## ACMVET5X27 Perform emergency procedures to sustain life

#### Application

This unit of competency describes the skills and knowledge required to rapidly assess animals in crisis, deliver immediate first aid to sustain life, perform structured triage, assist with stabilisation under veterinary direction, and undertake ongoing observation and review to support clinical decision-making.

The unit applies to veterinary nurses with vocational expertise, who provide advanced emergency and critical care nursing support in a wide range of veterinary contexts, predominately, but not limited to, in emergency or critical care practices.

Graduates will exercise autonomy in undertaking complex emergency tasks while working in close collaboration with supervising veterinarians. They are expected to communicate promptly and effectively with clients and team members, apply safe and hygienic handling techniques, minimise patient stress, and maintain infection prevention controls throughout all emergency procedures.

**Licensing, legislative, regulatory requirements**

Legislative and regulatory requirements apply to the permitted scope of practice of veterinary nurses and vary between states and territories. Users must confirm relevant jurisdictional requirements before delivery.

#### Pre-requisite unit

Nil

#### Unit sector

Veterinary Nursing (VET)

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| **Elements** *Elements describe the essential outcomes.* | **Performance criteria**  *Performance criteria describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element.* |
| 1. Assess need for emergency response | 1.1 Establish immediate patient history and communicate emergency first aid, transportation and arrival procedures to client if contact made prior to presentation of the animal at the practice  1.2 Conduct visual and manual assessment of presenting animal using safe handling techniques for protection of self, patient and others  1.3 Interpret and evaluate signs to confirm life threatening or other situation status in consultation with veterinarian |
| 2. Apply and maintain first aid to sustain life | 2.1 Apply cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) procedures according to patient’s needs and under veterinary supervision  2.2 Apply procedures for haemorrhage control and oxygen therapy according to patient’s needs and under veterinary supervision |
| 3. Carry out triage procedures and stabilise patient under veterinarian direction | 3.1 Complete and evaluate triage parameters  3.2 Report triage findings to attending veterinarian  3.3 Provide clear and concise directions to supporting personnel  3.4 Provide specific emergency and critical care nursing assistance as directed by veterinarian, ensuring hygiene and infection prevention and control (IPC) procedures are followed |
| 4. Complete history and secondary survey | 4.1 Confirm patient history with client records  4.2 Perform secondary survey in conjunction with veterinarian  4.3 Update patient records |

#### Foundation skills

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| **Learning** | **Reading** | **Writing** | **Oral communication** | **Numeracy** |
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**Assessment Requirements**

**Performance evidence**

An individual demonstrating competency must satisfy all of the elements and performance criteria in this unit.

There must be evidence that the individual has:

* managed, within legal scope of practice and with veterinary supervision, a minimum of five veterinary emergency situations, and has (for each):

minimised the animal’s stress and discomfort

maintained hygiene and infection prevention and control standard precautions to reduce the risk of infection and cross-infection during emergency life support situations

worked with at least one other person and the supervising veterinarian in the emergency life support situation

* carried out triage procedures for a minimum of two animals
* demonstrated cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) procedures on a minimum of two occasions, on real or model animals
* demonstrated procedures for haemorrhage control on a minimum of one occasion, on a real or model animal
* intubated a minimum of two real or model animals.

Performance must be demonstrated in a veterinary practice, emergency hospital or critical care practice, or an environment that accurately reflects a veterinary practice where animals requiring emergency and critical care procedures are presented, unless specified otherwise in the Performance Evidence above.

