



VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS BOARD  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

## Obligation to report

**A veterinary practitioner must report “notifiable diseases” to the relevant authority. This requirement takes precedence over maintaining owner confidentiality.**

Under section 13(1) of the *Animal Diseases Act 2005*, a person commits an offence if the person has reasonable grounds for believing that an animal is infected with an exotic disease and does not immediately tell the ACT Chief Veterinary Officer. Notifiable diseases that are exotic can be found in the [Animal Diseases \(Exotic Diseases\) Declaration 2018](#) and endemic in the [Animal Diseases \(Endemic Diseases\) Declaration 2021](#). (Current July 2022)

**Where veterinary practitioners reasonably believe that there exists, or potentially exists, a serious risk to the health and safety of the public and/or the health and welfare of an animal, they should report the matter to the relevant authority. This responsibility takes precedence over the obligation to maintain client confidentiality.**

If a veterinary practitioner judges an animal to be suffering, they must give the owner options for relieving that suffering as a matter of urgency and in direct terms. If the owner declines measures to relieve an animal’s suffering (including euthanasia), a veterinary practitioner should refer the matter to the relevant authority - **Access Canberra on 13 22 81, RSPCA on 02 6287 8100, Chief Veterinary Officer (ACT) 02 6205 3737.**

Accurate and thorough documentation of the veterinary practitioner’s observations of the animal should be made and will greatly assist in investigations. This documentation should include the recording of precise dates and times, along with the recording of any conversations and photographic evidence.