

Veterinary Practice Act Rules Approved

The Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) has given final approval to the new rules established to implement the Veterinary Medicine & Surgery Practice Act of 2004. There are several key changes in the rules, including:

- Increases the number of hours of continuing education required to renew a license (now 40 hours each renewal cycle) and removes the limitation on self-study courses. *PLEASE NOTE: The Department will not begin enforcement of the new CE requirement until the beginning of the next renewal cycle.*
- Specifies that an applicant may not take the licensing examination more than 5 times in a 5-year period.
- Requires that patient records be maintained for a minimum of five years from the date of the last known contact, rather than the current three years.
- Requires that copies of patient records must be released to the client upon written request.

The ISVMA informed its members of these rules when they were in draft form. Several veterinary professionals commented on the draft rules and their input was considered in the development of the final draft that was recently approved by the JCAR.

Veterinary Technician Rules Also Approved

JCAR also gave final approval to rules affecting Certified Veterinary Technicians. Please note that the CE requirements for technicians has also increased to 15 hours. *PLEASE NOTE: The Department will not begin enforcement of the new CE requirement until the beginning of the next renewal cycle.*

Veterinary Sales Tax Rules Advancing Through JCAR Process

The Illinois Department of Revenue has been enforcing a new standard for veterinary sales tax since the introduction of the "draft" regulation in the Spring of 2007. The draft regulation is now going through the process of being formally approved by JCAR for inclusion in the Administrative Code.

The proposed veterinary sales tax rule was published in the Illinois Register on November 30, 2007. This publication serves as notice to the public so that interested persons have an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed rule. The veterinary sales tax rule appears on pages 76-83 of the above linked report.

About JCAR (from the Illinois Blue Book)

All agency regulations must be approved by The Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) in order to become part of the Administrative Code; a necessary component to the implementation of state law.

JCAR is a bipartisan legislative oversight committee created by the General Assembly in 1977. Pursuant to the Illinois Administrative Procedure Act, the committee is authorized to conduct systematic reviews of administrative rules promulgated by state agencies. The committee conducts several integrated review programs, including a review program for proposed, emergency and peremptory rulemaking, a review of new public acts and a complaint review program.

The committee is composed of 12 legislators who are appointed by the legislative leadership, and the membership is apportioned equally between the two houses and the two political parties. Members serve two-year terms, and the committee is co-chaired by a member of each party and legislative house. Support services for the committee are provided by 25 staff members.

Two purposes of the committee are to ensure that the Legislature is adequately informed of how laws are implemented through agency rulemaking and to facilitate public understanding of rules and regulations. To that end, in addition to the review of new and existing rulemaking, the committee monitors legislation that affects rulemaking and conducts a public act review to alert agencies to the need for rulemaking. The committee also distributes a weekly report, the Flinn Report, to inform and educate Illinois citizens about current rulemaking activity, and maintains the state's database for the Illinois Administrative Code and Illinois Register.

Administrative Rules are prepared or drafted by the responsible State Agency. The public participation in the initial preparation or drafting of rulemaking is subject to the discretion of the individual State agency; however, public participation is encouraged by the Illinois Administrative Procedure Act (5 ILCS 100). As a public notification practice, State agencies are now required to publish semiannually (January / July) a Regulatory Agenda that outlines the anticipated rulemaking activity over the next six months. All Regulatory Agenda's are published in the Illinois Register.

A detailed explanation of how the rules process works can be [found here](#).

ASPCA Releases Information on Pet Welfare and Safety During Holidays

Dr. Steven Hansen, ISVMA member and Senior Vice President of the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center can be seen hosting a holiday pet safety video on the [ASPCA website](#). A board certified toxicologist, Dr. Hansen offers some important advice for pet owners, including:

- **No Sweets for These Sweets.** Holiday sweets are not for pets. Chocolate is one of the most common poisonous to many animals. Vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, hyperactivity and increased thirst, urination and heart rate can be seen with the ingestion of as little as 1/4 ounce of baking chocolate by a 10-pound dog. Also, candies and gum containing large amounts of the sweetener xylitol can also be toxic to pets. Ingestion of significant quantities can produce a fairly sudden drop in blood sugar, resulting in depression, incoordination and seizures.
- **Leftovers Should be Left ALONE.** Don't give pets holiday leftovers, and keep pets out of the garbage. Poultry bones can splinter and cause blockages; Greasy, spicy and fatty foods can cause stomach upset; spoiled or moldy foods could cause food poisoning, tremors or seizures.
- **Drinking and Dogs Do Not Mix.** Place unattended alcoholic drinks where pets cannot reach them. If ingested, the animal could become very sick and weak and may go into a coma and in severe cases can result in death.
- **No Love Under This Mistletoe.** Common Yuletide plants such as mistletoe and holly berries can cause gastrointestinal upsets and cardiovascular problems. Poinsettias are considered to be very low in toxicity and could cause mild vomiting or nausea if ingested by your pet.
- **Protect Your Pet, Protect Your Tree.** Keep pets away from Christmas tree water. The water may contain fertilizers which, if ingested, can cause a stomach upset. Stagnant tree water can also act as a breeding ground for bacteria and if ingested a pet could end up with nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Consider decorating your tree with ornaments that are relatively less enticing to pets, such as dried non-toxic flowers, wood, fabric or pinecones. Traditional decorations such as ribbons or tinsel can become lodged in the intestines and cause intestinal obstruction if swallowed.

Legislative Proposals to Ban Transportation of Horses in Double-Decker Trailers

Legislation has been introduced in the Illinois Senate and House of Representatives in response to the tragic accident in Wadsworth, IL that involved 59 Belgium draft horses being transported in a double-decker trailer. The bills will be reviewed and debated by interested parties, including the ISVMA.

The ISVMA Legislative Committee has recommended support for legislation that would ban the transportation of horses in double-decker trailers.

About the Photo

The Masked Duck (*Nomonyx dominica*) is a small Mexican, South American, West Indian, and Central American stiff-tailed duck. It is the only member of the genus *Nomonyx*.

The Masked Duck is most similar to the Ruddy Duck but the breeding adult males have a rust colored body with a black face and mottled wings. Female, immature, and eclipse-plumaged males have one more dark line on the face than the Ruddy Duck. Most other diving ducks do not have the long, stiff tail of the Masked Duck. Hooded Mergansers can sometimes hold their tails erect like Masked Ducks, but have crests and long thin bills.

Masked Ducks breed in any freshwater water body with dense marsh vegetation and surrounded by heavy tree cover. They also occur in mangrove swamps. These ducks are usually very secretive. Masked Ducks mainly feed by diving to collect seeds, roots and leaves of aquatic plants. They also eat aquatic insects and crustaceans.

The Masked Duck is primarily non-migratory. It is an irruptive and irregular species in the southernmost United States along the Mexican border and in Florida; but are very uncommon.

I photographed this juvenile Masked Duck west of Orange Grove, TX in Jim Wells County on December 1, 2007.

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