

**Examination for  
CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL DOG TRAINER –  
KNOWLEDGE ASSESSED (CPDT-KA®)**

Handbook for Candidates



Certification Council for  
Professional Dog Trainers®

**SPRING 2024 TESTING PERIOD**

**Application Deadline: Wednesday, January 17, 2024**

Testing Period Begins: Saturday, March 9, 2024

Testing Period Ends: Saturday, March 30, 2024

**FALL 2024 TESTING PERIOD**

**Application Deadline: Wednesday, July 17, 2024**

Testing Period Begins: Saturday, September 7, 2024

Testing Period Ends: Saturday, September 28, 2024

**Fees and deadlines are subject to change without notice. All fees listed are in US \$ and are non-refundable. Late Application Fee is in addition to Application Fee. Applications will not be accepted after the Late Application Deadline. All deadlines are effective 11:59 pm ET.**

Test Accommodations requests MUST be submitted **no less than 8 weeks** prior to the start of the testing period.

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## Mission Statement

The Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers® (CCPDT®) exists to be the industry leader in defining and maintaining competency in the dog training and behavior profession.

## Guiding Principles of the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers

- To develop a recognized standard of proficiency based on current scientific evidence for dog training and behavior professionals through an independent certification process of standardized testing.
- To maintain empirically validated certification examinations that are psychometrically sound, based on current scientific evidence in the profession, and independent of commercial influence.
- To recognize documented training and behavior experience as valid, functional criteria relevant to the certification process.
- To encourage growth in, and fluency of knowledge in, the profession, and thus foster a link in the community of trainers, behavior consultants, academics, veterinarians and veterinary staff, breeders, rescues, shelters, and other animal professionals.
- To benefit animal and human welfare by promoting strategies and methods based on humane practices defined by the CCPDT Values.
- To promote and protect the CCPDT's designations as the publicly recognized credential of dog training and behavior professionals committed to education, experience, and professional excellence.

## Position Statements

The CCPDT adheres to a LIMA (Least Intrusive Minimally Aversive) standard - incorporating the Humane Hierarchy - in canine behavior training. Please review our LIMA policy statement, found in this handbook. We also support the Humane Dog Training Position Statement of the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (AVSAB) which can be found on their website at [www.avsab.org](http://www.avsab.org).

## Certification

The Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT) endorses the concept of certification by examination for all dog training and behavior professionals. Certification focuses specifically on the individual and is an indication of relevant current knowledge in a specialized area of practice. Certification for dog training and behavior professionals is highly valued and provides formal recognition of basic knowledge.

The CCPDT reserves the right to change any of the requirements concerning its Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge Assessed (CPDT-KA®) credential, including, but not limited to, the eligibility requirements, examination content, recertification requirements, fees, use of the mark, name of the mark, and the website. Information published in the current version of the CPDT-KA Handbook for Candidates on the CCPDT website supersedes all other printed or electronic versions of this Handbook. Neither the Handbook for candidates, the examination application form, the examination, nor the CCPDT credential constitutes a contract between the candidate or the certificant and the CCPDT.

## Purposes of CPDT-KA Certification

To promote delivery of safe and effective dog training through the certification of qualified professional dog trainers by:

1. recognizing formally those individuals who meet the eligibility requirements of the CCPDT and pass the Examination for Certified Professional Dog Trainers - Knowledge Assessed;
2. encouraging continued professional growth in the practice of professional dog training;
3. establishing and measuring the level of knowledge and skills required for certification in professional dog training;
4. providing a standard of knowledge and skill requisite for certification; thereby assisting the employer, public, and members of the professional dog care industry in the assessment of the professional dog trainer.

