

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 adhere to, and implement, the Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification Standards to achieve and maintain the status of a Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice.

II. MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Upon initial certification, a veterinary practice will receive a welcome kit complete with a Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice Plaque with the year of certification, offers from Fear Free's corporate partners, Fear Free swag items designed to help the team provide Fear Free care, and much more!
- Listing in the Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice Directory to allow pet owners and professionals to search for your practice
- Access to exclusive Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice content on fearfreepets.com including educational webinars, pet owner handouts, educational blog articles, social media graphics, and more. (maintained annually)
- Discounted initial membership rate for pet professional certification programs for your staff (50% discount) (maintained annually)

- \$100 credit to the Fear Free online store to purchase items for your practice and team members (maintained annually)
- 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 (maintained annually)
- Preferential pricing and discounts from Fear Free's industry partners (maintained annually)

III. 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/boarding 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 - ideally 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

Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification cost is based on the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) veterinarians on staff. Annual practice fees replace individual membership fees and cover veterinary professional membership registrations and renewals for all staff. Annual fees also include renewals for pet professional memberships, after initial registration purchased at 50% discount, 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	
1 DVM	\$775
2-3 DVM	\$1,500
4-5 DVM	\$2,000
6+ DVM	\$2,800
<i>**Corporate pricing available – please contact certifyme@fearfreepets.com</i>	

- The membership product renews annually, 12 months from the date of purchase.
 - The product is renewed regardless of whether the practice has completed the initial certification process within the first 12 months or not.
- Annual renewal fees remain fixed until the next annual renewal date, at which time the fee is adjusted based on the number of FTE veterinarians on staff.

V. ANNUAL RENEWAL AND RECERTIFICATION PROCESS

Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification is valid for one (1) year and is subject to annual renewal fees. Practices are required to recertify every three (3) years.

Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practices must maintain 100% team member individual certification status to renew, apart from staff members added to the team within 90 days (about 3 months) of renewal.

Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practices will renew their membership annually by purchase of 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.

Renewal will maintain the practice's status as a Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice thereby maintaining an active listing in the Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice directory and 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. This may include removal of the practice from the Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice directory. Team members will not have access to the member's only portion of the Fear Free website (fearfreepets.com) 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 team members from the Fear Free Certified Professional directory and the closed Fear Free Facebook group(s).

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 by the Fear Free Certification Compliance Committee (CCC) and/or Fear Free leadership 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 and will not be able to market itself as a Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice. Employees will no longer have memberships that grant them access to Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice benefits.