

New Requirement: VMB to Launch the Veterinary Assistant Controlled Substance Permit Program

The California Veterinary Medical Board (VMB) is implementing the Veterinary Assistant Controlled Substance Permit (VACSP) program in response to a mandate by the state legislature in 2013 (SB 304 (Liu)). The program requires that veterinary assistants who obtain or administer controlled substances obtain a VACSP through the VMB. Veterinary assistants include practice employees who are not licensed or registered with the VMB.

Start Date: The VMB plans to open the permit application process on October 1, 2016.

The following Q&A will provide guidance on veterinary practice obligations relating to VACSP enrollment and renewal.

Who is required to obtain a permit?

Veterinary assistants in an animal hospital setting who obtain or administer controlled substances are required to obtain a VACSP. VACSP holders must be under the direct or indirect supervision of a California licensed veterinarian.

How do I apply?

The VMB will offer both online and traditional paper applications, but strongly encourages applying online. Information will be available on the home page of the VMB website: vmb.ca.gov. To apply online, click on the BreEZe icon.

What will the application entail?

The application will require a fingerprint-based background check which can only be performed at a Live Scan service location. There are many Live Scan locations throughout California including most sheriff and police stations, many Mailboxes Etc., UPS and FedEx stores, and other retail locations that specialize in Live Scan fingerprinting. Mobile services are also available.

The application will also require the practice licensee manager to submit a signed VACSP Supervision Agreement as well as a Licensee Manager Acknowledgment stating that he or she understands the laws and regulations pertaining to supervision of the permit holder, and agrees to abide by them.

What happened to the current veterinary assistant background check requirement? Is it still valid?

The current veterinary assistant background check requirement is being replaced by the VACSP. The prior background check alone will no longer qualify a veterinary assistant to obtain and administer controlled substances.

How long does the VACSP last?

Initial Permit: The initial permit is valid for 13 to 24 months depending on when you apply and what month you were born. For example, if you apply in November 2016 and your birth month is January, your initial permit will be valid through January 31, 2018. **Renewal Permit:** The California Business and Professions Code Section 4836.3 states that each person who has been issued a VACSP shall apply for renewal every two years.

What are the fees?

The application and initial permit fee will be \$100 (\$50 non-refundable application fee + \$50 initial permit fee). The \$50 initial permit fee is a flat fee regardless of the length of your initial permit period. The permit renewal fee will also be \$50.

Do I need to update my permit if I move to a different practice?

Yes. You are required to have your current address of record, work location, and supervising licensee manager on file with the VMB. Changes to a VACSP can be made online through the BreEZe system at vmb.ca.gov or by paper form.





How long will the VMB give practices to comply?

The VMB will provide a reasonable phase-in period for veterinary assistants, who obtain or administer controlled substances, to get a permit.

Will the VMB notify me when my permit needs to be renewed?

The VMB will send out renewal reminders for all renewable permits 90 days in advance of their expiration date, and send out a delinquent notice 30 days after permit expiration.

Can the VMB refuse to issue or revoke a permit?

California Business and Professions Code Section 4836.2 (c-d) outlines grounds for permit refusal or revocation which include fraud, controlled substance drug abuse, or a felony controlled substance violation, among others.

If a VACSP is denied or revoked, what does that mean?

If a VACSP is denied or revoked, the employee may not obtain or administer controlled substances.

What else do I have to do to comply with the VACSP program?

Permit holders must wear a nametag or post their VACSP in the practice. More information about the specifics of these requirements can be found in the California Code of Regulations, Title 16, § 2087.3 or on the VMB website.

If the relationship between the licensee manager named on a VACSP Supervision Agreement form and permit holder is terminated, the licensee manager must inform the VMB in writing within 10 days. The VACSP will cease to be valid until a new licensee manager submits a signed VACSP Supervision Agreement form.

The terms “Veterinary Assistant Controlled Substance Permit” or “VACSP” may not be used by anyone who does not possess a current and valid permit.

Where can I find more information about the VACSP?

The VMB will have information about the VACSP available on their website at vmb.ca.gov. The VMB can be reached at (866) 229.0170 or at vmb@dca.ca.gov.