

FEAR FREE PRACTICE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS



General

The Fear Free Practice Certification is designed to certify a practice in all aspects of Fear Free, including medical records, client education, culture & leadership, facility, marketing and patient observation.

The certification process includes an on-site visit by a Fear Free consultant to go over all standards and assess whether the practice has successfully achieved the implementation of them.

Standards are divided into various categories. Some categories include both mandatory and optional standards; others include only mandatory or only optional standards.

Mandatory standards are assessed as either passing or failing. If the practice fails a mandatory standard, practice certification will not be granted. A follow up Fear Free visit will be scheduled to give the practice an opportunity to work on this standard; once passed, practice certification will be granted.

Optional standards are assessed using a point system. A designated minimum number of points must be achieved to pass a given category.

Standard operating procedures (SOPs) or examples are provided wherever necessary to clarify these standards and to provide practices with as much detailed information and guidance as possible regarding acceptable means of implementation.

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FEAR FREE PRACTICE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS



Fear Free Physical and Emotional Standards

Mandatory Standards

#	Standard	Example Provided	Upload Required	Upload Details - Requirement
1.1	A licensed veterinarian approves and supervises all patient care	N	Y	License
1.2	All patients are cared for in a humane manner by hospital team members	Y	Y	Training log
1.3	Unless medically contraindicated, all patients are supplied with food and water	N		
1.4	Every patient evaluation includes a pain assessment and assignment of a pain score, no matter the visit circumstance	Y		
1.5	Appropriate pain management is provided for the level of pain occurring or expected	Y		
1.6	All surgical patients are provided with pain management	Y		
1.7	FAS assessment and documentation is part of every patient evaluation regardless of presenting complaint	Y		
1.8	Any animal that is observed to be experiencing mental suffering or distress must be assessed and appropriately treated in an urgent and timely manner	Y		
1.9	Written protocols for documenting, minimizing and treating FAS must be in place to support animals at admission, during the visit, and at check out	Y	Y	Protocols
1.10	Restraint and/or stabilization of any patient that could be painful and/or cause emotional distress is prohibited. The use of physical punishment or force in anger or frustration is unacceptable	Y		
1.11	When training and behavior modification strategies are employed, they must be free from aversives and adhere to scientific principles for humane handling techniques	Y	Y	Trainer and/or Behaviorist Referral List
1.12	Syringes and needles are single-use only. Needles are replaced after drawing up vaccines, medications, unsuccessful blood draws etc. so that the patient always receives a fresh needle	Y	Y	SOP For Syringe and Needle Use
1.13	Patient enclosures (any place a patient is housed while in the care of the practice for any length of time) are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safe - Well maintained - Able to be cleaned and disinfected with ease - Large enough for the patient to stand up, turn around, rest and sleep in his/her position of choice without having to touch the sides or top of the enclosure - Large enough for the patient to eliminate in an area other than his/her resting area - Comfortable (i.e. appropriate bedding is provided) 	N		

FEAR FREE PRACTICE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS



Fear Free Physical and Emotional Standards

Mandatory Standards

#	Standard	Example Provided	Upload Required	Upload Details - Requirement
1.14	Patients in boarding are given enough space to eliminate in a different area than their resting area and/or taken outside to eliminate at least 4 times in 24 hours	N		
1.15	Patients in boarding are provided with regular positive daily social interactions with people, opportunities for exercise are given, and enrichment is provided. Caregivers should be assigned to care for the same animals on a regular basis whenever possible	N		
1.16	The interior and exterior of the practice are neat, clean, and free of offensive odors	N		

FEAR FREE PRACTICE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS



Client Education Standards

Mandatory Standards

#	Standard	Example Provided	Upload Required	Upload Details - Requirement
2.1	<p>The practice provides client education about Fear Free veterinary care and FAS to all clients when visiting the practice.</p> <p>Client education material must include at least three (3) of the following, and must be present in all exam rooms and the waiting area.</p> <p>Check all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fear Free client brochure- Fear Free client-specific handouts- Fear Free veterinary resources handouts- Fear Free Happy Home information- Fear Free poster- Fear Free FAS scale- Other	Y	N	
2.2	<p>The practice provides take-home client education pieces about Fear Free veterinary care, Fear Free Happy Homes, and FAS to all clients.</p> <p>Take-home client education must include at least three (3) of the following, and must be present in all exam rooms, the waiting area and the check-out area.</p> <p>Check all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fear Free client brochure- Fear Free client-specific handouts- Fear Free veterinary resources handouts- Fear Free Happy Home information- Fear Free FAS scale- Other	Y	N	

