



Ontario Veterinary Biosecurity Initiative

Protocol 2

Veterinary Facility Biosecurity

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Protocol 2 – Veterinary Facility Biosecurity

The objective of this Veterinary Facility Biosecurity Protocol is to suggest a set of biosecurity standards for veterinary clinics or facilities. It is impossible to be all-inclusive or to have all steps be applicable to all species and veterinary practices. Each veterinary practice needs to determine what steps are followed for your clinic.

The basic principle is avoidance of contamination of clean and dirty equipment, clothing and people through development of procedures, changing of traffic patterns and perhaps facility changes. There should be designated “dirty” and “clean” areas in the practice facility and in vehicles.

Biosecurity protocols should be documented and part of regular staff training.

Suggested Biosecurity Steps

The following recommendations should be considered at veterinary clinics.

Veterinarians Returning to the Clinic after a Farm Visit

1. Equipment, samples and accessories should be put in a designated area.
2. Footwear and clothing should be removed and stored on the “dirty” side of the clinic.
3. Hands should be washed or cleaned using hand sanitizer; or veterinarians should shower before transitioning to “clean” clinic attire.
4. Equipment should be cleaned and disinfected or sanitized after use.
5. Periodic cleaning and disinfecting or sanitizing of the whole medical kit should be conducted.
6. Once medical equipment is cleaned and disinfected or sanitized it should be placed in a clean bin and stored on the “dirty” side of the anteroom, ready for the next visit.

Veterinary Clinic Anteroom Area

1. The general public, staff and veterinarians and other staff returning from farms should use separate entrances.
2. Veterinarians and other staff returning from farms:
 - a. Should enter the clinic through a wash- up area or anteroom which is sufficient size to allow transitioned movement from a dirty¹ area across a delineated barrier to a clean area. The barrier may consist of a visible demarcation on the floor, a bench, a shower or a doorway to a separate room.
 - b. Should set down medical equipment, samples and accessories on the dirty side of the anteroom on a designated area.
 - c. Should be clean dirty equipment in a designated area that must go into the facility for further processing or cleaned and returned to the vehicle.

¹ “Dirty” side refers to the area in the entrance of the anteroom where the veterinarian washes and changes clothes before entering the “clean” side or interior of the clinic.

- d. Should have access to a sink or hand sanitizer station, located on the dirty side, to be used immediately prior to transitioning from the dirty side of the wash-up area or anteroom to the clean side.
 - e. Should remove and store footwear and clothing on the dirty side. A bench and closet would be beneficial.
 - f. Should have access to a shower located on the dirty/clean border for use during elevated biosecurity periods or according to the clinic protocols.
 - g. Should move to the clean side of the barrier to change into clean clothing and footwear.
 - h. Should ensure no unauthorized access to the dirty area by keeping the door locked.
3. Biosecurity warning/instruction signs should be placed in appropriate locations.
 4. Vehicles used for farm visits should be parked in designated spots.

Veterinarians Proceeding into the Clinic from the Anteroom

1. Clean working clothes should be put on before entering.
2. A log book should be signed, identifying the veterinarian and date/time of entry.
3. Samples should be taken directly to a designated processing area.
4. Equipment requiring further processing after cleaning in the dirty area should be taken for further processing (e.g. autoclaving).

Public Entrance to the Veterinary Clinic

1. Veterinary clinics with public access should control public access by having a designated entrance and a receptionist.
2. The general public should remain in the waiting room and not have access to the remainder of the facility.
3. A practice biosecurity protocol should be developed and posted.
4. A designated employee should explain the clinic's biosecurity protocols to public visitors and delivery personnel.
5. The clinic should keep a record of all visitors with the date, names and purpose of the visit.
6. All deliveries should come through a designated entrance that is not used by staff returning from farm visits.

Staff Entrance to the Veterinary Clinic

Staff not returning from a farm should have an entrance other than that used by veterinarians and staff returning from farms.

In-clinic surgery and care cases

A protocol should be developed to ensure that farmed animals brought to a clinic for surgery or other care do not compromise the biosecurity of the facility. This would include arrival of the animal, penning, cleaning of pens, movement of equipment, movement of people, etc.

Exiting the Veterinary Clinic

1. The general public and their animals should exit the clinic using the public entrance.
2. Veterinarians and staff going on farm should enter through the dirty area, changing clothes when transitioning from clean to dirty areas.
3. Staff not going on farm should exit through a designated entrance.

Removal of Dead Animals from the Clinic

Any dead animals must be removed from the clinic using a protocol that avoids contamination of the facility and utilizes appropriate storage and disposal methods.

Conclusion

Cleaning and disinfecting yourself and your equipment will help to prevent the mechanical spread of disease. The goal of any biosecurity program is to prevent the entry of disease not currently present, and conversely, prevent disease organisms spreading from a diseased site. Following biosecurity procedures should be a consistent ongoing practice pursued by all staff and visitors.