

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Complaints and Investigations

**Q. Can I file a complaint because I think my veterinarian charges too much or keeps billing me for fees I owe? Can the Board help me get my money back?**

A. The Veterinary Board does not have jurisdiction over the amount of fees charged or fee disputes. However, per a new State of Arizona law that will become effective December 31, 2017, if requested by the complainant on the Board's Complaint Form at the time the complaint is submitted, the Board may order the licensee to reimburse the fees paid by the pet owner or on their behalf.

**Q. Can I file a complaint if my veterinarian will not treat my pet until I pay him? I had a disagreement with my veterinarian and now he/she will not see my pets. Is this ethical?**

A. According to the Veterinary Practice Act, A.A.C. R3-11-501(7), a veterinarian is free to choose whom he/she will serve. The Board has no jurisdiction over business practices.

**Q. Is my complaint valid?**

A. Board staff cannot offer advice, legal or otherwise regarding the validity of a complaint. Any person may file a complaint if they believe there have been issues regarding medical care, ethics or professional conduct of licensees or certificate holders.

**Q. If I file a complaint is anything done about it?**

A. The complaint process is outlined in "What to Expect After a Complaint is Filed," which can be found on our website. The Board reviews all cases. If violations of the Veterinary Practice Act are found, sanctions may be taken against the licensee or certificate holder.

**Q. How do I know the Arizona State Veterinary Medical Examining Board is not just protecting the veterinarians?**

A. The mission of the Veterinary Board is to protect the interest of the general public and the welfare of their pets. Every complaint is investigated as outlined in "What to Expect After a Complaint is Filed" hand-out, which can also be found on our website.

**Q. I want to file a complaint but I want to remain anonymous. How is that handled?**

A. Anonymous complaints are accepted regarding unlicensed persons practicing veterinary medicine and allegations of substance abuse by a licensee or certificate holder. Although other types of anonymous complaints can be accepted, we cannot guarantee anonymity. It is also important to realize that the case may be dismissed due to insufficient evidence. Adequate documentation and substantiation of allegations is essential to ensure a thorough investigation of the case.

**Q. Can you tell me if a veterinarian has had any disciplinary action in the past?**

A. Yes, you may visit our website for this information. Click on the "directory" and type in the veterinarian's name and select that person. If any disciplinary action has been taken against that person's license, information regarding that complaint case will show. You may also phone the Board office and a staff member can assist you with that and/or provide a listing of any other complaints that were dismissed.

**Q. My pet requires a specialist. Can you refer me to one?**

A. No. The Board office cannot provide referrals. You may want to search online, or contact the Arizona Veterinary Medical Association (602-242-7936), which may have a list of their members and their specialties. Be aware that this may not be a complete listing, as membership in the Arizona Veterinary Medical Association is voluntary.

**Q. I need clarification on a statute or rule; can you help me? Where can I get a copy of the statutes and administrative rules?**

A. Staff cannot interpret the statutes or rules for you but will try to assist you if possible. You may need to consult an attorney. Printer friendly versions of the Arizona Statutes and Administrative Rules are located on our "Statutes and Rules" page of our website or you may send a written request with \$5.00 to the AzVMEB, 9535 E. Doubletree Ranch Road, Suite 100, Scottsdale, AZ 85258