

Veterinary Technician: Full & Part-Time Position

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Veterinary technicians may also be identified as registered veterinary technicians, certified veterinary technicians, animal-health technicians, or veterinary nurses. In Florida, veterinary technicians are required to have completed an AVMA-accredited veterinary-technician program prior to passing the state's requirements for certification. We only hire certified veterinary technicians (CVT) to serve as technicians within our practice. Interested applicants who are not a CVT should consider the Veterinary Assistant position instead.

Veterinary technicians must have a broad knowledge of animal science, medicine, and husbandry, including a basic knowledge of pharmacology and sufficient mathematical skills to ensure the administration of accurate drug and fluid doses. They must be able to successfully restrain animals, complete clinical laboratory tests, use multiple radiology techniques, administer and monitor animals under anesthesia, assist in surgery, and perform dental procedures. Technicians must also deliver compassionate nursing care.

Pay

Technicians vary widely in pay based on education, experience, skill sets, and responsibilities. Typical starting wages for a technician vary widely. Hours can also vary, but most technicians work 30-40 hours per week. Some technicians also receive training in veterinary management. As such, those technicians may earn additional responsibilities which result in additional hours and/or pay.

Qualifications

- **Be a certified veterinary technician (CVT) with the FVMA**
- Applicants must have graduated from an AVMA accredited technician program
- Be able to lift and carry at least 50 pounds
- Must be at least 18 years of age (to assist with X-ray)
- Compassion for and the desire to work with animals
- Proficiency with speaking and writing in the English language (Spanish-bilingual preferred)
- A positive attitude, follow-through, and excellent communication and teamwork skills
- Punctuality and reliability are mandatory
- While not required, it is suggested that anyone working directly with animals consult their medical professional about rabies vaccines and other potential safeguards.

Training

A training schedule will be provided to help make the following list less overwhelming. Many of the tasks require prior training or education in order to perform. However, some are ones that require repetition to master and/or may be somewhat different from training due to our high standards and carefully thought out procedures. During the first week of employment, a technician will be provided training hours for shadowing staff to learn the job. Fellow technicians, the medical staff, and management will serve as mentors in order to help a new technician during their first few months. Technicians should be proficient at most, if not all, of the following tasks through their education, but are expected to learn our protocols, procedures, and expectations for completing them.

Some additional training is required of medical staff including, but not limited to, Hill's Veterinary Nutritional Advocate training, safety training, and emergency training.

General Knowledge and Tasks

General Knowledge

- Know the range of services the practice provides and the species it treats.
- Be reasonably familiar with breeds and coat colors.
- Follow OSHA standards. Be able to find Material Safety Data Sheets quickly.
- Know and use standard medical and business abbreviations.
- Use proper medical terminology when speaking and writing.
- Be familiar with infectious diseases, including their prevention and steps to reduce or eliminate transmission. Know the most common zoonotic diseases (infections from animals to humans).
- Competently speak and write the English language.
- Competently speak a second language commonly used at the practice (Spanish).

General Tasks

- Always be in position and prepared to work at the start of each scheduled shift.
- Maintain accurate personal time stamps.
- Enter the practice through the front door so that you see what clients see. Routinely pick up trash or feces from the parking lot, sidewalks, or entryway.
- Enter/exit the practice through the back door. Routinely pick up trash or feces from the parking lot, sidewalks, or entryway. Leave in groups to ensure safety.
- Maintain a professional appearance while at work, including clean and pressed uniforms or clothes. Change clothes during shifts as necessary to look professional and avoid carrying odors. Abide by the company dress code.
- Smile and maintain an even, friendly demeanor while on the job.
- Perform job tasks efficiently without rushing.
- Promote a positive attitude among staff.
- Handle stress and pressure with poise and tact.
- Be willing and available to stay late or through breaks, when needed, to assist with emergency or critical-care patients.
- Show respect for clients, team members, and animals (alive or deceased) at all times.
- Have the physical strength and ability to stand for an entire shift when needed, and be able to lift pets and objects weighing up to 50 pounds without assistance. Assist in lifting patients weighing more than 50 pounds.
- Maintain a list of tasks and engage in productive work during slow periods.
- Provide supervision/oversight for medical and kennel staff. Ensure team members are completing tasks appropriately.
- Assist other employees as needed. Avoid waiting for coworkers to ask for assistance.
- Maintain your personal veterinary technician certificate, license, or registration.
- Assist in hiring new employees by advising candidates of openings, offering them applications, working with them to help evaluate their personalities and skill levels, and providing your opinion to the hiring manager.
- Participate in your performance appraisal, and, as requested, in those of others.
- Participate in all staff and training meetings including the mandatory monthly staff meeting.

