

# GUIDELINE 18

## STANDARDS OF BIOSECURITY FOR PROPERTY VISITS

Registered veterinary practitioners should ensure they are familiar with the contents of this Guideline. The Board considers this Guideline to be the minimum standard expected from a registered veterinary practitioner exercising reasonable skill and care in the course of providing treatment to animals.

Practitioners should read this Guideline in conjunction with the Definitions listed in the introductory pages.

### 18.1 PREAMBLE

18.1.1 Practitioners can pose a particularly high risk for the spread of diseases of livestock because they are frequently exposed to potentially diseased animals, they wear clothing and use equipment and instruments that come in close contact with animals and their discharges, and they may visit several properties over a brief period of time. Inadvertent spread of notifiable or emergency animal diseases (e.g. foot and mouth disease) by practitioners could have dire consequences for the agricultural community.

18.1.2 Animal biosecurity is concerned with measures to reduce the risk, and prevent the spread, of infectious diseases between animals and properties. In its broader sense it is also concerned with promoting animal welfare and food safety.

18.1.3 Appropriate biosecurity procedures need to be *routinely* adopted for *all* property visits, because the risk of contamination after contact with even apparently healthy animals cannot be completely discounted, and also because it is a reasonable expectation of clients.

18.1.4 Practitioners should adhere to the minimum standards in order to protect themselves, producers, animals and the livestock industries. They should also adhere to any additional specific biosecurity requirements imposed by owners/producers (e.g. curfew periods, showering on entry). Livestock in this guideline includes food production species and horses. An on-site service is the provision of on-property veterinary services to livestock properties.

### 18.2 STANDARDS

18.2.1 Practitioners should assess the biosecurity risks posed by their visits to properties and should take appropriate measures to minimise those risks, taking into account species attended; intensiveness of husbandry; livestock health and biosecurity status; handling, procedures and equipment in use; zoonotic disease risk; and any other relevant risk factors.

18.2.2 For *all* provision of on-site veterinary services to farms, stables or livestock premises, practitioners should routinely undertake appropriate hygiene and decontamination measures between visits to minimise disease transmission risk, including for each visit:

- (a) wearing protective clothing and footwear that is clean and free of organic debris;
- (b) avoiding unnecessary contact with livestock areas, pens, barns etc;

- (c) washing hands before and after leaving the premises;
- (d) thoroughly cleaning and appropriately decontaminating equipment and instruments between visits;
- (e) avoiding driving the practitioner's vehicle into or through animal production areas, or if necessary to do so, assuring that tyres and wheel wells are cleaned (free of organic debris) prior to leaving the property, or prior to visiting the next property.

**18.2.3**

The vehicle used for property visits should:

- (a) be clean and hygienic at all times;
- (b) have secure storage for carrying drugs as required by the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2006, or any subsequent amendment to these regulations;
- (c) carry adequate means to ensure full and accurate contemporaneous medical records are able to be completed;
- (d) carry sufficient instruments and equipment for a thorough clinical examination;
- (e) be capable of being locked and meet the requirements of all government regulations;
- (f) provide facilities that allow for the prevention of spread of infectious diseases between patients and premises.

**18.2.4**

Practitioners should maintain awareness of requirements and procedures for notifying government and for dealing with either suspected or confirmed notifiable diseases and emergency animal diseases, and should adhere to those requirements.

**18.2.5**

Practitioners treating animals under quarantine or quarantine surveillance should comply with all quarantine station biosecurity policies and procedures and with any relevant national or state requirements. In addition to showering, use of protective clothing, and decontamination or non-removal of equipment, this may include a period of avoidance of contact with livestock of the same species outside of the quarantine station.

**18.2.6**

Where risk assessment indicates the possibility of a zoonotic disease, practitioners should take additional appropriate measures for minimising the risk of infection of themselves and infection of other people.

**18.2.7**

Practitioners should maintain awareness of biosecurity principles and practices and should advise their clients on the assessment and mitigation of biosecurity risks through early reporting of unusual disease, and through adoption and promotion of sound biosecurity practices which prevent the introduction or spread of diseases.

**18.2.8**

Practitioners should maintain awareness of appropriate standards of animal welfare and any relevant legislation and should advise their clients to promote continual improvements in livestock welfare standards.

**18.2.9**

Practitioners should maintain awareness of livestock management standards and practices for promoting food safety and should assist their clients to identify and manage any relevant issues on the property.