Understanding Your Veterinary-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR)

Healthy animals. Safe environments. Strong veterinary partnerships.

At Kamloops Large Animal Veterinary Clinic (KLAVC), we believe that good veterinary care begins with strong relationships, open communication, and a shared commitment to animal health and welfare.

Our goal is to help our clients create and maintain safe, healthy, and productive environments for themselves and the animals in their care.

An important foundation of this partnership is the Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship, or VCPR.

What is a VCPR?

A VCPR is the professional relationship between a veterinarian, a client, and an animal or group of animals under veterinary care.

It helps ensure your veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of your animals to make informed decisions about their health, recommend treatments, and prescribe medications when appropriate.

VCPR requirements are established by the College of Veterinarians of British Columbia (CVBC), not by KLAVC. All veterinarians practising in British Columbia must follow applicable professional standards.

Why is a VCPR important?

A VCPR supports responsible veterinary care, animal welfare, and safe medication use.

It is especially important when your animals need:

- Prescription medications or refills
- Veterinary advice about illness or injury
- Ongoing management of medical conditions
- Preventive health and herd-health programs
- Follow-up treatment and monitoring

A current VCPR helps ensure the right medication, dose and treatment plan and supports ongoing, high-quality care for your herd or individual animals.

Maintaining your VCPR

How do I establish or maintain a VCPR?

A VCPR begins with an agreement between the veterinarian and client about the veterinary services to be provided.

Your veterinarian must have sufficient, current knowledge of your animal or herd, obtained through appropriate veterinary assessments, examinations, or premises visits.

A VCPR is an ongoing relationship. There is no single annual expiry date that applies to every animal and situation. Your veterinarian determines when another assessment is needed.

We encourage clients to plan routine veterinary care rather than waiting until their animals become ill.

- Schedule regular veterinary visits, including routine herd health, annual health visits or problem-focused examinations as appropriate.
- Keep us informed about changes in your animals, management or health concerns.
- Follow veterinary recommendations, use medications as directed and keep good records.

Why might my animal need an examination before receiving medication?

Veterinarians have professional responsibilities when prescribing and dispensing prescription medications.

Even when your animal has received a medication previously, your veterinarian must determine whether that medication remains appropriate and whether they have sufficient current knowledge to prescribe it safely.

An additional examination or veterinary assessment may be necessary.

These requirements help protect your animals and support responsible medication use.

Telemedicine and your VCPR

Technology can be a valuable part of modern veterinary care, particularly for horse owners and livestock producers who live some distance from veterinary services.

Telemedicine may involve using telephone calls, photographs, or video to help your veterinarian assess concerns, provide follow-up care, or monitor an existing condition.

When veterinary diagnosis or treatment is provided remotely, the veterinarian must follow the CVBC's telemedicine guidelines and applicable VCPR requirements.

Telemedicine does not automatically replace a physical examination. Your veterinarian determines whether remote assessment is appropriate or whether your animal requires an in-person examination.

In exceptional circumstances, a VCPR may be established through telemedicine when professionally justified and appropriately documented.

Please contact KLAVC to discuss whether a remote consultation may be suitable for your animal's needs.

Planning and resources

Planning ahead makes a difference

Establishing and maintaining a veterinary relationship before an urgent situation arises helps your veterinary team understand your animals and their medical history.

We encourage clients to discuss ongoing medication needs, routine health care, and emergency planning with our team.

Questions about your VCPR?

If you're unsure whether you have an established VCPR or whether your animal requires an examination, please contact Kamloops Large Animal Veterinary Clinic.

We're happy to help you understand the requirements and plan appropriate veterinary care.

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Learn more

The following official resources explain the professional standards governing veterinary care in British Columbia:

- CVBC — VCPR Standards and Guidelines
- CVBC — Guide to the VCPR Standard
- CVBC — Telemedicine Guidelines
- CVBC — Telemedicine Frequently Asked Questions