



26 July 2017

## CPD requirements

We recently completed our annual CPD audit. Each year we audit 10% of veterinarians. Most are selected randomly, with a few targeted audits.

Great results! Generally veterinarians far exceed the minimum number of points required.

Remember that every time you renew your APC you are asked to declare that you've accumulated enough points to meet the minimum CPD requirements.

**If you don't meet the CPD requirements, your APC can be withheld.** We'll be taking a stronger stance on this in future, starting with the next APC renewal in 2018.

You can spread your CPD activities over 3 years. As this is the final year of the CPD cycle, at APC renewal time in 2018 you will need to be able to confirm that you've met the CPD requirements (60 points, with at least 15 points each in Collegial Learning and Continuing Veterinary Education).

If you're not on track, start thinking about this now. If you have any concerns about this, contact [Despina Arathimos](#) to discuss your situation, or [Wayne Ricketts](#) for advice.

[Our website](#) has more information about CPD requirements.

*Note that Despina will be out of the office from Friday 28 July until Monday 21 August.*

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## Mycoplasma bovis

MPI is responding to the detection of the cattle disease *Mycoplasma bovis* in a dairy herd in South Canterbury.

The disease is commonly found in cattle globally, including in Australia, but this is the first detection of it in New Zealand.

Clinical signs of the disease can include:

- mastitis in dry and milking cows
- arthritis in cows
- late term abortions
- premature calves.

For information read:

- [MPI's media release](#) and [information on Mycoplasma bovis](#)
- [NZVA's press release](#)
- [technical information for veterinarians prepared by the NZVA Society of Dairy Cattle Veterinarians](#).



## Social media and complaints

Social media is now a common factor in many issues raised with us. If a dissatisfied client raises a complaint with you through social media, you need to address it as you would any other complaint.

Use your professional judgement about whether a comment on social media requires a response. If you receive a legitimate complaint from a client via social media, you need to meet your obligations under the Code and respond to the complaint. Whether you do so by social media is your decision.

You don't have to respond to every negative comment if you don't want to.

If someone posts a negative comment, general advice is to address it and invite the person to move into a private forum (a phone call, email, or private message), rather than discussing the issue publicly. Apply the same principle as you would in person – if a client raised an issue in a crowded area, you'd probably want to move that discussion somewhere quieter where you can talk.

Whether you respond publicly or privately is a matter for your judgment. The Code applies either way.

Communication is key. This applies whether in person or online. Keep your communication truthful and clear, and you have a better chance of resolving the issue. [Remember Wayne's](#)

[article](#) on the value of an apology.

Timeliness is important. A tardy response (or no response at all) may make things worse.

When using social media, the principles of the Code remain the same. You need to:

- act professionally and respectfully
- respond to complaints in a timely, honest and constructive manner
- treat colleagues with professionalism and respect
- make sure you're not bringing the profession into disrepute.

When you're using social media there are additional things to be aware of. Remember that your posts are public. Once it's posted, it's there forever. Use your discretion and make sure you maintain client confidentiality.

There's a lot of advice available on approaches to dealing with complaints and negative comments on social media, including whether or not to remove negative posts. We recommend you do some research or seek advice. Our [Social Media Guide](#) advises against deleting negative posts, and suggests posting a reply once the issue is resolved which details the resolution.

We know it's stressful to have issues aired in public. We can't order a person to stop posting to social media – we don't have jurisdiction over members of the public. We do ask people who raise their concerns with us to keep the issue confidential and refrain from discussing it while we're looking into it.

We recommend a practice social media policy, that you make sure all staff members are aware of. Keep things professional, and continue to meet your obligations under the Code.

The joint NZVA/VCNZ [Social Media Guide](#) has more information.

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## Withholding periods and authorisations

We've had an enquiry about what to do if there's doubt about a client's ability to follow the requirements of a veterinary authorisation – specifically around withholding periods.

To meet the ACVM Act's requirements regarding residues, you must:

- provide the withholding period advice as clearly as possible
- include this advice in the authorisation.

We recommend that you give the advice verbally, include it in the written authorisation, and highlight the withholding period on the label.

Your responsibility is to provide the information. The requirement to conform to the maximum residue limit is on the end user.

However, if you have concerns about the client's ability to follow your instructions, you need to consider whether there should be an authorisation at all.

You need to be satisfied that the person who will administer the RVM understands and is able to competently carry out your instructions.

If in doubt, could you make other arrangements? Could a nurse or technician administer treatments when needed, and follow up reminders during the entire withholding period?

Also note that the ACVM Act requires you to comply with the applicable residue level, not a particular withholding period. You may set whatever withholding period you feel is sufficient to mitigate the residue risk; however this comes with the proviso that you may be liable if a residue is detected.

For more information see the [NZVA Guide to Veterinary Authorising \(Prescribing\) and Dispensing](#) and ACVM's [Requirements for Authorising Veterinarians](#).

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## Article: what happens after graduation?

This [article](#) on Ministry of Education (MoE) statistics looks at what graduates do after graduation, including median pay rates (including veterinarians) ten years on.



### Save the date

VCNZ is holding a Q and A session for local vets in Hamilton on 22 November. This is your opportunity to come along and talk to your Council. We'll send more details closer to the time.

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