FEAR FREE PRACTICE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS



Client Education Standards

Optional Standards

Points	#	Standard	Example Provided	Upload Required	Notes
80	2.3	<p>The practice provides client education regarding Fear Free veterinary care with recommendations for the client's role as it pertains to specific patient groups/procedures.</p> <p>Check all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Puppy/kitten exams and socialization- Adult new pet social planning and training for handling/husbandry/vet care- Nail trims and grooming- Ear and gland care- Geriatric patient care- Euthanasia- Chronic health (e.g: diabetic cat, allergic dog)- Referral to a specialty practice	N	Y	10 points per patient group/procedure to add up to a maximum of 80 points
60	2.4	<p>The practice will provide client education as it pertains to sourcing and engaging additional services.</p> <p>Check all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Behavioral treatment (DACVB, CAAB)- Training classes- Grooming- Boarding, pet sitting and dog walking- Daycare- End of life care (hospice, mobile vet services)	Y	Y	<p>Any recommendations for trainers etc. should follow AAHA guidelines and AVSAB position statement on behavior professionals.</p> <p>10 points per additional service adding up to a maximum of 60 points</p>

140 Total

60 Passing Score

FEAR FREE PRACTICE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS



Medical Records

Mandatory Standards

#	Standard	Example Provided	Upload Required	Upload Details - Requirement
3.1	The practice has a Pre-Visit Questionnaire that is completed prior to a scheduled visit to prepare the client, patient and staff for the visit	Y	Y	(3) Filled out pre-visit questionnaire examples
3.2	The practice documents an Emotional Medical Record summarizing all visits	Y		
3.3	The practice has documented all applicable FAS scores in the Emotional Medical Record	Y		
3.4	<p>At least of five (5) of the following are included in the Emotional Medical Record in the Medical Records section.</p> <p>Check all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Patient preference for arrival arrangements (waiting room, car, treatment room, etc.)- Patient's preference location for examination- Distraction/reinforcer (treats, touch, play, etc.) preferences- Preferred tricks and cue words- Gentle control methods- Patient preference of care provider- Pre-visit anti-anxiety options for the patient- Sedation type if needed (dose, route and strength documented)- Known FAS triggers	N		

FEAR FREE PRACTICE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS



Facility

Mandatory Standards

#	Standard	Example Provided	Upload Required	Upload Details - Requirement
4.1	Patients are provided with a non-slip surface for procedures and handling including but not limited to: exams, sample collections, treatments, imaging, anesthesia prep, bathing, and grooming	Y		
4.2	Practice has implemented at least two (2) of the following. Check all that apply <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outdoor exam for dogs - Non-slip flooring - Protocols to reduce FAS at the scale - Pheromone diffusers, sprays, and wipes - Design options for considerate approach and gentle control - Fear Free exam table - Treat dispenser - Provide heat source for pet - Platform for cat carriers in waiting and exam rooms - Outdoor views from exam rooms for cats - Enrichments for cats in exam rooms - Eliminate images of other cats from view - Increase temperature of room for cats - Litter box in exam room 	Y		

Optional Standards

Points	#	Standard	Example Provided	Upload Required	Upload Details - Requirement
80	4.3	Separate species in waiting area by providing at least one (1) of the following to attain the 80 points. Check all that apply <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separate waiting areas for dogs and cats - Visual blocks in waiting areas between species - Separate entries for dogs and cats 	Y		
80	4.4	Reduce wait times for patients in the lobby by implementing at least one (1) of the following to attain the 80 points. Check all that apply <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alternate check-in protocols to avoid waiting in lobby - Outdoor covered waiting area - Alternate access into practice 	Y		
70	4.5	Facilitate positive emotional response before patient enters the building by offering at least one (1) of the following to attain the 70 points. Check all that apply <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Treat dispenser at building entry - Safe outdoor walking area - Drive through - Other 	Y		

