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SECTION 145B

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Section 145B: Vaccination against rabies; certificate; tag; proof of vaccination; exemption; penalty

Section 145B. (a) Each owner or keeper of a dog, cat or ferret that is 6 months of age or older shall cause such dog, cat or ferret to be vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian using a licensed vaccine according to the manufacturer's directions and shall cause such dog, cat or ferret to be revaccinated at intervals recommended by the manufacturer. Unvaccinated dogs, cats or ferrets acquired or moved into the commonwealth shall be vaccinated within 30 days after the acquisition or arrival of such animal into the commonwealth or upon reaching the age of 6 months, whichever last occurs. It shall be the duty of each veterinarian, at the time of vaccinating a dog, cat or ferret, to complete a certificate of rabies vaccination which shall include, but not be limited to, the following information: the owner's name and address; a description of the animal, including breed, sex, age, name and distinctive markings; the date of vaccination; the rabies vaccination tag number; the type of rabies vaccine used; the route of vaccination; the expiration date of the vaccine; and the vaccine lot number.

(b) The veterinarian shall issue a tag with each certificate of vaccination. The tag shall be secured by the owner or keeper of the dog, cat or ferret to a collar or harness made of suitable material to be worn by the dog, cat or ferret; provided, however, that the owner of a cat or ferret may choose not to affix the tag, but shall have the tag available for inspection by authorized persons. In the event that a tag is lost, the owner or keeper of the animal shall, upon presentation of the original vaccination certificate, be issued a new tag.

(c) In order for a dog, cat or ferret to be accepted at an animal hospital, veterinarian's office or boarding facility, an owner or keeper of such animal shall show proof of current vaccination against rabies; provided, however, that if an animal has not been so vaccinated or such owner or keeper fails to show proof of vaccination, the animal shall be vaccinated against rabies prior to being discharged if the animal's medical condition permits.

(d) A licensing authority may grant an exemption from this section for a dog, cat or ferret that:

(i) the local board of health has declared exempt from the rabies vaccination requirement upon presentation of a veterinarian's certificate stating that because of an infirmity, other physical condition or regimen of therapy, such inoculation is considered inadvisable for a specified period of time for such reasons; (ii) is in transit; or (iii) was brought into the commonwealth temporarily for the sole purpose of display in a show or for exhibition.

(e) This section shall not apply to a dog, cat or ferret housed in a research institution.

(f) Whoever violates this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$100.

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