an offense of a violent or sexual nature; Provided, that a conviction for an offense of a violent or sexual nature may subject an individual to a longer period of disqualification from registration, to be determined by the Board.