



Information Statement

Public Authority: Veterinary Practitioners Council

This Statement is dated: 15th January 2025

The information contained in this Statement is complete and accurate as of this date.

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Introduction

This document is the Information statement for the **Veterinary Practitioners Council** (the Council). In accordance with the Public Access To Information (PATI) Act 2010, every public authority has a legal duty to maintain an Information Statement. The Council is regulated by legislation under the Ministry responsible for the environment.

The purpose of this document is to make information readily available to the public without the need for specific written requests, to encourage authorities to proactively publish information and to develop a culture of openness. Every person who is a Bermudian, or resident of Bermuda, has a right to access any record held by a public authority, and a right to amend their personal information held by a public authority if it is incorrect or misleading. However, several classes of information are exempt, including: Personal information (unless it relates to the requestor); Sensitive commercial, information received in confidence; Operations and deliberations of Public Authorities; Cabinet, Ministerial and Governors documents; and Legal documents. All exemptions are subject to the public interest test, except those that would be in contempt of Court, infringe Parliamentary privilege or are prohibited by other legislation. [For more information see sections 21 to 40, PATI Act].

How to make a request

Requests for information, or to amend your personal information, must be in writing using the application form, and submitted to the Ministry Information Officer (see Section G for contact details). A request must identify the record, the subject and time period, and may specify the manner in which access is preferred. Please note there is a small fee levied for reproducing materials (as per the Government Fees Regulations 1976, and as listed on the application form).

Key and Definitions

- ‘Act’ or ‘VP Act’ means the Veterinary Practitioners Act 2008

- ‘Council’ means the Veterinary Practitioners Council
- ‘Ministry’ means the Ministry the Environment
- ‘Department’ means the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
- ‘PATI’ means Public Access to Information
- Square brackets [], refer to sections of the PATI Act, unless another Act is indicated

Section A: Structure, Organization and Legislation [s5(1)a]

Insert structure of Authority (text, and figure if latter useful):

The Council consists of six to eight members appointed by the Minister for a period not exceeding two years, and includes the following:

- three registered veterinary practitioners;
- at least two persons who are not veterinary practitioners; and
- the Government Veterinary Officer, ex-officio.

[s4(3), Schedule 1, VP Act]

One member of the Council is appointed by the Minister to be Chairperson.

The Council is currently comprised of seven members, including three who are not veterinary practitioners.

Governing Legislation:

Veterinary Practitioners Act 2008. There is no subordinate legislation.

Section B1: Functions, powers, duties of the Authority [s5(1)b]

Insert functions, powers and duties:

Functions of Council

The general function of the Council is to secure high standards of professional competence and conduct in the practice of veterinary medicine and surgery in Bermuda. This is achieved through [s4(2), VP Act]:

- to assess the qualifications and cause the Registrar to register suitably qualified persons as veterinary practitioners;
- to promote and maintain proper standards for the practice of veterinary science in Bermuda;
- to ensure the maintenance of acceptable standards of professional conduct by persons registered as veterinary practitioners or acting as animal health assistants;
- to perform such other things of professional concern to registered veterinary practitioners as may be assigned to the Council under the Veterinary Practitioners Act or any other Act.

Powers and Duties of Council

The Council has the authority to decide who is qualified to practice veterinary medicine, to discipline practitioners for misconduct, to establish standards of practice and to probe all matters pertaining to the profession of veterinary medicine.

Section B2: Obligations under PATI Act [s5(1)b]

(same for all public authorities)

Obligations of the Council under the PATI Act

1. To provide an **information statement** for the public and promulgate it [s5].
2. To provide **other information** to the public so that the public needs only to have minimum resort to the use of the Act to obtain information [s6]. This includes:
 - a. General information, e.g. activities of the Authority;
 - b. Log of all information requests and their outcome;
 - c. Quarterly expenditure (upon request) [s6(5)];
 - d. Contracts valued at \$50,000 or more.
3. To **respond to information requests** in a timely manner [s12-16].
4. To **track information requests**, and provide this data to the Info Commissioner [s5(8)3].
5. To respond to requests from the Information Commissioner [s9].
6. To **amend personal information** held by the Authority that it is wrong or misleading following a written request by the person to whom the information relates [s19].
7. To conduct an **internal review** if formally requested [Part 5].
8. To give evidence for **review by the Information Commissioner** [Part 6, 47(4)], or for **judicial review** [s49], if required.
9. To provide an **annual written report** to the Information Commissioner of the status of information requests [s58(3)].
10. **To do anything else as prescribed** under the PATI Act and Regulations [s59, 60], including:
 - a. **Managing Fees** for Requests for information;
 - b. Management and maintenance of **records**;
 - c. **Following procedures** for administering the Act
11. To **train staff and make arrangements** so as to facilitate compliance with the Act [s61].
12. To **designate an officer** to be the person to whom requests are directed [s62].

Section C: Services and Programmes provided [s5(1)c]

Insert a summary of services and programmes provided by the authority:

Services & Applicable fees

1. Initial registration of veterinary practitioners - \$110*
2. Re-registration of veterinary practitioners (renewals, provisional registration, restoration of registration) - \$30*
3. Registration/Re-registration of visiting veterinary practitioners - \$30*
4. Investigation of complaints against practitioners
5. Probe all matters that pertain to the profession
6. Through the Department of Environmental Protection, issue letters of good standing

*Fees are established by the Government Fees Regulations 1976.