## Eligibility Requirements

1. A Training Log documenting at least three hundred (300) hours of paid or volunteer experience in dog training within the last three (3) years. Two hundred twenty-five (225) hours of experience must be training hours that include: instructing group dog training classes, conducting private training lessons, consulting with clients, and/or training hands-on with one or more dogs. A candidate may log training hours as a Trainer's Assistant, providing they are actively instructing a client or training a dog as part of their assistant role. Seventy-five (75) hours of experience can be in other related areas such as volunteering at an animal shelter in a non-trainer capacity, consulting with another trainer about current cases, designing training plans, working as a veterinary technician or dog groomer, and/or assisting another trainer but not actively instructing a client or training a dog. Training Log hours cannot be earned by training your own dog.
2. Be at least 18 years of age and have earned a high school diploma, GED, or equivalent.
3. A signed and completed Attestation Statement from a CCPDT certificant, IAABC Certified Dog Behavior Consultant, Associate Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist, Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist, Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist, Professional Canine Trainer – Accredited, Professional Canine Behavior Consultant – Accredited, or veterinarian. ***The Attestation Statement form can be found at the end of this handbook.***
4. Acknowledgment of and commitment to adhere to the CCPDT Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics and the CCPDT Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive (LIMA) Effective Behavior intervention Policy.
5. Completion of the online application.
6. Payment of the required fee.

***NOTE: An individual convicted of a felony shall be ineligible to apply for certification until release from confinement and completion of any probationary period.***

## Appeals on Eligibility

Candidates who have been deemed ineligible to sit for an examination may appeal in writing to the CCPDT Executive Committee, by sending a letter either by postal mail to the headquarters office of the CCPDT (Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers, Professional Testing Corporation, 1350 Broadway, Suite 800, New York, NY 10018), or by email to [appeals@ccpdt.org](mailto:appeals@ccpdt.org). The letter must be accompanied by supporting documents and must be received within ten (10) business days after the notification of ineligibility is sent to the candidate. The CCPDT will review the appeal and notify the candidate in writing of its decision within ten (10) business days of receipt of the written appeal.

Should the decision be in favor of the eligibility of the candidate to sit for the examination, but past the deadline for the current testing period, the candidate will be enrolled to take the examination during the next regularly scheduled testing period.

## Non-discrimination

The Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, gender, age, disability, physical limitation, marital or familial status, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, or any other characteristic prohibited by law.

## Administration

The certification program is sponsored by the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers. The examination for Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge Assessed is administered for the CCPDT by the Professional Testing Corporation (PTC), 1350 Broadway – Suite 800, New York, NY 10018, (212) 356-0660, [www.ptcny.com](http://www.ptcny.com). Prior to taking and passing the examination, questions concerning the examination should be directed to PTC at [www.support.ptcny.com](http://www.support.ptcny.com).

## Certification and Recertification

Eligible candidates who pass the Examination for Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge Assessed may use the designation, Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge Assessed (CPDT-KA®), after their names and will receive an e-certificate verifying their certified status from the CCPDT. This certificate is the property of the CCPDT. A directory of Certified Professional Dog Trainers – Knowledge Assessed certificants' names, cities, states, and zip codes will be maintained by the CCPDT. If you do not wish to have your information publicly available on the website, please notify the CCPDT by email and you will be removed from the online directory.

The Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge Assessed credential is valid for a period of three (3) years, at which time the certificant must have accumulated Continuing Education Units (CEUs) at CCPDT-approved programs and meet any new requirements or measures of qualification. Alternatively, the certificant may opt to retake and must pass the current Examination for Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge Assessed in order to maintain the credential.

## Revocation of Certification

Certification will be revoked for any of the following reasons:

1. Falsification of any part of an application
2. Felony convictions that occur during the certification period
3. Misrepresentation of certification status
4. Violation of CCPDT policies, including, but not limited to, the CCPDT Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics and the Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive (LIMA) Effective Behavior Intervention Policy

The Certification Compliance Committee of the CCPDT provides the appeal mechanism for challenging revocation of CCPDT certification. It is the responsibility of the individual to initiate this process.

## Application Procedure

The online application is accessed via the CCPDT website. Read and follow the directions on the application and in this Handbook for Candidates.

## Completion of Application

Complete all information requested in the online application.

***NOTE: The first and last name you enter on your application must match exactly the first and last name listed on your current government- issued photo ID, such as a driver's license or passport.***

**STANDARDS OF PRACTICE and CODE OF ETHICS:** All candidates must read and agree to adhere to the CCPDT Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics as part of their online application. The Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics can be found at the end of this handbook and on the CCPDT website.