- Keep up with new developments in the field by reading journals and attending continuing education. Attend off-site CE of at least 20 hours every two years or as required to maintain your license whichever is greater.
- Organize and present training seminars for other support staff.
- Maintain constant vigilance regarding open doorways that could allow pets to escape from the facility.
- Maintain strict confidentiality regarding clients and patients for whom the practice provides veterinary services.
- Be prepared to handle any pet or facility emergency that may arise, including dog or cat fights, choking or strangulating animals, and facility fire or weather-related emergencies. Follow contingency plans.
- Follow established facility closing procedures to ensure the security of patients, staff, data, revenue, inventory, and the building.

Front-Office Tasks

- Know phone functions, including hold, intercom, transfer, forward, and three-way calling.
- Answer the phone by the third ring when receptionists are preoccupied or unavailable.
- Use patients' names during phone conversations with clients about their pets. Know each patient's sex so the pet can be called "he" or "she."
- Possess sufficient knowledge of animal husbandry and basic medicine to answer routine questions or refer calls to appropriate colleagues.

Client-Interaction Tasks

Patient-Admittance Tasks

- Cordially greet incoming clients and their pets, addressing each by name, and check them in when receptionists are busy.
- Admit patients to the hospital. Provide counseling and compassion for clients, answer their questions unless it is clear that the attending doctor should do so, and ensure that all admittance paperwork is properly completed.
- Complete and discuss financial estimates for clients as directed by doctors or the office manager.
- Provide clients with handouts and brochures regarding relevant medical conditions, surgeries, immunizations, internal and external parasites, pet health insurance, and diets.
- Assist clients with unruly or unrestrained pets.
- Transfer incoming patients to appropriate wards and ensure their comfort. Identify patients with cage cards, appropriate stickers, and neck bands. Check for the presence of appropriate paperwork.

Pet-Identification Tasks

- Scan new patients and strays for microchips, tags, and tattoos. Identify and record microchip numbers, tattoos, and/or patient markings in patient records.
- Communicate with clients about the various pet-identification systems available, including tags, tattoos, and microchips.
- Assist clients in registering pet-identification information in the practice's computer system and in the appropriate national database.

Procedural Tasks

- As patients are admitted, prepare for surgeries, procedures, and/or treatments to have ready for attending doctors.
- Develop each day's hospital census and/or client-update forms, starting with in-hospital patients, and assist with development of these forms as patients are admitted for day-procedures, surgeries, or hospitalization. Deliver copies to the front desk at established times.

Patient-Discharge Tasks

- Coordinate patient transfers with front-desk, kennel, and/or veterinarians.
- Prepare medications and prescriptions for dispensing as directed by the doctor. Ensure that each prescription label contains the following information: doctor's name; practice's name, address, and phone number including area code; date; patient's and client's name; medication name, strength and volume (or number); administration instructions including route of administration, such as by mouth or in the ear; and product's expiration date. Initial top right corner of label to indicate your approval.
- Dispense medications. Discuss administration or application and potential side effects with owners as directed by doctors.
- Accurately invoice clients from charges on the estimate and/or in the records. Activate computer reminders and insert computerized notes, treatments, diagnostics, and diagnoses.
- Receive and record client payments as needed.
- Discharge patients. Instruct clients on the care of patients at home, the timing of recheck appointments, and warnings of adverse effects of surgeries or medications.
- Assist grieving clients and comfort them. Be familiar with the grieving process. Always be sensitive to background chatter or conversations that could exacerbate the anxieties and grief clients experience during euthanasias or deaths of their pets.
- Provide clients with poetic memorials of their dead-on-arrival, died-during-hospitalization, or euthanized pets including a paw print stamp. Return collars, leashes, and other accessories.
- Handle angry or grieving clients with a calm and reassuring manner. Be familiar with the grieving process. Always be sensitive to background chatter or conversations that could exacerbate the anxieties and grief clients experience during euthanasias or deaths of their pets.
- Assist clients to their vehicles if needed.

