



What types of health issues do Veterinary Boards consider?

Regulatory Veterinary Boards and Councils monitor, investigate and respond to registrant health issues which can pose professional practice-related risks to the public, animals, veterinary team members and to the veterinary practitioner themselves.

An *impaired veterinary practitioner* has a physical or mental impairment, disability, condition or disorder that detrimentally affects, or is likely to detrimentally affect the registered person's capacity to practice their profession.

Impairments can be short or long term, transient or permanent. They may relate to, or affect, specific aspects of professional practice or be more general in nature.

Health investigations can also relate to substance abuse or dependence.

How do Veterinary Boards become aware of a possible health issue?

An impairment or a substance dependence can be brought to our attention through

- a complaint, which either specifically raises the issue or whose investigation identifies a possible contributing health issue
- notification, for example from someone who is concerned for your health or through regulatory obligations from other veterinary jurisdictions or
- self-reporting, within registration processes or at any time

Seeking personal help from human health practitioners does not automatically trigger any reporting to your Veterinary Board.

In some specific cases, impairment may hamper your ability to accurately self-assess risk. Veterinary Boards encourage you to contact us for a confidential discussion about your specific circumstances.

Still have questions?

You can find more information on your Veterinary Board's website. You can also phone or email your helpful Veterinary Board or Vet Council staff.

How do we approach health investigations?

Reported impairments that are well-managed do not generally need any further regulatory intervention.

To support your abilities and needs, you may ask the Veterinary Board to impose a condition or limitation on your practice.

Veterinary Boards have particular processes and obligations to follow if your capacity to practice may be affected. The health investigation process is not the same as the professional conduct investigation process.

The health investigation process includes timely communications with you, options to address any immediate safety concerns, independent expert consultation and inclusion of your health practitioners in planning a path forward.

Veterinary Boards aim to work as team with you and your health providers. You'll always be given the opportunity to consider medical reports shared with the Board, and to respond to any proposed outcomes.

Outcomes of health investigations

Rather than deregistration, our preference is for outcomes that allow you to continue working in a way that protects the public and animals and supports your health.

Outcomes are tailored to your circumstance. For example:

- In cases of physical or mental impairment, individual and workplace actions may be appropriate, such as altered hours, conditions or type of work, increased peer support and the maintenance of relationships with medical, physical and/or psychological professionals. These may be proposed by your Veterinary Board as conditions of registration for a specified period.
- In cases of substance dependence, Veterinary Boards commonly place conditions on registration that prevent access or use of S8 drugs for a specified period. We may encourage mentorship or other education to develop alternative veterinary drug regimes. Based on your health professional's recommendations, rehabilitation is supported through requirements for relevant medical and psychological care, and drug testing centred on your specific context and needs.