

CALIFORNIA VETERINARY EMERGENCY COST BENCHMARK

Statewide Executive Summary & Regional Emergency Price Index (Cats & Dogs)

1. Executive Overview & Key Cost Drivers

Emergency veterinary care across California exhibits a 35% to 65% cost variance driven primarily by commercial lease rates, 24/7 specialist staffing (DACVECC/ACVS), and localized cost-of-living overhead. Metropolitan hubs command the highest exam, surgical, and overnight ICU baseline fees, while rural zones feature lower initial fees but increased transfer overhead for advanced critical care.

2. Statewide Regional Benchmark Breakdown

Region / Counties	ZIP Prefixes	Exam Fee	GI Obstruction	Trauma / Fracture	Toxicity	ICU Nightly
Bay Area (SF, San Mateo, Santa Clara)	940xx–944xx	\$185 – \$260	\$3,800 – \$7,500	\$3,500 – \$9,000	\$1,200 – \$3,200	\$850 – \$2,200
Los Angeles Metro (LA, Orange, Ventura)	900xx–928xx	\$160 – \$240	\$3,200 – \$6,800	\$3,000 – \$8,200	\$1,000 – \$2,900	\$750 – \$1,950
San Diego & Imperial	919xx–922xx	\$150 – \$220	\$3,000 – \$6,200	\$2,800 – \$7,500	\$950 – \$2,600	\$700 – \$1,800
Sacramento & North Valley	956xx–959xx	\$135 – \$195	\$2,600 – \$5,400	\$2,400 – \$6,200	\$800 – \$2,200	\$550 – \$1,450
Central Coast & Valleys (Fresno, Kern)	932xx–939xx	\$125 – \$180	\$2,400 – \$4,900	\$2,200 – \$5,800	\$700 – \$2,000	\$500 – \$1,300
Far North & Sierra Rural	955xx, 960xx+	\$110 – \$165	\$2,100 – \$4,200	\$1,900 – \$5,000	\$600 – \$1,750	\$400 – \$1,100

3. Common Emergency Procedure Benchmarks

- Surgical GI Obstruction / Bloat (GDV): \$2,400 – \$8,500** — Includes emergency stabilization, diagnostic radiographs/ultrasound, laparotomy, gastropexy, and post-op ECG/monitored ICU care.
- Trauma / Fracture & Soft Tissue Repair: \$1,900 – \$9,000** — Covers hit-by-car triage, FAST ultrasound, CT imaging, wound debridement, drainage, and surgical fixation.
- Toxicity / Decontamination: \$600 – \$3,200** — Emesis induction, activated charcoal, IV fluid therapy, and continuous organ function monitoring panels.
- Feline Urethral Obstruction (FLUTD): \$1,500 – \$4,200** — Emergency urinary catheterization, sedation, blood gas/electrolyte panels, and 48–72h inpatient flushing.

California Veterinary Medical Research Group. (2026). *California Emergency Veterinary Cost Benchmark & Regional Price Index*. Statewide Actuarial & Fee Study.