**LEAST INTRUSIVE, MINIMALLY AVERSIVE (LIMA) EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION POLICY:** All candidates must read and agree to adhere to the CCPDT Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive (LIMA) Effective Behavior Intervention Policy as part of their online application. The Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive (LIMA) Effective Behavior Intervention Policy can be found at end of this handbook and on the CCPDT website.

#### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:**

- **ATTESTATION STATEMENT:** The signed Attestation Statement is required to sit for the Examination for Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge Assessed. The statement can be signed by a current CCPDT certificant; IAABC Certified Dog Behavior Consultant, Associate Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist, Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist; Pet Professional Accreditation Board Professional Canine Trainer or Canine Behavior Consultant; or veterinarian. The Attestation Statement form can be found at the end of this handbook, as well as on the CCPDT website. The Attestation Statement must be saved as a .jpg or PDF and uploaded into the online application.
- **TRAINING LOG:** See Eligibility Requirements for details. The online Training Log instructions can be found on the CCPDT website. The Training Log must be entered directly into the online application where instructed.

**SUBMIT THE APPLICATION:** Submit the completed application, Attestation Statement, and fee online by the deadline shown on the cover of this Handbook.

*CCPDT randomly selects applications for audit. If selected, you will be required to provide additional information before your application is approved. Failure to comply will result in the denial of your application.*

## **Fees**

**Fees and deadlines are subject to change without notice. All fees listed are in US \$ and are non-refundable. The Late Application Fee is in addition to the Application Fee. Applications will not be accepted after the Late Application Deadline. All deadlines are effective 11:59 pm ET.**

- Application fee for the Examination for Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge Assessed: **\$400**
- Late fee: **\$100**
- Transfer fee : **\$220**

After you submit the online application and application fee, your application will be reviewed and you will be notified via email of your eligibility status. Your application will not be reviewed until your payment has been received. Applications without payment will be in pending status and you will not be registered to take the exam.

**Candidates who are deemed to be ineligible will be refunded the exam fee, less a \$100 administrative fee. In the unlikely event that a refund is granted to an approved candidate, a \$100 administrative fee will be deducted from the refund amount. Late application fees and transfer fees are excluded from all refunds.**

Please be advised: Prometric does not have the authority to grant transfers to another testing period or refunds.

## **Refunds**

**There will be no refund of fees.** Candidates unable to take the examination during the original test period may transfer to either of the next two testing periods. There is a transfer fee of \$220. **Candidates may only transfer once - please plan carefully.**

No refunds will be issued for applying for the incorrect examination or testing period, for failing to make an examination appointment, or for failing to appear for your scheduled appointment.

## Examination Administration

The Examination for Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge is administered during an established three-week testing period on a daily basis, Monday through Saturday, excluding holidays, at computer-based testing facilities or via live remote proctoring managed by Prometric.

## Scheduling Authorization

PTC will send approved candidates a Scheduling Authorization via email. Scheduling Authorizations are sent approximately 11 weeks before the first day of the testing window. The emails come from [notices@ptcny.com](mailto:notices@ptcny.com). Candidates cannot make an appointment until they receive a Scheduling Authorization.

If you have not received your Scheduling Authorization by 3 weeks before the start of your testing window, contact PTC at (212) 356-0660 or online at [www.ptcny.com/contact](http://www.ptcny.com/contact).

Candidates that apply less than 11 weeks prior to the opening of the testing window will receive a Scheduling Authorization within 3 business days after receiving an approval notice.

## Scheduling Your Examination Appointment

The Scheduling Authorization will indicate how to schedule your examination appointment with Prometric, as well as the dates during which testing is available. Appointment times are first-come, first-served, so schedule your appointment as soon as you receive your Scheduling Authorization in order to maximize your chance of testing at your preferred location and on your preferred date. **Candidates who wait until the last minute run the risk of missing out on their preferred date, time, and location. Candidates unable to schedule an appointment may be subject to forfeiture of their fees.**

After you make your test appointment, Prometric will send you a confirmation email with the date, time, and location of your exam. Please check this confirmation carefully for the correct date, time, and location. Contact Prometric at (800) 741-0934 if you do not receive this email confirmation or if there is a mistake with your appointment.

