

Table of Changes – October 2025

Species Type/ Requirement number	Current Standard and Guidance notes (SA v3.3, EQ v3.4, FA v3.3)	Change to Standard and/or Guidance notes (New versions SA v3.4, FA v3.4, EQ v3.5)
SA 4.3.1	Standard A dedicated dental radiography machine must be available and the practice must demonstrate that effective dental radiography is conducted regularly	Standard A dedicated dental radiography machine must be available and the practice must demonstrate that effective dental radiography is conducted regularly Guidance note CT provision on site does not exclude the need for a dedicated dental radiography machine
SA 16.1.17 EQ 15.1.17 FA 14.1.16	Standard The practice has carried out risk assessments in all areas of activity. Risk assessments are a legal requirement. Guidance note They should be recorded if five or more people are employed. Risk assessments must: - Identify the hazards - Decide who might be harmed and how - Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions - Record significant findings - Be reviewed and updated as necessary See the HSE guidance on risk management: https://www.rcvs.org.uk/hse-risk. Risk assessments should consider workers with particular requirements, for example young workers, new or expectant workers, or people with disabilities. Third parties should be considered, for example members of the public, contractors etc. If the workplace is shared, risk assessments should consider, and be drawn up with, the other business or businesses.	Standard The practice has carried out risk assessments in all areas of activity. Risk assessments are a legal requirement. Guidance note They should be recorded if five or more people are employed. Risk assessments must: - Identify the hazards - Decide who might be harmed and how - Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions - Record significant findings - Be reviewed and updated as necessary See the HSE guidance on risk management: https://www.rcvs.org.uk/hse-risk. Risk assessments should consider workers with particular requirements, for example young workers, new or expectant workers, or people with disabilities. Third parties should be considered, for example members of the public, contractors etc. If the workplace is shared, risk assessments should consider, and be drawn up with, the other business or businesses.

		Relevant risks should be included in the suicide prevention plan (see 16.1.41).
SA 16.1.35 FA 14.1.34 EQ 15.1.35	Standard Where firearms are stored on the premises and / or used in the course of practice business firearms certificates for each individual using the equipment must be shown. Guidance note All applications for a firearms licence in respect of any firearms/tranquilizer and dart guns, for example are subject to standard police checks and an interview by a firearms enquiry officer (FEO) at their home and or practice address. Each application is assessed on a case-by-case basis. Individual veterinary surgeons must have been issued with the relevant firearms certificate. These should cover adequate storage arrangements and any other conditions attached to the licence. The authorised licenced users must have an SOP in place to highlight the safety measures taken whilst transporting a firearm to comply with government guidance. Including but not exclusive to: - Where vehicles in which firearms are carried for professional use, are not fitted with immobilisers or alarms, then aftermarket systems should be fitted. - Firearms should always be stored in the locked boot or other secured, preferably unglazed, load carrying area of the vehicle. -The firearm and ammunition should not be stored together. Where the boot or load carrying area is the most practical place, ammunition should be locked in an appropriate container, secured to the vehicle. - If a handgun, it should be kept in a locked container secured to the vehicle. Firearms certificates. - Provision should be made for the securing of other firearms to the vehicles structure, e.g. security case, cage, cable or clamp https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/firearmssecurity-handbook Any other arms such as captive bolts, not caught by the legal definition of a firearm must have an SOP and risk assessment	Standard Where firearms are stored on the premises and / or used in the course of practice business firearms certificates for each individual using the equipment must be shown. Guidance note All applications for a firearms licence in respect of any firearms/tranquilizer and dart guns, for example are subject to standard police checks and an interview by a firearms enquiry officer (FEO) at their home and or practice address. Each application is assessed on a case-by-case basis. Individual veterinary surgeons must have been issued with the relevant firearms certificate. These should cover adequate storage arrangements and any other conditions attached to the licence. The authorised licenced users must have an SOP in place to highlight the safety measures taken whilst transporting a firearm to comply with government guidance. Including but not exclusive to: - Where vehicles in which firearms are carried for professional use, are not fitted with immobilisers or alarms, then aftermarket systems should be fitted. - Firearms should always be stored in the locked boot or other secured, preferably unglazed, load carrying area of the vehicle. -The firearm and ammunition should not be stored together. Where the boot or load carrying area is the most practical place, ammunition should be locked in an appropriate container, secured to the vehicle. - If a handgun, it should be kept in a locked container secured to the vehicle. Firearms certificates. - Provision should be made for the securing of other firearms to the vehicles structure, e.g. security case, cage, cable or clamp https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/firearmssecurity-handbook Any other arms such as captive bolts, not caught by the legal definition of a firearm must have an SOP and risk assessment in place to highlight the safety measures in place, for staff, animals, safe storage, and transportation.