**Knowledge evidence**

An individual must be able to demonstrate the knowledge required to perform the tasks outlined in the elements and performance criteria of this unit. This includes knowledge of:

* animal anatomy and physiology related to emergency situations, animal health status assessment and monitoring, and emergency procedures
* animal first aid techniques
* safety hazards associated with performing emergency procedures, including on sick, injured, anxious and frightened animals
* safe handling techniques for trauma patients
* visual assessment techniques to observe and report on animal condition and health status to the veterinarian, including:

level of consciousness

external bleeding

swelling

ataxia

body guarding

behaviour

vocal sounds

abnormal body, head or limb presentation

presence, colour, texture and volume of discharge from any orifice

* manual assessment techniques to observe and report on animal condition and health status to the veterinarian, including:

temperature

pulse

respiration

capillary refill

hydration status

pupillary reflex

mucous membrane colour

pain or guarding on palpation

* nursing support required in first aid procedures to sustain life, including:

current industry CPR procedures

defibrillation

haemorrhage control

open-chest cardiac massage

tracheostomy procedure

intravenous fluid therapy applications in emergency medicine

* anaesthesia and anaesthetic agents in emergency procedures
* techniques required to:

apply direct digital pressure or pressure bandages

clear airway

give oral fluids for caustic ingestion

identify poison evidence for snakes, toads, ticks, rat bait, snail bait, flea collars and organophosphate pesticides

support penetrating foreign bodies

support fractures

perform ventilation and cardiac compression

administer emergency drugs and fluids

monitor patients during and post resuscitation

* critical care procedures
* medications and therapies for emergency procedures and first aid
* emergency situations that may result from specific clinical conditions
* state or territory legislation and regulations relating to the practice of veterinary science, work health and safety and animal welfare in relation to emergency and first aid procedures
* triage purpose, procedures and priorities for emergency situations that are life threatening

**Assessment conditions**

Skills must be demonstrated in a veterinary practice, emergency hospital or critical care practice, or an environment that accurately reflects a veterinary practice where animals requiring emergency and critical care procedures are presented, unless specified otherwise in the Performance Evidence above.

Assessment must ensure access to:

* a range of real animals in need of emergency care
* a range of animal models where permitted by the Performance Evidence and where skills are unable to be demonstrated on real animals
* equipment, instruments and resources typically available to perform emergency and critical care procedures
* organisational policies and procedures, current legislation and regulations relevant to safely, ethically and legally performing emergency veterinary procedures
* veterinary practice personnel to assist with emergency procedures, as directed and supervised by a registered veterinarian.

Assessors of this unit must satisfy the requirements for assessors in applicable vocational education and training legislation, frameworks and/or standards.

#### Unit mapping information

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| **Code and title current version** | **Code and title previous version** | **Equivalence status** | **Comments** |
| ACMVET5X27 Perform emergency procedures to sustain life | ACMVET506 Perform emergency procedures to sustain life | Equivalent | Unit re-templated to 2025 template  Changes to wording of Application  Legislative and regulatory statement revised to more accurately reflect requirements.  E1 and E2 merged to (new) E1 ‘Assess need for emergency response’  PCs 1.1- 1.3 merged to (new) PC1.1  PCs 2.1 and 2.2 merged to (new) PC1.2  Wording of PC4.4 changed in (now) PC3.4 from ‘Provide specific emergency and critical care nursing assistance ensuring hygiene and infection control protocols are followed’ to ‘Provide specific emergency and critical care nursing assistance as directed by veterinarian, ensuring hygiene and infection prevention and control procedures are followed’  PE: wording changed from ‘handled a minimum of five’ to ‘managed, within legal scope of practice and with veterinary supervision, a minimum of five’  PE sub-bullet point 1 streamlined  Sub-bullet point 3 change from ‘worked as a member of a team’ to ‘worked with at least one other person’  Bullet point ‘intubated a minimum of one patient’ changed to ‘intubated a minimum of two real or model animals’  Removed reference to specified number of hours of work, whilst retaining requirement for performance, unless specified to be demonstrated in the workplace on real animals.  KE: re-sequenced  ‘safety risks’ reworded to ‘safety hazards associated with emergency procedures, including on sick, injured, anxious and frightened animals’ and list of mix of hazards and risks removed. |

### Overview information

#### Modification History

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| **Release** | **Comments** |
| 1 | This unit of competency was first released in ACM Animal Care and Management Training Package Release 7.0. |

**Mandatory workplace requirements:**

Mandatory workplace requirements apply to this unit of competency and are specified in the Performance Evidence and Assessment Conditions of the Assessment Requirements.