**Note: International candidates may also schedule, reschedule, or cancel an appointment online at [www.prometric.com](http://www.prometric.com).**

**IMPORTANT!** You MUST present your current driver's license, passport or U.S. military ID at the test center or during your remote check-in. Expired, temporary, or paper driver's licenses will NOT be accepted. The first and last name on your Scheduling Authorization MUST exactly match the first and last name on your photo ID. ***Fees will not be refunded for exams missed because of invalid ID.***

### Scheduling a Remotely Proctored Examination Appointment

If you prefer to test via live remote proctoring in your home or another quiet distraction free location you must provide a computer with a camera, microphone, and an internet connection to allow real-time video communication with a remote proctor. Please see the Live Remote Proctoring FAQs for more info: <https://ptcny.com/remote-proctor-faqs/>

**PLEASE BE ADVISED:** It is the candidate's responsibility to be sure their equipment and workspace meet all of the requirements for Live Remote Proctoring. If a candidate makes an appointment for remote proctoring and is unable to test due to not meeting technical requirements or physical requirements of the workspace, the candidate will forfeit their examination fees.

## Test Center or Live Remote Proctoring: What's the Difference?

	Test Center Exam	Live Remote Proctored Exam
<b>Additional cost</b>	No	No
<b>ADA Accommodations offered</b>	Yes	Yes – Extra time accommodations only
<b>Breaks allowed</b>	Unscheduled breaks are permitted; however, the exam timer will continue counting down.	No breaks are permitted. Candidates must NOT leave camera view until the exam has ended.
<b>Equipment needed</b>	None – Computer provided at test center	Candidate provides their own laptop or desktop computer to take the exam. The computer must have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Webcam</li> <li>• Microphone</li> <li>• Secure, reliable internet</li> </ul> For complete requirements: <a href="http://www.prometric.com/proproctorcandidate">www.prometric.com/proproctorcandidate</a>
<b>Testing space needed</b>	None – testing space provided by the test center	Candidates must test alone at a desk or table in a room with a door and no distractions or interruptions. Other people or animals are not permitted in your testing area.
<b>Check-in procedure</b>	Candidates must show their current Government-issued photo ID; walk through a metal detector or be wanded by staff; and roll up sleeves and turn out pockets for a visual inspection.	Prior to check-in, the candidate's equipment needs to pass a compatibility check.  During check-in, candidates must show their current government-issued photo ID; perform a 360° scan of the room using their camera; and roll up sleeves and turn out pockets for a visual inspection.
<b>Monitoring</b>	Proctors monitor candidates through video and physical walkthroughs in the testing room.	Remote proctors monitor candidates through video and audio, as well as ProProctor security software.

*This information is provided as a courtesy summary and may not represent full requirements or specifications for in-person testing or live remote proctored testing. For Live Remote Proctored FAQs, visit <https://ptcny.com/remote-proctor-faqs/>*



## Changing Your Examination Appointment

Candidates are able to reschedule their examination appointments within the same testing period as long as the request is submitted within the timeframe described below. Reschedule within the permitted time frame by calling or going to the Prometric website: [www.prometric.com/ccpdt](http://www.prometric.com/ccpdt).

Time Frame	Reschedule Permitted?	Stipulations
Requests submitted 30 days or more before the original appointment	Yes	None
Requests submitted 29 to 5 days before the original appointment	Yes	Candidate must pay Prometric a rescheduling fee of \$50.
Requests submitted less than 5 days before the original appointment	No	Candidates who do not arrive for their appointment to test will be considered a no-show and all their examinations fees will be forfeited. Candidates will need to reapply and pay fees for a future testing period.

## Transferring to a New Testing Period

Candidates unable to take the examination during their scheduled testing period may transfer to either of the next two testing periods. Transfers to a later testing period will not be accepted. **There is a transfer fee of \$220.** You cannot transfer more than once, so, *please plan carefully.*

Candidates are responsible for contacting Prometric and canceling the original examination appointment, if one was made. Candidates who do not cancel the original exam appointment will be considered a no-show and will not be permitted to transfer.

