

COMPLAINTS AND THE INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS

The Nevada Veterinary Board is authorized under NRS 638.1413 to investigate complaints against those licensed to practice veterinary medicine in the State of Nevada. These licensees include veterinarians, licensed veterinary technicians, animal physical therapists, animal chiropractors, and veterinary facilities.

Please be aware that we do not handle complaints relating to financial matters of any kind.

Financial complaints should be addressed through other sources, such as small claims courts.

Writing Your Complaint:

A formal complaint requires the submission of complete and signed complaint form. When filing out your complaint form, please include details such as names, dates, and times of services or treatment.

Information for veterinarians involved in your pets' case, but not necessarily those against whom you have filed a complaint should also be included. This information helps the investigators get a clear picture of the health and history of your pet. Missing information may slow down the processing and investigation of your complaint.

Please submit the completed form and any supporting documentation to:

State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners
4600 Kietzke Lane, Bldg. O, #265
Reno, Nevada 89502

If you have questions regarding your complaint, please call our office at (775) 688-1788 or email us at vetbinfo@vetboard.nv.gov

After Submission:

Once the Board receives a complaint, the licensee is noticed of the complaint and has 14 days to submit medical records to the Board office. You will also be noticed by mail that the complaint has been received. After medical records are received, a copy of the records is sent to an investigator to begin the investigation. Review of the records can take some time, so please be aware it may take several weeks after the complaint is received at the Board office before you hear from the investigator.

Investigation and Assessment:

The purpose of the investigation is to gather enough information to determine if the facts show a violation of NRS 638/NAC 638 has been committed.

To obtain enough information the investigator may:

1. Interview all parties involved;
2. Obtain medical records for all veterinarian's involved in the specific treatment of the complainant's animal;
3. Consult with specialists, research literature, and consult with legal counsel.

After interviews and research is complete, the investigator writes a summary report explaining the complainant's concerns and the findings of the investigation.

Review Panel:

Once the assessment is complete, the Executive Director, Board Investigator, and Board member review the report and meets prior to a scheduled board meeting. The Review Panel discusses the assessment,

medical records, interview information, and any other documents pertinent to the case. If the Review Panel determines that there is no violation of NRS 638 or NAC 638 against the licensee, they will recommend dismissal of the complaint. If violations are found, the Review Panel will recommend proceeding with discipline. The Review Panel's recommendation and findings will be presented at a Board meeting for the entire Board to discuss the findings and recommendation. The Board will vote regarding the final decision of dismissal or discipline.

Board Decision:

The Board meets every three months in January, April, July, and October; the locations alternate between Reno and Las Vegas.

Complaints will be placed on the agenda once the investigation is complete. The licensee and the complainant will be noticed of the meeting at least 21 days prior to the meeting. The Board receives a copy of the investigator's report and the Review Panel recommendation prior to the meeting and will discuss the case if there are questions or if clarification is needed.

No testimony is taken from the licensee or the complainant at the Board meeting.

The Board will consider the Review Panel recommendations and one of the following will occur:

1. Dismissal of the complaint; the complaint is closed without any disciplinary action;
2. Continuation of the investigation by:
 - A. Referring the case back to the investigator;
 - B. Referring the case to an expert (Surgeon, Radiologist, Internal Medicine Specialist, etc.)
 - C. Requests that a hospital inspection be conducted;
3. Disciplinary action; there is enough evidence to believe that the licensee has breached the standard of care.

The complainant and the licensee will be noticed by mail of the Board's decision.

Disciplinary Action

Once the Board votes to proceed with discipline, the case is either negotiated for a settlement or a disciplinary hearing. If a settlement agreement is reached, staff will prepare the letter of reprimand, which will be reviewed by the Board before it is accepted. The complainant will receive a final copy of the letter of reprimand. If a case proceeds to hearing, the complainant will be notified and may be called to testify.

Public Information vs. Confidential Information

During the investigation, the complaint and all documents are confidential. The assessment created for the Board does not use the names of parties involved. If the case is dismissed the complaint and investigative documents remain confidential. If a letter of reprimand is issued, the letter of reprimand will be posted on the Board's website and is public information. If a disciplinary hearing is held, the hearing and proceedings are open to the public.