Medical-Record Management Tasks

- Understand the medical software.
- Record doctors' and technicians' notes in patients' computer records.
- Make notes in patient files of all relevant phone or in-person conversations with clients, especially when notifying them of lab results and include a timestamp before or after such entries.
- Verify and/or witness clients' statements regarding procedures, including euthanasias.
- Check files for completeness of notes, charges, callbacks, and reminders, making entries as needed.
- Accurately file all paper records.

Exam-Room Tasks

- Possess sufficient strength and assertiveness to effectively restrain patients and ensure the safety of clients and personnel.
- Clean and straighten exam rooms to prepare for incoming patients. Spray disinfectant on exam tables, wipe them clean, and dry them. Remove sources of offensive odors; empty trash if necessary. Check floors, walls, doors, and counters, and sweep or clean them as needed to remove hair, body fluids, and dirt.

- Obtain and record patient histories from clients.
- Answer questions and educate clients about basic pet care and procedures including nutrition; internal and external parasite control; immunization protocols; the administration of topical, oral, otic, and ophthalmic medications; spay and neuter procedures; and behavior and obedience training.
- Complete cursory overall examinations of patients and record your findings in the medical records.
- Identify external parasites.
- Perform suture removals, nail trims, and wing trims.
- Draw up vaccines and/or injections for administration.
- Vaccinate pets. Follow manufacturers' directions as well as AAFP guidelines for placement of injectable vaccines at appropriate sites.
- Dispose of used needles and syringes and other sharp objects as set forth by the practice's policy and OSHA standards.
- Keep a small notebook in your pocket to record accurate instructions, particularly regarding the preparation and administering medications to be dispensed.
- Inform the practice manager or doctors immediately of all bite or scratch wounds you suffer so that reports can be made and you can be referred for timely medical care by a physician if necessary. Clean all wounds quickly and thoroughly.

Nursing-Care Tasks

Basic and Environmental Tasks

- Prioritize tasks to maximize clients' satisfaction and patients' health.
- Track comfort items that clients brought for hospitalized patients.
- Wash, dry, and store patients' bedding and the practice's towels. Bedding should be in good repair.
- Provide occupants with clean, soft bedding.
- Clean cages when they are soiled, and scoop or change litter boxes as needed.
- Maximize patients' comfort with a gentle and reassuring manner. Understand that actions that would constitute animal cruelty under state or local laws or the practice's policies will be grounds for immediate reprimand and/or termination.
- Monitor patients for vomit, blood, urine, and feces in the cage, and clean patients and cages as needed. Note unexpected incidents on cage cards or charts.
- Monitor patients' behaviors and note potentially aggressive behaviors. Use caution when handling aggressive or potentially aggressive pets. Request assistance when needed.
- Monitor changes in patients' conditions. Alert doctors to significant changes.
- Alert doctors to notable pathology identified during patients' exams.
- Follow isolation procedures. Prevent contact between contagious animals and others. Using the designated products and dilutions for disinfectants, properly disinfect your shoes, hands, and clothing before leaving isolation areas.
- Walk dogs on a double leash or on a leash within a fenced exercise area. Ensure that they are restrained and under your control at all times.
- Accurately assess patients' temperatures, pulse rates, and respiratory rates.
- Clip hair in a manner that minimizes clipper burn. Maintain, clean, and lubricate clipper blades on a regular basis.
- Complete and update cage cards.
- Use warning stickers and notations on cage cards and records as appropriate.
- Prior to discharge, remove patients' catheters and clean patients so that no body fluids or excrement are present.