Transfer applications must be received according to the application deadlines and fees for the new testing period. Transfer candidates must meet the eligibility criteria of the CPDT-KA exam at the time of the transfer application submission.

Candidates wishing to transfer to a new testing period need to follow the steps below.

1. Go to <http://secure.ptcny.com/apply>.
2. Click "Start New Application."
3. Choose CCPDT-CPDT-KA from the first drop-down menu. Then choose the new testing period in the second drop down menu and fill out the rest of the information on the page.

NOTE: If the new testing period falls in the next year, the testing period application will be available by December of the current year.

4. Fill out the application, making sure you answer **yes** to the question asking if you are transferring. You will need your current PTC ID Number.
5. Your Log will be automatically transferred into the new application so you can edit it as needed to meet the eligibility requirements. You will need to update (if applicable) and reupload your Attestation Statement and your Test Accommodations form (if applicable).

6. When you have finished the application, click “Submit Request for Transferring Verification” in the Examination and Certification Information section of the application.
7. PTC Support will send you an email letting you know your transfer application was accepted and that you can log back into your application and pay the transfer fee. Your application will not be approved until you pay the transfer fee.
8. You will receive a new Scheduling Authorization with instructions for scheduling your exam in the new testing period.

Contact PTC at (212)356-0660 or <https://www.support.ptcny.com/> if you have any questions regarding the transfer process.

If candidates are unable to take the exam during the testing period for which they registered and elect not to transfer to another eligible testing period, the application will be closed and all fees will be forfeited. There will be no refund of fees. Candidates may only be transferred to a new testing period once; please plan carefully.

**NOTE:** Transferring your examination only refers to instances when a candidate is unable to take their exam during a testing period for which they have already applied. Candidates who did not pass their examination and are retaking the examination need to complete the full application and pay the full examination fee. If a candidate has been found to have violated security policies they may not transfer and must pay the exam fees in full if they're granted a reexamination.

## Failing to Report for an Examination

If you fail to report for an examination, you will forfeit all fees paid to take the examination. A completed application form and examination fee are required to reapply for the examination.

## Online Practice Test

Candidates can experience what the computerized test will be like by taking an online practice exam. There are two 50-question CPDT-KA practice tests available for purchase. Scores by content area are provided upon completion. This is an opportunity to experience taking the computerized exam, to review the types of content included in the Examination for Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge Assessed, and to learn more about question format and style. The practice tests are optional and are neither the preferred nor only means to prepare for the exam.

Two hours are allotted to complete the 50 questions for a fee of \$99. The practice tests can be found at <https://secure.ptcny.com/webtest/>.

## Test Accommodations

CCPDT and PTC support the intent of and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). PTC will take steps reasonably necessary to make certification accessible to persons with disabilities covered under the ADA. According to the ADA, an individual with a disability is a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity (such as seeing, hearing, learning, reading, concentrating, walking) or a major bodily function (such as a function of the neurological, endocrine, or digestive system). If you will need to use your cell phone or another electronic device to monitor a medical condition, such as diabetes, please be sure to include this

on Part 1 of the Request for Test Accommodations Form so that Prometric can be notified in advance. The information you provide and any documentation regarding your disability and special test accommodations will be held in strict confidence.

All approved testing accommodations must maintain the psychometric nature and security of the examination. Accommodations that fundamentally alter the nature or security of the exam will not be granted.

The Test Accommodations Form must be uploaded with the online application **no later than 8 weeks** prior to the start of your chosen testing period. Candidates who do not submit their Test Accommodations Form with their application may not be able to test during their chosen testing period and therefore be subject to rescheduling or transfer fees.

Prometric is not authorized to approve accommodations. All requests for test accommodations must be submitted to PTC on the Test Accommodations Form.