FEAR FREE PRACTICE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS



Facility

Optional Standards

Points	#	Standard	Example Provided	Upload Required	Upload Details - Requirement
80	4.6	<p>Separate species at exam, during treatment, and in wards/housing by providing at least one (1) of the following to attain the 80 points.</p> <p>Check all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separate exam rooms for dogs and cats - Separate wards/housing for dogs and cats - Separate treatment areas for dogs and cats - Visual blocks between patients in wards - View blocking in treatment 	Y		
60	4.7	<p>Facilitate family involvement in ICU/CCU setting by providing option for owner to stay with pet in critical care setting.</p>	Y		
80	4.8	<p>Cleaning protocols to improve olfactory experience for pet are in place, and include at least one (1) of the following to attain the 80 points.</p> <p>Check all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cleaning protocols to prevent nose blindness - Cleaning with appropriate disinfectant - Closed trash receptacles in treatment and exam to reduce odors - Cleaning protocol for all tools and products that come in contact with pets - Protocol for cleaning exterior vertical and horizontal surfaces near practice entrances - Protocol for exterior pet waste removal - Protocol for spot cleaning only while pet is occupying housing unit 	Y		Any protocol(s) selected
80	4.9	<p>To reduce stress for patients in a ward setting, practice has implemented at least two (2) of the following to attain the 80 points.</p> <p>Check all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eliminate animals facing each other in wards - Provide more than one dog ward - Non-reflective surfaces in cages - Ability of cats to hide in enclosure - If bars are present on cat cage doors, they are horizontal - Resting platforms in cages for cats - Cages with views to pleasant or neutral spaces - Enrichments used in caging - Litter boxes designed for hospitalized cats - Provide critical Fear Free dimensions in caging - Appropriate pheromone therapy 	Y		

FEAR FREE PRACTICE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS



Facility

Optional Standards

Points	#	Standard	Example Provided	Upload Required	Upload Details - Requirement
60	4.10	Practice creates calming environments using lighting and sound engineering by implementing at least one (1) of the following to attain the 60 points. Check all that apply <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Minimize phone ringer volume and pagers- Dimmable lighting in wards and exam rooms- Natural light in animal wards, exam spaces- LED lighting in animal wards- Sound walls around exam, treatment, wards- Sound reduction strategies (baffles, ceilings, etc.)- Masking sound	Y		
60	4.11	Practice prevents noise and vibration by implementing at least one (1) of the following to attain the 60 points. Check all that apply <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Isolate mechanical equipment- Non-audible practice paging systems- Prevention of unnecessary operational noise- Sound-dampening materials used in housing	Y		
50	4.12	Practice provides healthier environments using mechanical techniques including at least one (1) of the following to attain the 50 points. Check all that apply <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Negatively pressurize ward spaces- Achieve minimum air exchanges for wards- Heated surfaces for patients	Y		

700 Total

320 Passing Score

FEAR FREE PRACTICE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS



Community Education and Marketing

Optional Standards

Points	#	Standard	Example Provided	Upload Required	Upload Details - Requirement
80	5.1	<p>The practice utilizes at least two (2) of following marketing tools to highlight its Fear Free certified professionals to attain the 80 points.</p> <p>Check all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fear Free logos on practice website - Fear Free logos and certification mentioned on each team member's bio - Fear Free logos on certified staff's business cards - Fear Free client brochure available in waiting area and in exam rooms - Fear Free Toolbox items utilized in practice, such as screen savers, posters, FAS scale, body language handouts and more - Fear Free social media tools utilized, such as banners, images and posts provided by Fear Free - Fear Free video is being used to educate pet owners in waiting area - Other 	N	Y	All applicable examples where marketing tools are being used
50	5.2	<p>The practice staff wears Fear Free trade dress by wearing at least one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pins or patches on scrubs and lab coats - Stethoscope clip 	N		
70	5.3	<p>The practice is involved in community outreach at least once a year to educate others about Fear Free</p>	N		
60	5.4	<p>The practice provides a regular newsletter which utilizes the Fear Free logo and Fear Free tips and resources to clients</p>	N	Y	Most recent newsletter
60	5.5	<p>The practice incorporates Fear Free into appointment reminders</p>	N		

