THE ABVMA RADIATION PROTECTION PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

In the province of Alberta, all diagnostic and therapeutic x-ray equipment, particle accelerators and Class 3 and 4 lasers are governed by the *Radiation Protection Act and Regulation.* Compliance with the *Act* and Regulation was the responsibility of Alberta Human Services (formerly Alberta Employment & Immigration) until July 1st, 1997, when the Alberta Medical Association (ABVMA) was designated as an Authorized Radiation Health Administrative Organization under the *Government Organization Act.* The ABVMA assumed the responsibility for ensuring the safe delivery of radiation health services for veterinary facilities and veterinary education facilities in the province of Alberta. In order to receive this designation the ABVMA developed a "Quality Management Plan" for the administration of the program and a Radiation Protection Manual was developed as part of the ABVMA Resource Manual (now only available online) and sent to all veterinary facilities that had radiation equipment.

INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS

***** A new facility must have their equipment inspected and certified PRIOR to use.
* After the initial inspection, all veterinary radiation equipment must be inspected by a government approved agency every five years. A list of the Authorized Radiation Protection Agencies is located online at http://cms.abvma.ca/uploads/AuthorizedRadInspAgencies2012.pdf

QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM

On January 26, 2001 at the ABVMA Annual General Meeting the following amendment to the Practice Inspection Practice Standards Bylaws was passed.

A documented Quality Assurance Program is in place, consistent with that outlined in the ABVMA's Radiation Protection Program Manual and an individual in the practice (Veterinarian or Registered Animal Health Technologist) is identified as the Quality Control Officer.

A Quality Control Officer must be appointed for your practice. This person can be an RAHT or Veterinarian. The Quality Control Officer would be the person responsible for directing and recording Quality Control in the Practice. As part of the ABVMA Radiation Protection Program, the ABVMA has provided Radiology Quality Assurance Workshops to assist practices in developing a Quality Assurance Program and training a Quality Control Officer. Notices for future seminars will be put in the ABVMA Magazine and the ABVMA E-News.

ANNUAL CONFIRMATION

The ABVMA requires annual confirmation of the status of equipment in order to update the Radiation Program database. Verification of the owner's Quality Control Program will also be requested on an annual basis, along with evidence of a regular preventative maintenance program and evidence of a personal exposure monitoring program. The Annual Confirmation of Registration form is part of your Annual Quality Assurance Self-Verification Guide for Veterinary Practices. Each facility owner must review and return this form to the ABVMA office.

MAINTAINING THE PROGRAM

The ABVMA will continue to administer the Radiation Protection Program by ensuring:
* That the equipment and facility database remains current
* That members are maintaining their radiation equipment annually
* That members are aware of quality control procedures
* That members have enacted a quality control program
* New developments in the use of radiation equipment by veterinarians are monitored.

ADMINISTRATION FEE

Whereas the costs of radiation protection were provided for in the past through provincial taxes, owners of radiation equipment must now provide the entire financial support of the program. This program is run on a cost recovery basis; therefore, the Administration Fee is re-assessed annually by the ABVMA Council. All existing facilities are invoiced in June of each year. The administration fee for registration of radiation equipment for new facilities will be proportionately pro-rated from the time of year at which the facility opens.

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