**Only those requests made and received on the official Request for Test Accommodations Form will be reviewed. Letters from doctors and other healthcare professionals must be accompanied by the official form and will not be accepted without the form. All requests must be made at the time of application. Test accommodations cannot be added to an existing exam appointment.**

## Preparing for the Examination

- Check your government issued photo ID (driver's license, passport or U.S. Military ID) when you make your examination appointment. Is it expired? Does the first and last name on your ID match the first and last name on your Scheduling Authorization email? Proctors at the Prometric testing center or via remote access will refuse admission to candidates with expired IDs, IDs with names that do not match their records, or temporary paper IDs. Candidates without valid ID will be marked as no-shows and will forfeit their exam fees.
- Check your PTC Scheduling Authorization email and Appointment Confirmation email from Prometric to make sure everything is accurate (i.e., your name, exam name, appointment date, time, and location).
- For in-person testing, make yourself familiar with the location of your chosen testing site and any requirements they may have for parking, and check the weather and traffic conditions before you leave for the testing center. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to arrive as late arrival may prevent you from testing. In the event of inclement weather, check the Prometric website for site closures: <https://www.prometric.com/en-us/pages/siteclosure.aspx>.
- For remote testing, make sure that your testing area and equipment meet the requirements provided by PTC and Prometric. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to log into the remote system, as late log-in may prevent you from testing.
- Prometric's website provides information on what you can expect on your test day, including a walkthrough of check in and security procedures for both in-person and remote testing: [www.prometric.com](http://www.prometric.com).
- This Handbook provides the Content Outline for the Examination. Use this to help you start studying for the examination.
- Review the Rules for the Examination in the following section before your appointment.

## What to Expect at the Testing Appointment

PTC has partnered with Prometric Testing Centers to deliver examinations to candidates, either in-person or via live remote proctoring.

Here is what you can expect for your in-person testing appointment:

- Candidate Check-In

- Candidates will be asked to present their IDs.
  - Candidates will be asked to empty and turn out their pockets.
  - Candidates will be “wanded” or asked to walk through a metal detector.
  - Inspection of eyeglasses, jewelry, and other accessories will be conducted. Jewelry other than wedding and engagement rings is prohibited.
  - Religious headwear may be worn into the testing room. However, it may be subject to inspection by a testing center administrator before entry into the testing room is permitted.
  - Prometric provides lockers for candidates to store their purses, mobile phones, jackets, food, drinks and medical supplies.
- During the Exam
    - Candidates have 3 hours to complete 200 exam items (180 scored items, plus 20 pre-test items)
    - No breaks are scheduled during the exam. Candidates who must leave the testing room to take a break will not be given extra time on the exam
    - Candidates are only permitted to leave the testing room to use the restroom or access food, drink, or medicine from their assigned locker
    - Candidates who take an unscheduled break are subject to additional security screenings before being permitted to reenter the testing room
    - Accessing mobile phones, study materials, or anything other than food, drink, or medicine during the examination is prohibited
    - Smoking is prohibited at the testing center
    - All examinations are monitored and may be recorded in both audio and video format
    - Proctors periodically walk through the testing room for security monitoring

NOTE: Other exams will be administered at the same time as your exam. Therefore, you may hear ambient noises such as typing, coughing, or people entering and exiting the testing room that cannot be avoided. Prometric is unable to provide a completely noise-free environment. However, headphones may be requested to minimize impact.

Here is what you can expect for your live remote proctored appointment:

- Candidate Check-In
  - Candidates will be asked to present their IDs.
  - Candidates will be asked to empty and turn out their pockets.
  - Candidates will be asked to perform a 360° scan of the room using their camera. The room must have a door. Other people or animals are not permitted to be in the room, with the exception of service animals that have been pre-approved as a test accommodation.
  - Inspection of eyeglasses, jewelry, and other accessories will be conducted. Jewelry other than wedding and engagement rings is prohibited.
  - Religious headwear may be worn while testing. However, it may be subject to inspection by a testing administrator.

- During the Exam
  - Candidates have 3 hours to complete 200 exam items (180 scored items, plus 20 pre-test items)
  - No breaks are permitted during the exam. Candidates must NOT leave camera view until the exam has ended.
  - Accessing mobile phones, study materials, or any other device or material is prohibited.
  - Accessing food, drink, or medicine during the examination is prohibited, unless pre-approved as a test accommodation.
  - All examinations are monitored and may be recorded in both audio and video format

Please see [Prometric's website](#) for more information about what to expect on testing day.