320 Total

130 Passing Score

FEAR FREE PRACTICE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS



Culture, Training and Leadership

Mandatory Standards

#	Standard	Example Provided	Upload Required	Upload Details - Requirement
6.1	Practice maintains a mission statement that includes core Fear Free principles	Y	Y	Write in mission statement
6.2	The practice's new-hire orientation process must demonstrate inclusion of Fear Free definitions and goals	Y	Y	New hire Fear Free training checklist/on-boarding/manual
6.3	Standard Operating Procedures that affect animals and/or clients must include Fear Free principles. (Examples include: commonly performed procedures such as restraint, ear cleaning, euthanasia, venipuncture, radiography)	Y	Y	Minimum of 2 SOPs

Optional Standards

Points	#	Standard	Example Provided	Upload Required	Upload Details - Requirement
80	6.4	The practice has a Fear Free Advocate assigned who is responsible for Fear Free implementation, record keeping and renewing the certification	N		
70	6.5	All Fear Free documents relating to the practice, including the Fear Free CE log, will be maintained in a single location by the Fear Free Advocate. The Fear Free documents need to be easily accessible for initial practice certification, renewal and recertification	N		
70	6.6	The practice hosts monthly staff meetings in which Fear Free is discussed, best practices are shared, challenges are discussed and successes celebrated	N		

220 Total

150 Passing Score

FEAR FREE PRACTICE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS



Patient Observation

Optional Standards

Points	#	Standard	Example Provided	Upload Required	Upload Details - Requirement
90	7.1	<p>Pre-Visit Preparation</p> <p>Staff show knowledge of and/or demonstrate appropriate use of instructions to pet owners on how to deliver a calm pet to the practice. Practice must achieve at least nine (9) of the following to attain the 90 points.</p> <p>Check all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing any known FAS triggers with practice team member - Reacquainting pet with carrier where appropriate - Appropriately designed carriers for cats and small dogs (airflow, warming/cooling mats) - Transporting pets in carriers with covers (towel, blanket etc.) to reduce arousal - Bring the pet in hungry/fasted – if medically and emotionally appropriate - Options for pre-visit pheromone use - Options for pre-visit pharmaceuticals - Options for pre-visit nutraceuticals - Sound comforting during transport – white noise or appropriate music - Options for behavior management products e.g. compression garments - Preparing the vehicle for a comfortable temperature - Placement of pet in car, including non-slip surfaces 	Y		
90	7.2	<p>Arrival At The Practice</p> <p>Staff show knowledge of and/or demonstrate welcoming experiences consistent with the Fear Free philosophy. Practice must achieve at least seven (7) of the following to attain the 90 points.</p> <p>Check all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring pet and people interactions in lobby are not contributing to FAS - Option of moving pets directly into exam rooms - Option of having pets wait in cars with owners when environmental conditions permit - Option of specific hours for sensitive pets - Fear Free scheduling to avoid bottlenecks and even the appointment flow - Provide pheromone-impregnated bandanas/towels/cotton balls to patients upon arrival - Minimize interruption in the exam room: minimize in and out flow of staff - Minimize interruption in the exam room: minimize removal of patient from exam room for procedures unless medically indicated (e.g. imaging) - Minimize interruption in the exam room: preparing room in advance with needed supplies medically indicated 	Y		

