

Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society (VECCS) certification of veterinary emergency and critical care facilities:

The VECCS is offering a certification program to veterinary facilities that provide emergency and critical patient care. The purpose of this certification is to recognize those hospitals that meet and exceed the minimum standards and guidelines published by the VECCS. The VECCS does this in the hopes of raising the standard of care while also increasing public and professional awareness in the area of veterinary emergency and critical patient care.

This certification program identifies 3 levels (I through III) based on facility operating hours, equipment and personnel. The following is a description of the different levels of certification with associated requirements for each level.

Level III

The level III emergency and critical care facility is an acute care facility with the medical staff, personnel and training necessary to provide emergency and critical patient care. This facility is open to receive small animal emergency patients on nights, weekends, and holidays, 365 days a year.

The level III emergency and critical care facility must be in compliance with the requirements listed in the appendix "Minimum Requirements for Certification of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Facilities".

Level II

The level II emergency and critical care facility is a 24 hour acute care facility with the medical staff, personnel and training necessary to provide emergent and critical patient care. This facility is open to receive small animal emergency patients 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

The level II emergency and critical care facility must be in compliance with the requirements listed in the appendix "Minimum Requirements for Certification of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Facilities".

The level II emergency and critical care facility must also have:

- A dedicated surgical preparation area.
- Have these additional items in stock:
 - Canine packed red blood cells
 - Feline Type A packed red blood cells
 - A maintenance crystalloid solution
 - Central venous catheters
 - Diltiazem
 - Sodium nitroprusside or hydralazine
 - Magnesium sulfate or magnesium chloride
 - Sodium phosphate or potassium phosphate

- The capability of providing enteral nutritional support through placement of an esophagostomy tube.
 - The capability of providing partial parenteral nutrition.
 - Consultation capabilities with a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Radiology (onsite or via the internet) for the review of diagnostic images when necessary.

Level I

A Level I emergency and critical care facility is a 24 hour acute care facility with the resources and specialty training necessary to provide sophisticated emergent and critical patient care. This facility is open to receive small animal emergency patients 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The level I facility must have a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care employed full time and available for consultation either on-site or by phone 24/7.

The level I emergency and critical care facility must be in compliance with the requirements listed in the appendix "Minimum Requirements for Certification of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Facilities".

The level I emergency and critical care facility also must meet these additional requirements in the areas of:

Staffing

- It is recommended that there be at least one veterinarian on duty at all times with at least 2 years practice experience or 1 year small animal internship experience.
- Must have at least two certified technicians employed full time, and it is recommended that at least one of the technicians is a certified Veterinary Technician Specialist (Emergency and Critical Care).

Continuing Education

- A comprehensive, written training and continuing education program to include as a minimum the following components: journal club, morbidity and mortality rounds, and wet labs.

Emergency Capabilities

- Have the resources (equipment and staff training) to evaluate and stabilize any small mammal, avian and reptile (exotic) “pets”. These patients can be referred to a local exotic specialist that sees emergencies, if a documented relationship is present.
- Providing volume or pressure cycled mechanical ventilation.
- Performing invasive blood pressure monitoring.
- The proficiency and resources to perform endoscopy and bronchoscopy.
- Have proficiency in abdominal ultrasound and echocardiography or a documented relationship with a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Radiology and Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine.

Facilities

- A system in place to ensure continuous ongoing power that will support the operation of critical equipment for an indefinite period of time in the event of a power outage. An example of such a system would be a combination of either a centralized or distributed uninterruptable power supply (UPS) unit(s), supplying short term uninterrupted power to the computers, phone system and emergency lighting, and a generator for stand by and long term power needs. The system needs to be maintained and have documented performance checks at least twice a year.

In-Patient Support Capability

- To provide total parental nutrition.
- To perform peritoneal or hemodialysis.