



FEAR FREE VETERINARY PRACTICE CERTIFICATION PROCESS OVERVIEW

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I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification provides an opportunity for veterinary professionals to implement Fear Free techniques and standards throughout the entire workflow, team culture, and patient handling aspects of their practice. Veterinary practices must successfully implement and adhere to the Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification Standards [[Fear Free Practice Certification for Veterinary Hospitals](#) | [Fear Free Pets](#)] to achieve and maintain the status of a Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice.

II. ENROLLED PRACTICE BENEFITS

- Each practice purchasing a Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification product receive individual Veterinary Certification Program memberships for all staff including but not limited to veterinarians, veterinary technicians, veterinary assistants, customer service representatives, kennel attendants, etc. (but excluding pet professional memberships). Veterinary Certification Program memberships will be valid for a period of twelve (12) months from the date of enrollment or renewal, at which time they will expire.
- Upon purchase, the practice will have access to the practice portal to complete the online self-assessment, see section IV.

III. FEAR FREE CERTIFIED VETERINARY PRACTICE BENEFITS

Upon initial completion of the Veterinary Practice Certification process, the veterinary team will receive the following benefits:

- A welcome kit equipped with items to help celebrate your accomplishment as well as set you and your team up for success in practicing in a Fear Free manner.
- A listing in the Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice Directory to allow pet owners and professionals to search for your practice

In addition, each Certified Veterinary Practice will receive the following membership benefits during the term in which their Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice product is active:



- Access to exclusive Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice content including educational webinars, pet owner handouts, educational blog articles, social media graphics, and more.
- Inclusion in the closed Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice Facebook group
- Discounted initial membership rate for pet professional certification programs for your staff (50% discount)
- \$100 credit to the Fear Free online store to purchase items for your practice and team members
- Receipt of the exclusive Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice newsletter which contains team spotlights, Fear Free tips and tricks, new product announcements and opportunities for product reviews
- Preferential pricing, exclusive offers and discounts from Fear Free's industry partners
- Maintenance of the practice listing in the Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice Directory

IV. PROCESS OVERVIEW

The process begins with purchase of the appropriate Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice product, based on the type of veterinary practice and number of full-time equivalent veterinarians, see Section IV outlining the pricing structure. Once purchased, the initial product will allow a veterinary practice to receive complimentary Fear Free Veterinary Professional Certification memberships for all staff; these memberships will be assigned to staff by the team administrator. In addition, purchase of the initial product will provide the veterinary practice team with access to the practice portal in which they will complete their online self-assessment.

Initially, the veterinary team will focus on completion of the individual certification programs for all staff; this process is self-paced; however, it is recommended that the staff complete this within the first 90 days (about 3 months) after purchase of the product. Veterinary team members can choose to begin working on implementation of the Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification Standards concurrently or can complete steps sequentially.

- I. **Online Self-Assessment:** The team will utilize the online practice portal to complete a self-assessment to document how the team is implementing the Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification Standards. The self-assessment is a combination of choice selections, write-in answers, and documentation uploads.



- II. **Medical Records:** Three (3) complete medical records are required as part of the online self-assessment process. Any personal and identifying information related to the client should be removed from the medical record submissions. The medical records must include a completed Pre-Visit Questionnaire (PVQ), completed Emotional Medical Record (EMR), complete medical records indicating both fear, anxiety and stress (FAS) scoring as well as pain scoring, and complete medical evaluation notes and recommendations. Medical records are assessed for purposes of confirming implementation of the Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification Standards only and are not evaluated for medical prowess or diagnostic skills.
- III. **Virtual Onsite Visit:** For initial certifications, following the successful completion of an approved online self-assessment, the veterinary team will complete a virtual onsite visit. Virtual onsite visits are completed by contracted consultants of Fear Free – please note that these consultants are not able to make final determinations on certification status of a practice. The virtual onsite visit is split into 3 portions:
 - I. Virtual Tour – the consultant will evaluate the practice flow from entrance through the reception area, a minimum of 2 exam rooms (feline and/or canine), the treatment area, kennel/board area, and exit.
 - i. The purpose of the virtual tour is to evaluate the implementation of standards relating to positive reinforcement, pheromone utilization, sightlines and potential interactions of patients, noise levels within the hospital and overall hospital appearance/set-up as it relates to Fear Free. (Considerate Approach)
 - II. Patient Observation – the consultant will evaluate the veterinary team during a minimum of 3 patient interactions:
 - i. Feline appointment
 - ii. Canine appointment (if applicable)
 - iii. Veterinary support staff interaction – this can be a technician or assistant only appointment or can involve the veterinary professional team obtaining diagnostics, preparing for surgery, or caring for a patient without direct supervision by a veterinarian.
 - iv. The full medical records of the observed patients must be provided to the consultant after the virtual onsite visit is completed.
 - v. The purpose of the patient observation portion is to evaluate Touch Gradient, Gentle Control and Considerate Approach.
 - 1. Interactions will be scored based upon evaluation of FAS scores, team member response to patient FAS, utilization of positive reinforcement and previously mentioned Fear Free techniques



III. Team Discussion – the consultant will meet with a predetermined number of professionals within the team holding different roles - this will be a mixture of veterinarians and support staff. The consultant will lead the discussion with questions however the consultant may opt to turn this into a more informal discussion.

- i. The goal of the discussion is to give the consultant an idea of the team culture, understanding of Fear Free and to allow the team the opportunity to discuss any Fear Free wins or struggles they are experiencing.