	in place to highlight the safety measures in place, for staff, animals, safe storage, and transportation. The Assessor may ask to see an SOP and risk assessment in the day of assessment	The Assessor may ask to see an SOP, risk assessment and suicide prevention plan on the day of assessment
SA 13.1.8 FA 11.1.7 EQ 12.1.8	Standard Proper safety precautions must be taken for team members on duty at night. An appropriate protocol for dealing with night-time callers must be in place. Suitable means must be available to enable team members to call for immediate assistance when necessary. Guidance note See Chapter 3 in the supporting guidance to the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for further information: https://www.rcvs.org.uk/247care.	Standard Proper safety precautions must be taken for team members on duty at night. An appropriate protocol for dealing with night-time callers must be in place. Suitable means must be available to enable team members to call for immediate assistance when necessary. Guidance note See Chapter 3 in the supporting guidance to the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for further information: https://www.rcvs.org.uk/247care. Safety precautions include references within the suicide prevention plan.
SA 16.1.12 FA 14.1.11 EQ 15.1.12	Standard The practice takes reasonable care to prevent issues surrounding mental health in the workplace from occurring, and to deal with them appropriately when they do. Guidance note Mental health is explicitly addressed within practice policies e.g. H&S, Sickness and Absence etc. Information about mental health support is made available to all team members e.g. posters, intranet, employee handbook, flyers etc. Team members are encouraged to use their annual leave entitlements. Examples of measures to achieve this include (but are not limited to): limiting the amount of annual leave that can be carried over each year; procedures being in place to ensure that annual leave is fairly allocated, or an annual leave policy being in place.	Standard The practice takes reasonable care to prevent issues surrounding mental health in the workplace from occurring, and to deal with them appropriately when they do. Guidance note Mental health is explicitly addressed within practice policies e.g. H&S, Sickness and Absence, suicide prevention plan etc. Information about mental health support is made available to all team members e.g. posters, intranet, employee handbook, flyers etc. Team members are encouraged to use their annual leave entitlements. Examples of measures to achieve this include (but are not limited to): limiting the amount of annual leave that can be carried over each year; procedures being in place to ensure that annual leave is fairly allocated, or an annual leave policy being in place.

	Team members and line managers should also show understanding of the importance of sufficient downtime from work and the impact of this on both staff wellbeing and standards of care. Team members can describe the measures in place to support them at work in the event of a mental health issue. Team members are also able to describe at least one step taken by their practice to avoid risk to mental health and reduce workplace stress (e.g. group reflective practice, Employee Assistance Programme, exercise class). Line managers can describe the practice's approach to managing mental health in the practice, and have an understanding of where to seek advice and guidance if necessary. The practice is compliant with the Equality Act and makes reasonable adjustments for individuals with a mental health condition. See the Government's guidance on the Equality Act: https://www.rcvs.org.uk/equality-act. Practice policies addressing mental health. The practice records absences for work-related mental health issues and can demonstrate the steps taken to address these. Advice and guidance is available from: Mind (https://www.rcvs.org.uk/mind), ACAS (https://www.rcvs.org.uk/acas), NHS, vetlife (https://www.rcvs.org.uk/vetlife), Mentalhealthatwork.org.uk, and the RCVS Mind Matters Initiative (https://www.rcvs.org.uk/mmi)	Team members and line managers should also show understanding of the importance of sufficient downtime from work and the impact of this on both staff wellbeing and standards of care. Team members can describe the measures in place to support them at work in the event of a mental health issue. Team members are also able to describe at least one step taken by their practice to avoid risk to mental health and reduce workplace stress (e.g. group reflective practice, Employee Assistance Programme, exercise class). Line managers can describe the practice's approach to managing mental health in the practice, and have an understanding of where to seek advice and guidance if necessary. The practice is compliant with the Equality Act and makes reasonable adjustments for individuals with a mental health condition. See the Government's guidance on the Equality Act: https://www.rcvs.org.uk/equality-act. Practice policies addressing mental health. The practice records absences for work-related mental health issues and can demonstrate the steps taken to address these. Advice and guidance is available from: Mind (https://www.rcvs.org.uk/mind), ACAS (https://www.rcvs.org.uk/acas), NHS, vetlife (https://www.rcvs.org.uk/vetlife), Mentalhealthatwork.org.uk, and the RCVS Mind Matters Initiative (https://www.rcvs.org.uk/mmi)
New standard SA 16.1.41 EQ 15.1.41 FA 14.1.41		Standard The practice must implement a practice-specific suicide prevention plan covering all areas of potential risk. Guidance A 'suicide prevention plan' is a collection of measures which aim to protect staff and the wider public by reducing incidences of suicide.

		We understand that for suicide prevention plans to be effective, they need to address the specific risks present in individual practices whilst allowing the practice to deliver care appropriately. As such, each plan should be bespoke, and assessors will expect practices to be able to explain the underlying rationale. In order to develop a suicide prevention plan, practices should carry out a risk assessment covering all areas of potential risk, including: - drugs used or stored for the purposes of euthanasia or sedation - access to firearms and captive bolt - lone/late night working. - Following this risk assessment, measures should be implemented to address and/or mitigate each risk identified. These measures, together with the associated risks, should be recorded in a document. This document is the practice's suicide prevention plan. By way of example, suicide prevention plans <u>may</u> include measures such as: Protocols regarding euthanasia away from the practice - Protocols for safe storage of CDs and firearms when taken away from the practice - Mental health first aiders on site - Use of a 'going home' type poster in staff areas, e.g. Vetlife Going Home Check List (PDF download) - Vetlife Please note that whilst the above list may be useful for illustrative purposes, it is not exhaustive and we recognise that the measures listed may not be appropriate for some practice types/settings. Useful resources include: Home - Vetlife Looking after staff - Vetlife Working-together-to-prevent-suicide-in-the-NHS-workforce--a-national-suicide-prevention-toolkit-for-England.pdf Suicide prevention - HSE Creating a 'safety plan' Samaritans
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