



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 – obtained after successful completion of initial certification and provided annually thereafter, if practice maintains an active annual Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice membership.

- i. Upon initial certification, a veterinary practice will receive a certification kit complete with a Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice Plaque with the year of certification, offers from Fear Free's Corporate Program Members and Preferred Product Providers, Fear Free swag items designed to help the team provide Fear Free care, and much more!
- ii. Annually a practice receives:
 - i. Listing in the Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice Directory to allow pet owners and professionals to search for your practice
 - ii. Access to exclusive Fear Free Certified Veterinary Practice content on fearfree.com including educational webinars, pet owner handouts, educational blog articles, social media graphics, and more.



- iii. 50% discount on initial enrollment in pet professional certification programs for all staff (Boarding & Daycare, Groomer, Pet Sitter, Trainer)
- iv. \$100 credit to the Fear Free online store to purchase items for your practice and team members
- v. 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
- vi. Preferential pricing and discounts from Fear Free's industry allies.

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 Practice 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 and education requirements 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 (<https://facilitycertification.fearfree.com>) 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, documentation uploads, and recorded videos for some programs.

II. Medical Records: 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 to confirm implementation of the Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification standards only and not evaluated for medical prowess or diagnostic skills.



III. **Patient Handling Observation:** Along with the evaluation of medical records and practice protocols, the Fear Free team will observe patient handling either through a virtual onsite visit or evaluation of recorded patient procedures.

I. **Fear Free General Veterinary Practice Certification:** Practices within 6 hours of EST (USA) will have patient handling observed through 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. All practices will be evaluated on the following:

i. Virtual Tour

1. 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

1. The purpose of the patient observation portion is to evaluate Touch Gradient, Gentle Control and Considerate Approach.

2. 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

1. The purpose of the team discussion is to evaluate the team's understanding of the core concepts of Fear Free

II. **Fear Free General Veterinary Practice Certification:** Practices outside of the time zone set forth in III (i) will have patient handling evaluated through submission of specific recorded videos:

i. The practice will provide a recorded virtual tour evaluating the same criteria as noted in Section III, subsection I(i)

ii. The practice will provide 3 recorded patient visits. All videos must show the visit complete from initial entrance to discharge

1. Canine visit

2. Feline visit

3. Visit of practice's choosing

iii. The recorded videos will also showcase discussion from the team on how the patient visits went, what could have been done differently and or discussion about FAS observed during the



patient visit

III. Fear Free Emergency & Urgent Care Practice Certification: Practices enrolled in the FFCVP-ER/Urgent Care program will submit a recorded virtual tour and videos of specific patient procedures

i. The virtual tour will evaluate the same criteria outlined in Section III, subsection I(i) and will showcase the following areas:

1. ICU
2. Reception/lobby
3. Examination area(s)
4. Treatment/procedure area(s)

ii. The patient handling will be evaluated based on the same criteria outlined in Section III, subsection ii and must showcase the following procedures:

1. Venipuncture
2. Intravenous catheter placement
3. Administration of at least 1 injection
4. Patient preparation for surgery and anesthesia induction
5. Choice of procedure from a list provided within the standards document

IV. Recertifications: For recertifications, the veterinary team will complete an updated online assessment showcasing any revisions or changes to previously submitted documentation as well as submit up to 3 recorded patient appointments or procedures, complete with full medical records, to the online practice portal as designated in the instruction form contained therein. The recorded patient visits should highlight the team's ability to accurately assess FAS levels, respond to FAS and showcase Fear Free implementation within workflows.

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.

V. Change of location: Practices which move to a new location after obtaining Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification must alert Fear Free to the move and will be asked to submit a virtual tour of the new facility once the relocation is complete.

I. The team administrator must alert Fear Free to the move by emailing practicecertification@fearfree.com and requesting a relocation assignment. Once the request



is received, the Fear Free team will assign the appropriate process within the practice portal to allow the team to upload the necessary information and video.

II. This video must be submitted within 60 days (about 2 months) of relocation and should showcase the items required for the initial video tour.

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 and the type of practice. 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.

- i. Fear Free defines full-time as >35 hours/week.
- ii. 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.
- iii. Non-whole numbers are rounded up or down as per traditional math rules: down if <0.4, up if >0.5

Independent Veterinary Practice – GP FFCVP	
1 DVM	\$850/year
2-3 DVMs	\$1,700/year
4-5 DVMs	\$2,200/year
6-9 DVMs	\$3,000/year
10-14 DVMs	\$3,500/year
15+ DVMs	\$4,000/year

***Corporate pricing available – please contact certifyme@fearfree.com*

Independent Veterinary Practice – ER/UC FFCVP	
1-3 DVMs	\$1,500/year
4-9 DVMs	\$2,800/year
10-29 DVMs	\$3,500/year
30+ DVMs	\$5,000/year

***Corporate pricing available – please contact certifyme@fearfree.com*



- iv. The membership product renews annually, 12 months from the date of purchase.
 - i. The product is renewed regardless of whether the practice has completed the initial certification process within the first 12 months or not.
- v. 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.
- vi. Special Pricing Considerations
 - i. Practices with sister locations which utilize **the same staff** will pay an annual fee equal to the VPC product based on the location with the higher number of DVMs plus 50% off the additional location(s) annual fee (*i.e. First location (2 DVM): \$1,700 plus 2nd location (1 DVM) \$425 - total price for both locations \$2,125*)
 - ii. Practices which purchase more than 1 type of VPC product (*i.e. GP, ER/Urgent Care, HouseCall*) will make the initial product purchase at full price. Once the practice has established an active VPC membership, any subsequent VPC products will be purchased at a 25% discount.

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 selection 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.

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

- i. This process will require the veterinary practice to access their online practice portal and complete a series of recertification questions and online assessment
- ii. 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. INTERNATIONAL VETERINARY PRACTICE CERTIFICATION

Fear Free Veterinary Practice Certification is available globally with specific considerations as follows:

- I. All products are available at the current listing price as maintained on fearfree.com and all prices are in USD.
- II. All documentation provided for review **must** be in English
- III. Virtual visits **must** be conducted in English – provision of a translator is the responsibility of the practice if English is not the primary language spoken
- IV. Recorded patient visits and procedures should be done in English as much as possible – if translation is not possible during the recorded patient visit, the video must be submitted in either MP4 or Mov format to allow for translation post recording.

VII. 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 (fearfree.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. As such employees will no longer be able to use the Fear Free Certified Professional designation as they will not have an active membership.