IV. **Recorded Patient Observations:** For recertifications, the veterinary team will submit up to 3 recorded patient appointments or procedures to the online practice portal as designated in the instruction form contained therein. The instruction form will provide information on the types of appointments or procedures to be recorded, as well as the FAS levels requested. The recorded videos will be evaluated by Fear Free contracted consultants.

- I. The purpose of the recorded patient observations is to assess the team's progression in utilization of the core Fear Free techniques (Considerate Approach, Touch Gradient and Gentle Control) since initial certification as well as implementation of Fear Free within more advanced veterinary procedures such as intravenous catheter placement, radiography and/or ultrasonography, etc.

IV. COST OF FEAR FREE VETERINARY PRACTICE CERTIFICATION

The cost of the annual Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification product is based on the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) veterinarians on staff at the practice location (Veterinary Practice Certification products are location specific). Annual practice fees replace individual membership fees and cover veterinary professional membership registrations and renewals for all staff. Practices that have become Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practices will also receive a 50% discount for pet professional memberships purchased during the term during which the Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification product is active, see Section II.

- Fear Free defines full-time as >35 hours/week.
- When considering part-time veterinarians, FTE is calculated by adding the average weekly hours worked by all part-time veterinarians together and dividing the sum by 35.



- Non-whole numbers are rounded up or down as per traditional math rules: down if <0.4, up if >0.5

Independent Veterinary Practice		Corporate Veterinary Practice**	
1 DVM	\$775	1 DVM	\$725
2-3 DVM	\$1,500	2-3 DVM	\$1,400
4-5 DVM	\$2,000	4-5 DVM	\$1,900
6+ DVM	\$2,800	6+ DVM	\$2,700
**MOU required with minimum commitment outlined; Additional details apply			

- The Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification product has a term of 12 months commencing on the date of purchase and must be renewed annually thereafter to continue receiving the benefits of the Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification program.
 - The product is renewed regardless of whether the practice has completed the initial certification process within the first 12 months or not.
 - A limit of 1 renewal can be purchased prior to achieving Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification status.
- The cost of the Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification product is determined based on the number of FTE veterinarians on staff at the time the product is purchased. This cost will be fixed during the 12-month term during which the Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification product is active, and no additional amounts will be due nor refunds issued if the number of FTE veterinarians on staff increase or decrease during such time.
- The cost of renewing the Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification product will be fixed based on Fear Free's then applicable pricing based on the number of FTE veterinarians on staff at the time of the renewal product is purchased.

*For practices which maintain a land-based practice, as well as a mobile unit that provides veterinary care as an extension of the initial practice the following applies:

- Both the land-based practice and the mobile unit must each be independently certified utilizing the appropriate Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice Standards.
- Both the land-based practice and the mobile unit must recertify, independently, every 3 years.
- If the land-based practice and the mobile unit share the same veterinary staff (i.e., only DVMs and vet techs that work at the land based-practice are permitted to provide



services through the mobile unit), the land-based and mobile-based practices will be permitted to cover both practices under a single Veterinary Practice Certification product at a cost based on the total FTE-DVM count plus \$275 annually.

- If the land-based practice and the mobile unit have different staff rosters (i.e., some or all of the DVMs and vet techs for the land-based practice are different from the DVMs and vet techs for the mobile practice), each practice unit will need to purchase a separate Veterinary Practice Certification product, which will be invoiced separately according to the FTE-DVM count in each practice unit.

V. ANNUAL RENEWAL AND RECERTIFICATION PROCESS

The Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification product is valid for twelve (12) months and is subject to annual renewal fees. Practices are required to recertify every three (3) years.

Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practices will renew their membership annually by purchasing the appropriate renewal product by the team administrator. The renewal product will be applied to all team members within the practice, thereby removing the need for individual staff to renew their memberships.

A practice that has demonstrated compliance with the Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification Standards through the process described above must at all times have any active Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification product to hold itself out as a “Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice,” maintain an active listing in the Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice directory and receive access to all Certified Veterinary Practice benefits.

Triannually, every three (3) years, a practice will complete a Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice Recertification process.

- This process will require the veterinary practice to access their online practice portal and complete a series of recertification questions and online assessment
- In addition, the practice will upload up to 3 recorded patient appointment/procedure videos for evaluation (see Section III) as well as the completed medical records for the associated patients.

VI. FAILURE TO RENEW

Failure to purchase the appropriate Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification renewal product by the renewal date will result in a suspension of the practice’s membership and all associated



rights, including, if applicable, the right to be listed in the Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice directory. Team members will not have access to the member's only portion of the Fear Free website until the renewal product is purchased. If the Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification renewal product has still not been purchased 30 days past the due date, Fear Free reserves the right to remove all associated Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice benefits from all staff members.

VII. VIOLATION OF FEAR FREE CERTIFIED VETERINARY PRACTICE STANDARDS

Each veterinary practice that is pursuing or that has achieved Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification shall ensure that all members of its staff, including but not limited to full-time and part-time employees, contractors, relief, interns, and externs, are familiar with and comply with the Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice Standards.

If a Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice is determined to have violated one or more of the Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice Standards, Fear Free reserves the right to revoke the practice's status as a Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice and cancel the practice's memberships and all associated rights and benefits without refund. The practice will be removed from the Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice directory, the Practice will not be permitted to market itself as a "Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice," and individual memberships granted to the practice's team members will be simultaneously terminated.