



Certification Council for
Professional Dog Trainers®

Standards of Practice and Professional Code of Ethics Policy

These Standards of Practice and Professional Code of Ethics have been adopted by the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers® (CCPDT®). Certificants and Candidates are expected to abide by these standards both through their conduct and the delivery of professional services.

Standards of Practice

The Standards of Practice provide a framework of principles to convey a collective principle of professionalism, skills and values in positive reinforcement-based training. Each Certificant and Candidate will undertake the following:

- To understand and promote Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive (LIMA) training and behavior work.
- To continue professional development by reading relevant material; attending conferences, workshops and seminars; and pursuing other educational opportunities.
- To review and understand source material and academic texts for information.
- To abstain from representing training and behavioral information as scientific, unless the information is derived from peer-reviewed and published research.
- To refrain from offering guarantees regarding the outcome of training and behavior work.
- To always maintain professionalism through:
 - Providing your services honestly
 - Treating animals and clients respectfully
 - Valuing and preserving the privacy of clients
 - Maintaining professionalism with colleagues and other professionals.

Professional Code of Ethics

The Professional Code of Ethics sets forth the standards of conduct that CCPDT Certificants and Candidates must adhere to professionally. Any Certificant and Candidate is subject to revocation of certification, revocation of candidate application approval, or other disciplinary actions if they fail to abide by this code.

Principle I: Responsibility to Clients

- 1.1 Shall provide professional assistance to persons without discrimination on the basis of race, age, sex, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, gender, health status, religion, political beliefs, national origin, or sexual orientation.

- 1.2 Shall comply with applicable laws regarding the reporting of animal bites and suspected abuse or neglect.
- 1.3 Shall respect the right of clients to make decisions regarding their pet's management, training and care. CCPDT are responsible for helping clients understand the potential consequences of those decisions.
- 1.4 Shall obtain informed consent from clients before videotaping, audio recording, or permitting third-party observation.
- 1.5 Shall obtain signed waivers, contracts or agreements prior to the start of services.
- 1.6 Shall ensure and oversee the safety of clients, animals and the public in implementing training and behavior programs.

Principle II: Confidentiality

- 2.1 Shall not share confidential information that could reasonably lead to the identification of a client, or prospective client, research participant, or other person with whom they have a confidential relationship, unless they have obtained the prior written consent of the client, research participant, or other person with whom they have a confidential relationship.
- 2.2 Shall keep accurate and complete records of all clients, their animals, services provided, and the conclusion of the services provided.
- 2.3 Shall provide referring veterinarians with professional feedback on services provided and training and/or behavior plans to improve continuity of care and ensure the collaborative relationship between health and training and/or behavior professionals.

Principle III: Professional Competence and Integrity

- 3.1 Shall work to minimize the use of aversive stimuli and maximize the effective use of positive reinforcement to modify animal behavior through a Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive (LIMA) based approach.
- 3.2 Shall maintain competence in training and behavior through continuing education.
- 3.3 Shall maintain adequate knowledge of, and adhere to, applicable laws, ethics, and professional standards.
- 3.4 Shall provide truthful advertising and representation concerning their qualifications, certifications, experience, performance, and pricing of services.
- 3.5 Shall refrain from providing guarantees regarding the specific outcome of training and behavior plans.
- 3.6 Shall provide full disclosure of potential conflicts of interest to clients and other professionals.
- 3.7 Shall work within their professional education and individual expertise.
- 3.8 Shall seek help and education when confronted with complex or difficult cases, and refrain from taking cases beyond their professional experience.

- 3.9 Shall not advise on problems outside their recognized professional education and certifications, and shall not provide advice or recommendations in areas of veterinary medicine or family counseling unless licensed and qualified to do so.
- 3.10 Shall not permit employees, subcontractors, or supervisees to perform or to hold themselves out as competent to perform professional services beyond their training, level of experience, and competence based on certification and education.
- 3.11 Shall exercise care when stating their professional recommendations and opinions through public statements.
- 3.12 If the accountable party has employees or subcontractors, that accountable party shall hold their employees, subcontractors, and mentees accountable for following the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics during the course of the delivery of professional services on behalf of the Certificant.

Principle IV: Responsibility to the Profession

- 4.1 Shall be respectful of colleagues and other professionals and shall not condemn the character of their professional acts, nor engage in public commentary, including commentary in public presentations, written media or on websites, internet discussion forums, or social media, that is disrespectful, derisive, or inflammatory. This includes cyberbullying, that is, the use of electronic media for deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior against colleagues.
- 4.2 Shall maintain adequate professional liability insurance coverage.

Principle V: Financial Arrangements & Truthful Representation of Services

- 5.1 Shall clearly disclose and explain to clients all financial arrangements and fees related to professional services prior to entering into a professional relationship.
- 5.2 Shall represent facts truthfully to clients, third party payors, and students regarding services rendered.

Principle VI: Advertising

- 6.1 Shall accurately represent their competencies, education, training, and experience relevant to their practice of training and/or behavior modification.
- 6.2 Shall not use titles that could mislead the public concerning the identity, responsibility, source, and status of those practicing under that name.
- 6.3 Shall correct, wherever possible, false, misleading, or inaccurate information and representations made by others concerning their qualifications, services, or products.
- 6.4 Shall not represent themselves as providing specialized services unless they have the appropriate education, training, or experience.
- 6.5 Shall refrain from making misrepresentations regarding marketing and logos for which they are no longer eligible, and remove logos and claims of certification when no longer maintained.

- 6.6 Shall agree to use the most current logos and follow the recommended usage of said marketing materials.
- 6.7 Shall not commit business fraud, plagiarism, copyright infringement, misuse or misappropriation of logos or trademarks, theft of intellectual property, slander, or libel.

Principle VII: Illegal Behavior

- 7.1 Shall not be convicted of cruelty, abuse, or neglect of animals or humans, crimes against humanity, or violence against animals or humans.
- 7.2 Shall not engage in cruelty, abuse, or neglect of animals or humans, crimes against humanity, or violence against animals or humans.
- 7.3 Shall not be convicted of crimes directly related to the responsible party's professional qualifications.
- 7.4 Shall not engage in gross misconduct directly related to the responsible party's professional qualifications.

Principle VIII: Cooperation in Matters Related to Ethical Complaints

- 8.1 Shall cooperate at all times from the inception of an ethical complaint through the completion of all proceedings regarding that complaint.
- 8.2 Shall not threaten or retaliate against any parties or witnesses to a good faith ethics complaint, both during the course of the complaint and after the completion of all proceedings.

Principle IX: Appeals

- 9.1 Any CCPDT Certificant or Candidate who wishes to appeal a termination or sanction may do so in accordance with CCPDT's Certification Compliance and Disciplinary Procedures.

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