Patient-Treatment Tasks

- Understand the mechanics and application of standards of asepsis.
- Properly calculate medication dosages and volumes of liquids or tablets to be administered to patients.
- Maintain IV catheters so fluids flow freely; flush and clean as needed.
- Monitor and maintain urinary-collection bags. Record urine production on charts.
- Administer IV, IM, SQ, and oral medications.
- Provide IV and SQ fluid therapy to patients. Maintain aseptic conditions. Understand the different types of fluids and additives used in the practice. Calculate, add, and administer medications through fluids. Calculate and administer proper fluid flow rates to patients.
- Monitor, adjust, and maintain IV infusion pumps.
- Administer routine enemas.
- Apply wound dressings and treatments. Maintain a clean site. Understand the applications for wet, dry, and wet-to-dry dressings.
- Apply bandages in a manner that ensures that the bandage protects and/or limits mobility and remains properly applied. Cover and maintain bandages as needed to preserve function and cleanliness.
- Use cotton swabs to clean ears, bulb syringes to flush them, cures to remove debris, and catheters to irrigate ear canals. Administer ear treatments without causing trauma, and teach clients how to complete this task.
- Trim nails to the quick without causing bleeding.
- Provide physical therapy and hydrotherapy to patients as instructed.
- Provide medical grooming, including medicated baths, dips, and mat removal.
- Understand how to stop bleeding by using styptic pencils, powder or other means.
- Deflea patients with flea combs, flea sprays, spot-on topicals, baths, dips, or appropriate medication.
- Detick patients with tick-removal instruments or medications.
- Identify a patient's level of pain and possible causes of pain, and understand the medications and methods used to control pain.
- Assist kennel staff in medicating and treating boarders.

Technical Tasks

General Technical Tasks

- Restrain pets in a manner that allows necessary work to be performed, minimizes patient stress, and ensures their safety and that of other people.
- Safely and effectively apply and use restraint devices, including muzzles, towels, gloves, and cat bags.
- Perform venipunctures using patients' cephalic, saphenous, and jugular veins in a manner that minimizes trauma to patients and injury to veins and allows you to successfully obtain nonhemolyzed blood samples.
- Collect urine and fecal samples. Use fecal loops for stool collection as needed. When required, perform urinary catheterizations on male dogs or cystocenteses on male and female dogs, cats, and pocket pets.
- Aseptically place cephalic, saphenous, and jugular intravenous catheters without causing patient trauma.
- Perform needle aspirates and stain them as requested.
- Draw blood for transfusions. Type-match blood samples. Perform blood transfusions: set up filters for whole-blood administration, oversee administration of blood and blood products, and monitor patients for transfusion reactions.
- Set up and record diagnostic multi-lead ECG tracings.
- Collect and properly store canine semen.

- Make effective smears from vaginal swabs.
- Obtain ear swabs and cultures for analysis.
- Express anal sacs.
- Properly implant microchips and test their functionality.
- Assist with euthanasia procedures. Hold off veins and release pressure at appropriate times when catheters are not used.

Emergency-Care Tasks

- Provide basic life support, including CPR, airway maintenance, and oxygen therapy.
- Apply temporary bandages or splints.
- Know where to find the emergency drug kit. Make sure products have not expired, and understand the basic uses for these drugs.
- Control bleeding using pressure bandages and tourniquets.
- Provide fluid and pharmacologic therapy under veterinary supervision.
- Provide cooling baths and/or enemas for heatstroke patients.