Section D: Records held [s5(1)d]

Insert list and description of the classes of records held by the authority:

Registration Records

1. *Registration Applications* since 2008. (EXEMPT under s23 – Personal Information). Applications of persons wishing to practice veterinary science in Bermuda are held by the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources. An electronic register is under development, but is not yet available as of the date of this Statement.
2. *The Veterinary Practitioners Register* since 2008. (Public Access) A list of registered veterinary practitioners is gazetted annually as soon as practical near the beginning of each calendar year.

Activities of the Council

3. *Minutes of Council meetings*: The meetings are not minuted.

Section E: Administration manuals [s5(1)e]

Insert list and description of all administrative manuals/guidelines used by employees for administering or carrying-out activities:

None. The Council will distribute guidelines that have been adopted that speak to the issue of requirements for renewal of registration.

Section F: Decision-making documents (all public access) [s5(1)f]

Insert list and description of all policies and guidelines for decision making in respect to any person.

1. Veterinary Practitioners Act 2008. Government of Bermuda. (Public Access). Governs the powers and duties of the Council.

Section G: The Information officer [s5(1)g]

Insert name and contact information:

Requests for information shall be in writing and submitted to the Information Officer, Department of Environmental Protection, from where they will be directed to the Council.

Contact: PATI Information Officer,
Dr Geoffrey Smith
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Re: CITES Scientific Authority

Mail to*: P.O. Box HM-834, Hamilton, Bermuda

Visit: Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Botanical Gardens, 169 South Road, Paget

E-mail*: gcsmith@gov.bm

*Requests for personal information will only be accepted for submissions made in-person so to verify the Requester's identity. Emailed & Mailed requests for personal information will not be accepted.

Section H: Any Other Information [s5(1)h]

Insert any other information that you think might be useful for the public to know, so as to decrease requests for information [s6]:

Financial Information

1. The fees for services, and the remuneration of Council members for service, are governed by the following legislation:
 - Government Fees Act, 1965; and the Government Fees Regulations, 1976. The Act governs the charging of fees to applicants for services. The Regulations lists the fees for the services.
 - Government Authorities (Fees) Act, 1971. The Act governs the remuneration of body members for services. In brief: the Chair receives \$100, and other members receive \$50, per meeting. Public Officers receive no monies.
2. **Budget:** The Council receives no monies for expenditure.

Further information

3. The **legislation** listed may be found at Bermuda Laws Online www.bermudalaws.bm.

Section I: Any Other Information as Prescribed [s5(1)i]

As of March 2015 there are no Regulations to specify additional requirements for the Information Statement. But note, that the following shall be provided in accordance with s6 of the PATI Act:

Request Application process

- i. Only a person who is Bermudian or a resident of Bermuda has a right to information under the PATI Act [s12(1)]. Requests from other persons will not be accepted.
- ii. Requests must be made in writing to the public authority that holds the information being sought. [s13(1)]
- iii. The identity of the requester shall be kept confidential and, except with the consent of the requester, may not be disclosed to any person other than a person who is required to deal with the request. [s12(4)]
- iv. A requester is not required to give any reasons for making a request [s12(3)]. However, the Information Officer (or designate) may ask questions structured towards the sole purpose of clarifying the request.
- v. Law requires that the public authority make every reasonable effort to assist persons in connection with requests and to respond to requests completely, accurately and in a timely manner.
- vi. Legislation grants the public authority six weeks to decide whether to grant or deny a request, and the authority will notify you of its decision. This time period may be extended for reasons contained in legislation. [s15(1)]
- vii. Requests may be refused on administrative grounds [s16(1)] or may be refused if the record being sought is an exempted record. [s21-40]

viii. The Requester must be mindful that some records involve a third party who must be consulted if the record contains personal information, commercial information or information originally given in confidence. [s39]

ix. There is no fee for simply making a request. However, a fee may be charged for access. You will be apprised of the applicable fee which must be paid before access is granted. [s20]

Other Information that must be provided

x. Log of PATI information access requests: To be provided upon request and with personal identifiers deleted.

xi. Contracts: Any contracts entered into, with a value equal to or greater than \$50,000 [s6(6)]. Note for this authority, there is no power to enter into any contracts.

xii. Expenditure: Quarterly expenditure will be provided upon request. Note the expenditure for the previous fiscal period is provided on the website (as per Section H)

xiii. Salaries: The Minister responsible for PATI shall publish a list of title and salary range of every post of public officers [s6(6)].

Section J: Information Statement: Copies and Updates [s5(2,3,4,5)]

Every public authority shall update its information statement at least once a year, and make it available for inspection by the public at reasonable times by [s5(2-5), PATI Act]:

Locations of Information Statement:

- Office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Botanical Gardens, 169 South Road, Paget
- The Bermuda National Library
- The Bermuda Archives
- Office of the Information Commissioner
- www.gov.bm

The Information Statement is available electronically via email. Requests for the Information Statement may be forwarded to animals@gov.bm.

Signed:



Dr Geoffrey Smith

Director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources on behalf of the *Chairperson of the Veterinary Practitioners Council*

Date 15th January 2025

Ends