

Spay-Neuter: Practice Guidelines

JAVMA published an article on July 1, 2008 as a courtesy to the Association of Shelter Veterinarians on spay-neuter. The SC Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners is offering this article as information for your consideration and has provided a link from HAVS to clinical forms that might useful. These guidelines cannot replace or override any specific provision of South Carolina statutes and regulations but can be used to understand the law and implement acceptable practices to provide an appropriate standard of care for spay-neuter surgeries at shelters or in private practice. The Board considers these practice guidelines as a safe harbor for consideration.

From the Association of Shelter Veterinarians, as efforts to reduce the overpopulation and euthanasia of unwanted and unowned dogs and cats have increased, greater attention has been focused on spay-neuter programs throughout the United States. Because of the wide range of geographic and demographic needs, a wide variety of programs have been developed to increase delivery of spay-neuter services to targeted populations of animals, including stationary and mobile clinics, MASH-style operations, shelter services, feral cat programs, and services provided through private practitioners. In an effort to ensure a consistent level of care, the Association of Shelter Veterinarians convened a task force of veterinarians to develop veterinary medical care guidelines for spay-neuter programs. The guidelines consist of recommendations for preoperative care (eg, patient transport and housing, patient selection, client communication, record keeping, and medical considerations), anesthetic management (eg, equipment, monitoring, perioperative considerations, anesthetic protocols, and emergency preparedness), surgical care (eg, operating-area environment; surgical-pack preparation; patient preparation; surgeon preparation; surgical procedures for pediatric, juvenile, and adult patients; and identification of neutered animals), and postoperative care (eg, analgesia, recovery, and release). These guidelines are based on current principles of anesthesiology, critical care medicine, microbiology, and surgical practice, as determined from published evidence and expert opinion. They represent acceptable practices that are attainable in spay-neuter programs.

The First link below is the article *Special Report: The Association of Shelter Veterinarians Veterinary Medical Care Guidelines for Spay-Neuter Programs.*

<http://avmajournals.avma.org/doi/pdf/10.2460/javma.233.1.74>

<http://www.sheltervet.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=2>

The Humane Alliance Veterinary Services (HAVS) has given permission for the Board permission to provide a link to their clinical forms for Front Counter use for Admission, Post-Operative Instructions, and Treatment Care. Again the Board is offering this as "safe harbor" information for your consideration. <http://www.humanealliance.org> Look under *Resources* on the homepage and then select *Clinical Documents*. There are a variety of documents, as well as the ones mentioned under Front Counter.