## Rules for the Examination

Please read the information below carefully. You are responsible for adhering to the examination rules while at your testing location.

- You must present your current driver's license, passport, or US Military ID at your testing location. Candidates without valid ID will **not** be permitted to test. Temporary or paper copies of your ID will not be accepted.
- Cell phones, watches, and all other electronic devices are strictly prohibited at your testing location, with the exception of the equipment required for a remote exam. Please leave these items in your car, in your assigned locker at the testing center, or in another room at your remote location. You may NOT access your cell phone, electronic devices, or study materials at any time.
- NO watches, including fitness/smart watches and similar devices, can be worn during the examination.
- No papers, books, or reference materials may be accessed, taken into, or removed from the testing location. You may ONLY access snacks, drinks, medicines or personal healthcare items from your locker during an in-person exam. You may NOT access snacks, drinks, medicines or personal healthcare items during a remote proctored exam
- No questions concerning the content of the examination may be asked during the examination session. The candidate should carefully read the directions that are provided on screen at the beginning of the examination session.
- In-person testing candidates are prohibited from leaving the testing room while their exam is in session, except for going to the restroom, or accessing their locker for food, drink, or medicine only. Remote proctored candidates are prohibited from leaving the testing location while their exam is in session under any circumstances.
- Bulky clothing, such as sweatshirts (hoodies), jackets, coats, and hats (except hats worn for religious reasons), as well as most types of jewelry, may not be worn while taking the examination. Proctors will ask you to remove such items and place them in your locker or outside of your remote testing location. Please see [Prometric's statement on Test Center Security](#) for more information.
- No food or beverages are permitted inside the testing location.

Contact PTC at (212) 356-0660 or [www.ptcny.com/contact](http://www.ptcny.com/contact) with any questions about the Examination Rules.

Irregular or improper behavior that is observed, made apparent by statistical analysis, or uncovered by other means before, during or after the examination will be considered a violation of these rules and may constitute grounds for invalidation of a candidate's examination. CCPDT will initiate an investigation and request suitable analyses and appropriate documentation.

**VIOLATION OF ANY OF THE RULES LISTED ABOVE MAY LEAD TO A FORFEITURE OF FEES, DISMISSAL FROM THE TESTING LOCATION, AND CANCELLATION OF YOUR TEST SCORES.**

## Exam Security

Candidates seeking admission to take the examination do so for the purpose of pursuing certification, and for no other purpose. Because of the confidential nature of the examination, candidates may not make or keep copies, excerpts, or notes of examination materials, and not use or divulge information learned from the examination. The examination is the exclusive property of CCPDT and candidates may not use examination information in any way without the express written consent of CCPDT.

The CPDT-KA examination is confidential. Candidates are required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to the start of the examination.

Candidates agree to abide by the testing rules in effect at the time of their test appointment. CCPDT, PTC, and/or Prometric staff may refuse a candidate admission to the examination if they do not have the proper identification as detailed in the Candidate Handbook. Candidates who do not abide by the testing rules may have their exam terminated during the exam administration in order to maintain a secure and proper exam administration.

## Disciplinary Policy

Disruptive, abusive, or uncooperative behavior of any kind before, during, or after the examination is strictly prohibited. Irregular behavior constitutes an attempted violation of the testing rules regarding any part of the examination process. CCPDT, PTC, and Prometric staff have the authority to enforce disciplinary action for candidate misconduct.

