

1980 WL 121080 (S.C.A.G.)

Office of the Attorney General

State of South Carolina

March 7, 1980

\*1 Melvin B. McKeown, Jr., Esquire  
County Attorney  
Spratt, McKeown & Spratt  
Post Office Drawer 299  
York, South Carolina 29745

Dear Mr. McKeown:

You have asked the opinion of this Office on whether a licensed graduate veterinarian must administer or certify the administration of rabies vaccine to pets.

The question presented by you is governed and controlled by [§ 47-5-60, Code of Laws of South Carolina](#), 1976. Besides requiring the inoculation of pets against rabies, this section specifies that a licensed graduate veterinarian must certify the administration of the inoculation on a form prescribed and issued by the Department of Health and Environmental Control and furnish a serially numbered metal license tag bearing the same number as the certificate and the name of the veterinarian. Thus, for the licensed graduate veterinarian to certify the administration of the inoculation, he must personally either administer the inoculation or observe the inoculation. See Op. Atty. Gen., dated May 28, 1978 [copy enclosed]. Otherwise, the veterinarian would not be capable of properly certifying the administration of the inoculation and the use of an antirabic vaccine approved by the Department of Health and Environmental Control and by the United States Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Biologies Division. See § 47-5-20, as amended.

It is clear that the requirements set forth in [§ 47-5-60](#) are intended to provide a procedure utilizing licensed graduate veterinarians to control the inoculation of pets against rabies. It should be noted that the refusal to comply with or the violation of [§ 47-5-60](#) is a criminal misdemeanor. See § 47-5-200.

Also noted in your correspondence was a copy of a memorandum citing information from this Office and concluding that owners may inject their animals with rabies vaccine without veterinary assistance. This conclusion is incorrect, and the memorandum containing it is not an opinion of this Office. In fact, the conduct advised in the memorandum may be construed as a criminal violation as explained hereinabove.

Based on the foregoing, it is the opinion of this Office that [§ 47-5-60](#) requires that licensed graduate veterinarians administer rabies inoculations or that licensed graduate veterinarians observe the administration of the inoculations.

Sincerely,

James M. Holly  
State Attorney

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