

A veterinary emergency is defined as *'any sudden, unforeseen injury, illness or complication in an animal, demanding immediate or early veterinary treatment to save life or to provide timely relief from unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress'*.

A veterinary emergency is not considered to exist and therefore does not need to be attended by a veterinarian if:

- i. Following veterinary assessment the veterinarian decides that in their professional judgement the situation is not a veterinary emergency.
- ii. Following discussion between the caller and the veterinarian mutual agreement is reached that emergency veterinary treatment is not required to manage the situation and protect the welfare of the animal.

In an emergency where the caller identifies that they have economic restraints (or where the client has a poor credit history with the practice), the obligations of the veterinarian remain the same. The welfare of the animal is the first priority. However, attending the welfare needs of the animal does not commit the veterinarian to undertake treatment beyond ensuring the animal is not suffering unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

Veterinarians in clinical practice must make an emergency service available at all times. This service is required so that their clients' animals can receive essential veterinary treatment in order to relieve unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

The emergency service must be sufficiently resourced, so that except in extraordinary circumstances all [veterinary emergencies](#) involving clients' animals are attended in reasonable time to ensure the welfare of the animals. A decision of what is a reasonable time will take into account the type of practice and the locality.

Those veterinarians on duty and directly responsible for providing the emergency service can refer callers who are not clients to the emergency service provided by the caller's own veterinarian. However, if that alternative service is not available and if the veterinarian has the necessary skills and resources required for the particular emergency, the veterinarian must [attend](#) the emergency and provide essential treatment.

Retrieved from: VCNZ Code of Professional Conduct:

http://www.vetcouncil.org.nz/CPC/VetServices/CPC_VetServices.php

Where the approved organisation cannot identify the owner of the animal, an inspector or auxiliary officer acting for the approved organisation may—

(a) after the animal has been in the custody of the organisation for at least 7 days,—

- (i) sell the animal; or
- (ii) find a home for the animal; or
- (iii) destroy or otherwise dispose of the animal in such manner as the inspector or auxiliary officer thinks fit:

(aa) at any time, sell, re-home, or otherwise dispose of (including destroy) the animal in any manner that the inspector or auxiliary officer thinks fit if—

(i) the animal is wild or unsocialised; and

(ii) the animal is severely distressed; and

(iii) in the opinion of a **veterinarian**, the animal's distress is a direct result of being contained to the extent that it would be unreasonable and unnecessary to continue to contain the animal:

(b) at any time, in any case where the animal is diseased or is suspected of being diseased and the inspector or auxiliary officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the welfare of other animals in the custody of the approved organisation would be compromised if the organisation were to continue to hold that animal in custody,—

(i) sell the animal; or

(ii) find a home for the animal; or

(iii) destroy or otherwise dispose of the animal in such manner as the inspector or auxiliary officer thinks fit.

Retrieved from: Animal Welfare Act 1999

http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1999/0142/latest/DLM51277.html?search=sw_096be8ed817c720c_veterinarian_25_se&p=1&sr=17