FEAR FREE PRACTICE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS



Patient Observation

Optional Standards

Points	#	Standard	Example Provided	Upload Required	Upload Details - Requirement
80	7.3	<p>Patient Records</p> <p>Each patient has an emotional medical record which includes FAS scoring and client input. Practice must achieve three (3) of the following to attain the 80 points.</p> <p>Check all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The emotional medical record is reviewed when the client calls to schedule an appointment and appropriate direction is provided by staff to the client regarding patient transport and arrival at the practice to reduce FAS. - The emotional record and FAS scores in the record are reviewed during the appointment and appropriate accommodations are made to minimize FAS. - All observed FAS scores during the visit are recorded in the medical record. - The client's input is sought and recorded as to how the client felt the patient was in terms of FAS during all aspects in which they are involved. 	Y		
90	7.4	<p>Exam Room Experiences</p> <p>Staff show knowledge of and/or demonstrate appropriate use of Fear Free methods, protocols, and procedures during the course of the outpatient exam. Practice must achieve at least seven (7) of the following to attain the 90 points.</p> <p>Check all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Touch gradient, gentle control, distraction - Use of high-value food treats or other distractors throughout the exam when appropriate - Appropriate location of exam chosen by patient, such as table, floor, carrier, chair or lap towels - Non-slip surfaces for examination, such as yoga mats, Fear Free exam tables or towels - Application of considerate approach to allow patient to acclimate to staff member - Calming music in the exam rooms - Touch gradient used throughout exam - Staff member responds appropriately to patient's body language - For serial treatments or when distraction is not effective, practice recommends a Fear Free Animal Trainer, other aversive-free trainer, or depending on the level of FAS, a board certified veterinary behaviorist or CAAB 	Y		
90	7.5	<p>Inpatient Practice Experiences:</p> <p>Staff show knowledge of and/or demonstrate appropriate use of Fear Free methods, protocols, and procedures during inpatient care. Practice must achieve at least eight (8) of the following to attain the 90 points.</p> <p>Check all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visual blocks for cages such as hiding boxes, cage covers - Visual blocks for pets receiving treatments such as curtains, barriers - Masking noises in wards/housing facilities such as white noise, calming music 	Y		

FEAR FREE PRACTICE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS



Patient Observation

Optional Standards

Points	#	Standard	Example Provided	Upload Required	Upload Details - Requirement
90	7.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-slip flooring in cages and on treatment tables - Application of calming techniques and tools - Tools for gentle restraint such as toweling techniques, basket-type muzzles - Touch gradient during procedures and treatments - Knowledge of pre-visit pharmaceuticals (e.g. trazodone, benzodiazepines, gabapentin) - Knowledge of pre-visit nutraceuticals (e.g. alpha-casozepine, L-theanine) - Knowledge of compression garments - During stay, use high-value food items when appropriate to decrease FAS - Thoughtful placement of patients to minimize FAS - During stay, place patient with familiar items from home, such as bed, towels, favorite toys and implement spot cleaning whenever possible 	Y		
90	7.6	<p>Inpatient Procedures</p> <p>Staff show knowledge of and/or demonstrate appropriate use of calming protocol and products that reduce FAS during in-patient procedures.</p> <p>Practice must achieve all three (3) of the following to attain the 90 points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff demonstrate use of calming techniques and products during commonly performed procedures - Staff demonstrate use of appropriate demeanor when in the presence of hospitalized patients - If during a procedure a rise in FAS is noted due to staff abilities, steps are taken to reduce FAS by employing a more experienced staff member to complete that procedure 	Y		

FEAR FREE PRACTICE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS



Patient Observation

Optional Standards

Points	#	Standard	Example Provided	Upload Required	Upload Details - Requirement
70	7.7	<p>Travel From Practice To Home</p> <p>Staff showed knowledge of and/or demonstrated appropriate delivery of instructions to clients regarding how to transport patient home calmly. Practice must achieve at least five (5) of the following to attain the 70 points.</p> <p>Check all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Where applicable, guidance is provided to clients regarding reduction of FAS on arrival home- Efforts are made to send pet owners home prepared for next visit- Efforts are made to discuss reintegration of pets back into multi-pet households where applicable- When patient being discharged has been sedated, anesthetized or is compromised by a mechanical device, clear instructions are provided to client, regarding what to avoid so patient is not injured and so that FAS score does not increase (e.g. not to leave on a bed, by stairs, near pool)- Knowledge of medications, nutraceuticals and pheromones that might be used to ease pet back into the household and reduce FAS- Upon release the owner is provided with instructions and contact information if they can not reduce FAS once home and need to get further advice- Proper instructions are provided and staff confirm that client knows how to administer medications or treatments at home using Fear Free compatible techniques	Y	N	
80	7.8	<p>General</p> <p>Clients are made aware of Fear Free tools and techniques. Practice must achieve both bullets indicated below to attain the 80 points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fear Free efforts are communicated throughout the practice visit- Fear Free tools are accessible throughout the exam experience	Y	N	

680 Total

410 Passing Score