



# College of Veterinarians of British Columbia

## *Professional Practice Standard<sup>1</sup>: Thermoregulating Devices*

Originally published January 2018, amended March 2018 and October 2019

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This College publication describes a mandatory standard of practice. The *Veterinarians Act* in section 52 provides that a failure to comply with a standard may be investigated.

For anesthetized or otherwise immobile patients, including neonates, **only thermoregulating devices that have been specifically designed for use in anesthetized patients are acceptable for use in veterinary practice facilities in British Columbia**, including, but not necessarily limited to:

- forced warm air blankets approved for use in hospitals
- circulating warm water blankets approved for use in hospitals or veterinary facilities
- air-free, conductive fabric blankets

A list of unacceptable devices for thermoregulation includes, but is not limited to, these and similar products:

- electric heating pads
- hot water bottles
- exam gloves filled with water
- hairdryers
- ceramic discs
- heat lamps
- grain-filled bags (e.g. “magic bags”)
- any device or item that is heated in the microwave.

While it is acknowledged that the risk of thermal burns cannot be completely eliminated, those risks can be minimized by:

- adopting the use of devices that have been designed with internal systems that ensure even distribution of heat and safety features to maintain the temperature of the device within an acceptable range,
- ensuring proper use and careful maintenance (following manufacturer instructions), and
- providing close monitoring and supervision by qualified staff.

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<sup>1</sup> Council has approved this professional practice standard on January 20, 2018 in light of recent complaints from the public presented to the Investigation Committee involving animals sustaining serious burn injuries from inappropriate devices used in some veterinary facilities.