

Working With Veterinarians As a Chiropractor, why you should.  
From Kelly Thompson DC

For Chiropractors in California this applies directly to you. So if you are treating animals in your Chiropractic practice, whether you charge for this service or not, you are in violation of this regulation even if the Veterinarian, whose patient you are treating, has gone so far as to refer them to your practice. I have been on the receiving end of investigations by the California Veterinary Medical Board and the Board of Chiropractic Examiners over the years even following the regulations to the letter. Nothing like being greeted by your friendly neighborhood Postal person and signing for a certified, return receipt requested envelope from the Department of Consumer Affairs, Veterinary Medical Board to put a little excitement in your day! I can assure you that the process of resolving the, "misunderstanding" is always stressful and expensive. If you are actually caught, investigated, and cited for violating Section 2038 the Board of Chiropractic Examiners will subsequently open their own investigation and you will be extremely lucky if you keep your license. So be warned.

Secondly, Veterinarians carry liability insurance to cover them for malpractice. If you are included in a malpractice case, your chiropractic liability insurance does not cover you treating animals. Additionally, if you are named in a lawsuit, it will again be reported the Chiropractic Board and you are once again under investigation.

Finally and perhaps most importantly for the animal patient, ask yourself if you can answer "yes" to any of the following questions. What if a your animal patient comes in "pain posturing" (head held down, back arched up, tail tucked under). Can you tell the difference between pain caused by an acute T/L subluxation or the onset of pancreatitis or a clostridium infection causing pronounced abdominal pain? Can you tell the difference between neck spasms and pain caused by a cervical subluxations or a fractured odontoid or syringomyelia or a severe lower cervical sprain with instability? Can you discern the difference between a limp caused by a small but developing Osteosarcoma of the femur and lameness caused by a cruciate ligament sprain or a subluxation of the hock? Can you distinguish between a dog that is unable to get up due to paraparesis of the hind end or a dog that is just profoundly weak and infirm due to illness? Is that patient panting at night because they are in pain or because they have mitral valve disease or perhaps canine cognitive dysfunction? Can you determine if a dog is non-weight-bearing on one leg because of root signature or because of a pathologic fracture through the femur or perhaps a luxated femoral head, or a medial luxating patella? If you as a Chiropractor can't say yes to these (and not even a Veterinarian can say yes to all of these based purely on presenting signs, symptoms, and a physical exam) then you have no business treating "off the reservation." Why am I so adamant? These have all at one time or another presented to me at a Veterinary clinic or hospital. Fortunately working along side Veterinarians daily, these were sorted out to the benefit of myself and more importantly the patient and their owner.