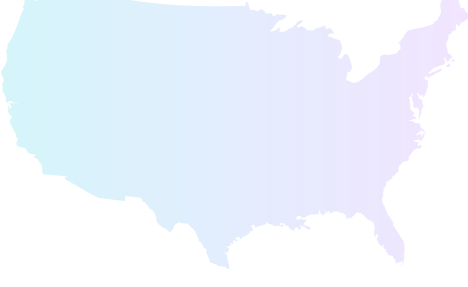


# Veterinary Practice Act 101: What Does It Mean for Vet Techs?

The answer to this question can be complicated, so let's break it down.



## State-Specific Veterinary Practice Acts

Veterinary Technicians in the United States are governed by a series of state-specific practice acts that define the qualifications needed to become a Vet Tech, along with the duties and limitations of the role. Although these can vary state-by-state, a basic understanding of the Veterinary Practice Act is useful for all Vet Techs.

## What's the Goal of the Veterinary Practice Act?

*The goal of the Veterinary Practice Act is to protect both animals and the public by regulating the practice of veterinary medicine.*

The act defines the qualifications necessary to become a licensed Veterinarian, Veterinary Technician, and other animal health professionals. It also outlines duties and limitations for those professionals.

As a Vet Tech, it's important to be familiar with your state's Veterinary Practice Act. This will help you understand your duties and limitations, learn about new laws that affect you, and keep up with changes that can affect your career.



## How Is It Created and Revised?

The Veterinary Practice Act is created and revised by several different entities: state legislators, Veterinary Medical Boards, Veterinary Medical Associations, and Veterinary Technician Associations.

Legislators put forward bills to make changes to the act as they deem necessary, while Veterinary Medical Boards put forward recommendations for revision. Finally, Veterinary Medical Associations and Veterinary Technician Associations advocate the first two groups for needed change.

*The Veterinary Practice Act is a living document that's regularly updated to reflect the latest advances in veterinary medicine and to ensure that all practitioners are held to a high standard.*

Legislative sessions occur in each state where bills for change can be put forward each year. In addition, Veterinary Practice Acts go through a "Sunset Review" regularly (typically every 3-5 years) to evaluate their need and decide whether modifications are necessary.



## What Does It Cover?

### CREDENTIALS AS OF 2022

- 40 states\* have "State Regulated" credentials, implemented by Veterinary Medical Boards (VMB). These states use LVT, RVT, or CVT depending on the state. LVMT is only used in Tennessee.
- State regulation allows the quality of the professionals to be upheld by enforcing requirements, setting a scope of practice (what credentialed and non-credentialed individuals can or cannot do), and preventing misrepresentation through laws.
- 10 states\* have "Private Credentialing" where a private organization certifies individuals as CVTs.
- Private credentials have no enforceability in terms of law. But these private organizations establish the same high standard requirements as state regulation to ensure the quality of individuals that carry the credentials.

\* Montana and Colorado credentialing requirements scheduled to change in 2023

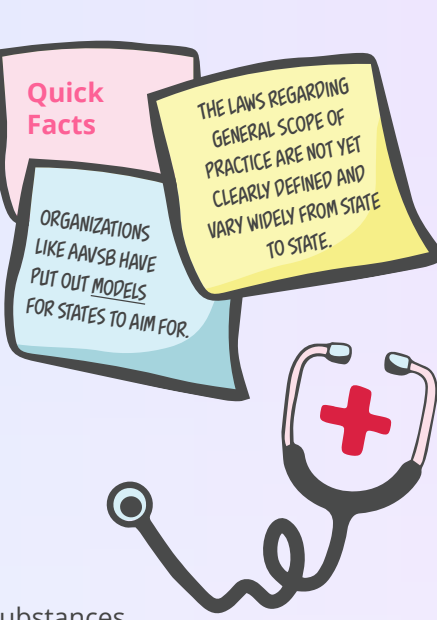


### GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- An Associate's or Bachelor's degree in Veterinary Technology or a Veterinary Nursing degree from an AVMA Accredited Program.
- Passing the Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE) maintained by the AAVSB.
- Credential granted by the state VMB, or certification granted by private organization.

### GENERAL SCOPE OF PRACTICE

- Determining a diagnosis and prognosis, prescribing treatment, and performing surgery can only be performed by licensed Veterinarians.
- In states that regulate Veterinary Technicians, some tasks and procedures may be restricted to those with credentials (depending on the state).



### Tasks That Are Commonly Restricted to Ensure Patient Safety

- Administration of anesthesia
- Bandaging, casting, and splinting
- Suturing of superficial tissues
- Assisting in surgical procedures
- Preparation and administration of medications, especially controlled substances



### VETERINARY TECHNICIAN SPECIALTIES

Due to a growing interest among Veterinary Technicians to attain a higher level of recognition for advanced knowledge and skills in specific disciplines, the National Association of Veterinary Technicians (NAVTA) developed the Committee on Veterinary Technician Specialties (CVTS). Very few states currently include language on Veterinary Technician specialists.