Laboratory Tasks

- Understand the paperwork and procedures of outside laboratories used by the practice.
- Maintain all laboratory test kits and reagents under proper environmental conditions.
- Maintain centrifuges, microscopes, and chemistry analyzers.
- Make slides of body fluids. Air-dry and stain them as directed.
- Make blood smears with properly feathered edges to ensure accurate interpretation.
- Evaluate blood smears to accurately assess platelet numbers, red and white cell morphology, and differential white counts. Recognize blood pathogens.
- Maintain stains and other supplies to ensure the best results. Prevent contamination of stains and replace them when ineffective or contaminated.
- Use proper stain techniques to maximize the diagnostic capability of prepared slides.
- Evaluate vaginal smears to determine stages of estrus.
- Evaluate fresh semen for evidence of fertility and sperm quality.
- Perform urinalyses. Properly use and record data from urine dipsticks. Measure specific gravity. Evaluate urine sediments for crystals, cells, and other material.
- Perform fecal examinations, including direct and flotation procedures.
- Perform and evaluate skin scrapings and ear smears.
- Complete routine ELISA tests, such as heartworm and feline viral tests.
- Perform CBCs and differentials.
- Set up, centrifuge, and read hematocrits.
- Use refractometers or chemistry analyzers to evaluate total protein levels of serum or other fluids.
- Set up and read Azostix® and blood glucose test strips.
- Use handheld glucometers to measure blood glucose values.
- Collect and prepare samples for bacterial and fungal cultures. Evaluate in-house cultures.
- Evaluate bleeding/clotting times.
- Maintain quality control by running control samples and periodically testing in-house results against results from an outside laboratory.

Surgical Tasks

- Develop or locate and maintain equipment and instrument maintenance logs.
- Serve as laser safety officer. Ensure the eye safety of veterinarians and staff present during laser surgery.
- Understand aseptic principles and apply them to surgical patients, instruments, equipment, and rooms.
- Know the names of instruments and where they are stored.
- Prepare the surgery suite(s) for incoming patients.
- Prepare patients for surgery. Clip surgical fields with straight margins. Minimize tissue trauma. Properly scrub and prepare surgical fields. Maintain clean fields when moving patients.
- Properly position and align patients for surgery.
- Use circulating warm-water baths and/or hot water bottles to maintain the body temperatures of anesthetic and surgical patients.
- Ground patients when using electrocautery.
- Properly scrub hands and arms for surgical cleanliness, and aseptically gown and glove yourself when called to assist or “scrub in.”
- Assist surgeons with aseptic gowning and gloving.
- Anticipate surgeons’ needs for assistance, instruments, and patient monitoring, and treatments.
- Monitor patients’ recoveries. Protect patients from aspiration and hypothermia. Deflate cuffs and remove endotracheal tubes as soon as gag reflexes return.
- Stimulate and care for puppies and kittens removed by cesarean section.
- Maintain surgery logs with patients’ names, doctors’ names, procedures performed, types and amounts of preanesthetic and anesthetic agents, and surgical times.
- Maintain controlled-substance logs with patients’ names, doctors’ names, types and amounts of drugs used, amounts of drugs remaining, and your signature.
- Maintain logs of the number of hours surgical lasers are in use.
- Keep controlled drugs secured to meet Drug Enforcement Agency and state board specifications.
- Update patient records with drugs administered, procedures performed, and patient status during surgeries and recoveries.

Surgical Cleaning Tasks

- Clean operating rooms and equipment after use.
- Clean surgical prep and recovery areas.
- Wash, sterilize, and store endotracheal tubes.
- Dispose of used needles and syringes and other sharp objects as set forth by the practice’s policy and OSHA standards.
- Clean surgical instruments by hand and/or ultrasonic cleaner.
- Operate and maintain the autoclave.
- Pack and autoclave instruments. Using lists of instruments or photos as guides, ensure that packs contain the proper numbers and types of instruments and that they are labeled with dates and types of packs. Assist with and maintain the color-coding system used on instruments in packs. Apply pressure and temperature sterilization tape and/or monitors, and verify effectiveness after autoclaving.

Dental Tasks

- Know the names of surgical and dental instruments and their storage locations.
- Understand and use proper attire when operating dental equipment, including masks, eye protection, caps, and protective apparel such as a gown or scrubs.
- Recognize significant dental and gum disease, record it in patient records, and bring it to the attention of doctors.

- Perform dental scaling and polishing procedures without traumatizing the gingiva.
- Perform fluoride treatments.
- Perform dental extractions under the direction of attending doctors. Ensure full root removals or report incomplete extractions.
- Maintain proper dental records for each patient.

Anesthetic Tasks

- Be sufficiently familiar with the anesthetic machines to operate, maintain, and repair them.
- Routinely check and change soda lime. Record dates of soda-lime changes on the machines.
- Check anesthetic hoses for leaks and internal contaminants.
- Ensure that the anesthetic scavenging system is functional.
- Understand the differences between closed- and open-circuit administration of anesthetic agents, adjustments needed for oxygen flow rates, and anesthetic percentages used for each.
- Regularly check the level of inhalant anesthetic in vaporizers. Add anesthetic as needed.
- Check pressures in oxygen tanks regularly and replace tanks at appropriate times. Check regularly for leaks in oxygen hoses and couplings.
- Connect oxygen tanks to anesthetic machines without damaging gaskets. Maintain spare gaskets and replace them if they are damaged.
- Test endotracheal tube cuffs for leaks prior to use and replace them.
- Know the volume of air that should be used to inflate various-sized cuffs to pressure levels that prevent leakage without traumatizing tracheas.
- Generally understand the various anesthetic agents used for different patients.
- Administer preanesthetic drugs to surgical patients as directed. Record times of administration.
- Preoxygenate surgical patients that are at particular risk for oxygen deprivation as directed.
- Administer IV, IM, and inhalation anesthetic agents safely.
- Estimate endotracheal tube diameters for patients. Safely pass endotracheal tubes and ensure proper fits.
- Use a laryngoscope or other light source as needed to pass tubes.
- Check patients for proper respiratory function during intubation to ensure that tubes are in the trachea and not the esophagus.
- Monitor surgical patients by tracking anesthetic depths, heart rates, respiratory rates, temperatures, pulse oximetry, and ECGs during anesthetic procedures.
- Adjust gas anesthesia for each patient to safely maintain proper surgical planes. Administer additional injectable anesthetics within safety guidelines as needed to maintain desired surgical depths.
- Use palpebral, toe pinch, and corneal reflexes to assess and maintain necessary surgical planes.
- Maintain anesthetic log books so as to be in compliance with AAHA and state board standards.

Imaging Tasks

Radiology Tasks

- Maintain radiographic, developing, and shielding equipment to maximize patients' and employees' safety. Record maintenance data.
- Know how to perform radiographic contrast studies, such as barium swallows, upper and lower contrast studies of the GI system, excretory urograms, and cystourethrograms.
- Minimize radiation hazards. Use protective equipment and wear exposure badges during radiographic exposures.
- Properly measure patients for effective translation to radiograph machine settings.

- Develop, use, adjust, and maintain a radiograph technique chart that minimizes waste caused by erroneous exposures.
- Position patients to obtain diagnostic-quality radiographs of skeletal anatomy, internal organs, superficial lesions, or extremities.
- Consistently use right and left markers.
- Adjust machine settings to correct technique failures.
- Properly store radiograph cassettes and unexposed film.
- Properly save radiographs to the medical record and create CD for client of the radiographs. Provide the CD to the clients for their own records.
- Maintain a radiograph log book that complies with AAHA standards and/or state laws.

Ultrasound and Endoscopy Tasks

- Prepare patients for ultrasound.
- Warm the ultrasound gel before use.
- Properly restrain and position patients for ultrasonography.
- Perform introductory ultrasound surveys as directed.
- Clean and maintain ultrasound equipment.
- Properly clean, handle, maintain, and store all endoscopic equipment.

Inventory-Management Tasks

- Discuss new products with retail representatives and doctors.
- Develop and maintain contacts for retail reps and sources of drugs and supplies.
- Maintain lists of medications, vaccines, pet food, and/or hospital supplies to determine levels of inventory on hand. Place orders for additional supplies on demand, if so instructed, or report items needed to the ordering manager.
- Receive and stock supplies, matching invoices with packaged goods. Report all shortages, overages, and damaged goods.
- Ensure that medical supplies are always available.
- Regularly check for outdated supplies. Remove and replace them as instructed by the practice manager.

While extensive, this job description does not cover every task or duty that might be assigned. Additional responsibilities may be assigned as necessary. If you have questions or concerns about this job description, please feel free to contact the General Manager.