Visit NAVTA's [Specialties Page](#) to find out more.

**Quick Facts**

THE NAVTA COMMITTEE ON VETERINARY TECHNICIANS SPECIALTIES (CVTS) WAS FORMED IN 1994 AND IS RECOGNIZED BY THE AMERICAN VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

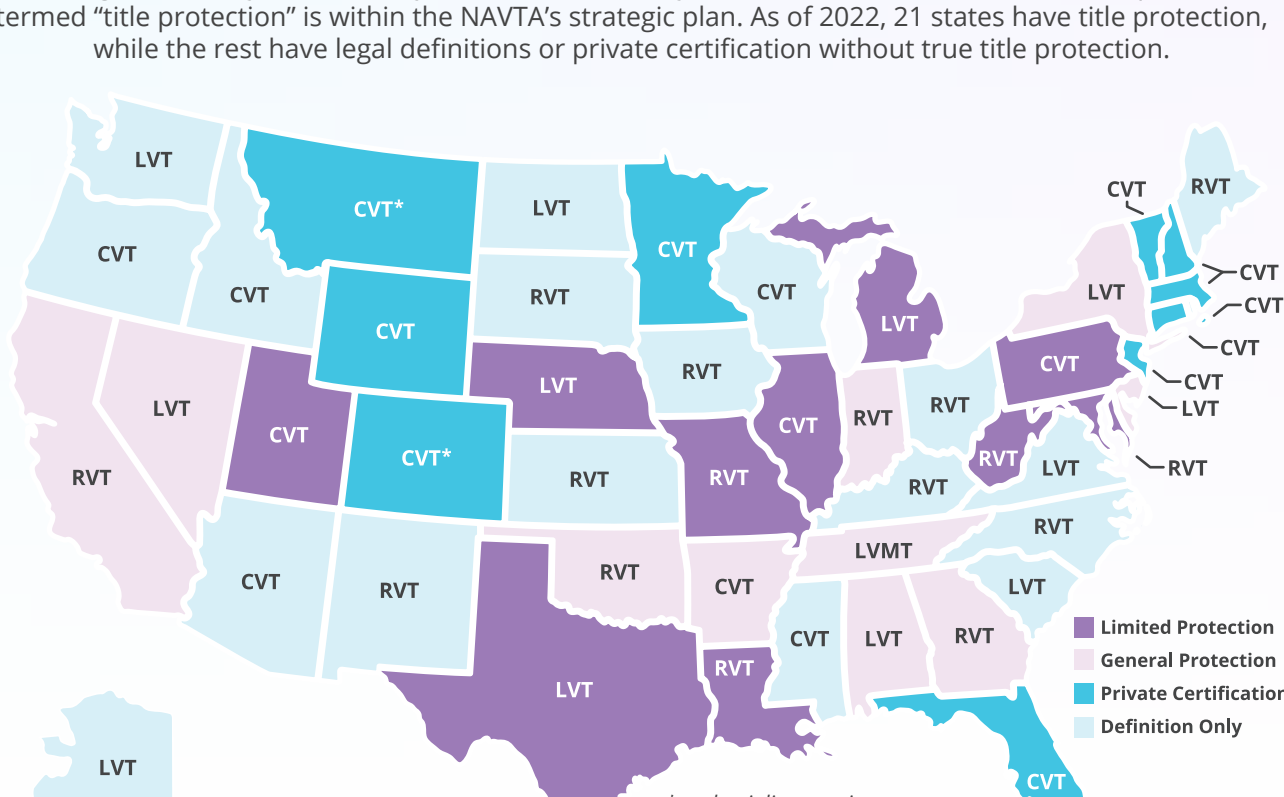
THERE ARE CURRENTLY OVER 1200 VETERINARY TECHNICIAN SPECIALISTS (VTS) AND VETERINARY NURSE SPECIALISTS (VNS).

### TITLE PROTECTION

The Veterinary Technician profession is challenged with obtaining self-identity that provides unquestionable professional recognition that is not confused with veterinary team members that have not completed a veterinary technology/nursing curriculum, and/or passed standardization credentialing examinations.

Those who have not obtained a Veterinary Technician credential are considered Veterinary Assistants (VAs) in most states.

Protecting the identity of Veterinary Technicians to solely those that meet the educational requirements, termed "title protection" is within the NAVTA's strategic plan. As of 2022, 21 states have title protection, while the remaining states have private certification without true title protection.



\*credentialing requirements scheduled to start in 2023

*Proper title protection protects the public from misrepresentation of individuals and upholds the reputation of the profession.*

## Resources & Assistance

- [National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America \(NAVTA\)](#)
- [American Veterinary Medical Association \(AVMA\)](#)
- [American Association of Veterinary State Boards \(AAVSB\)](#)
- [North American Veterinary Community \(NAVC\)](#)