Examples of violations before testing include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Falsification of any information in the certification application
- Altering documentation submitted with the certification application
- Requesting information about the exam or exam items from previous test takers
- Enlisting a proxy test taker

Examples of violations during testing and breaks, include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Misrepresenting identity
- Using a camera, with the exception of remote proctoring which requires that a web camera remain on for the duration of the exam
- Using a recording device
- Using a phone or other unauthorized device at any time during the test administration, including breaks
- Cheating on the exam
- Violating test center or remote proctoring rules
- Using a proxy test taker
- Impersonating another candidate
- Communicating with other candidates during an in-person exam
- Communicating with any third party other than the proctor during a remote proctored exam

- Attempting to gain access to exam content during exam administration
- Giving or receiving help during the exam
- Being uncooperative or abusive with test center staff or proctor
- Tampering with exam computer or software
- Removing anything from your assigned locker except food, drink, medicine, or personal healthcare items
- Bringing anything into the remote testing environment except food, drink, medicine, or personal healthcare items unless authorized and pre-approved
- Leaving the test center
- Leaving the in person testing area excluding the allowed break during the exam administration
- Leaving the camera view of the remote proctor without proctor permission for the allowed break during the exam administration

Examples of violations after testing include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Sharing exam items or content with others
- Taking exam notes or materials from the test administration
- Using or divulging information about the exam
- Altering exam results
- Misrepresenting or misusing certification status
- Engaging in behavior that results in revocation of license in a primary profession
- Conduct that leads to limitations or sanctions imposed by another professional organization
- Violation of professional code of ethics

CCPDT may deny, suspend, revoke, or take other action regarding an application or certification if an individual is not in compliance with this Disciplinary Policy. Violations of any testing rules may result in disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Termination/dismissal of the exam
- Investigation, including a review of audio and video recordings of the exam administration
- Cancellation of exam registration
- Cancellation of exam scores
- Forfeiture of exam fees
- Denial, suspension, or revocation of certification or recertification
- Prohibition from future certification-related activities, including examination, recertification, or volunteer activities within CCPDT
- Denial or suspension of eligibility
- Notification to other parties as necessary

## Reporting of Results

Candidates will be notified by email within four (4) to six (6) weeks of the close of the testing period whether or not they have passed the Examination for Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge Assessed. This period allows for the psychometric and administrative review required to ensure accurate and reliable scores. Scores on the total examination and percentages correct by domain will be reported. Successful candidates will also receive an e-certificate from the CCPDT.

## Examination Challenges

It is the policy of the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers to provide every candidate with an opportunity to question the reliability, validity, and/or fairness of a test and its questions. Candidates may submit a complaint in writing to the CCPDT's administrative offices no later than fourteen (14) calendar days after taking the examination. Complaints and challenges must be communicated in writing and within this time frame. The CCPDT will NOT consider late challenges or complaints, or challenges or complaints not submitted in writing. All challenges

and complaints shall receive the CCPDT's full attention. The CCPDT shall investigate each challenge or complaint and acknowledge it in writing to the complainant.

## Re-examination

The examination for Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge Assessed may be taken as often as desired upon submission of a new application (including all application components as defined in the current Eligibility Requirements) and payment of the examination fee. There is no limit to the number of times the examination may be repeated.

If a candidate has been found to have violated security policies, they must contact CCPDT to request permission for reexamination.

## Confidentiality

The CCPDT will release the individual test scores ONLY to the individual candidate and only by email to the email address on the application. Any questions concerning test results should be referred to the CCPDT or the Professional Testing Corporation. Aggregate exam data may be used for research and other purposes.

Candidate information shall be kept confidential and not publicly disclosed without the expressed consent of the candidate unless required by law or court order. By applying for certification, candidates and certificants consent to the following disclosures of their personal information:

1. Name, certification, city, state, and zip code included in the online directory located on the CCPDT website (active certificants only)
2. For confirmation of certification status and dates of testing requests from employers or prospective employers
3. For sharing with vendors involved in the development and administration of exams
4. To CCPDT volunteers, staff, and consultants as needed

If you pass the exam and do not wish to have your information publicly available on our website, please notify the CCPDT by email and you will be removed from the online directory.



## Content of Examination

1. The Examination for Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge Assessed is composed of objective multiple-choice items. There are 180 scored items on the exam, plus 20 pre-test items. Only the scored items count towards a candidate's final score. The pre-test items are randomly distributed throughout the exam and do not count towards a candidate's score. The pre-test items are being evaluated to determine if they perform well enough to be introduced as scored items on future examinations.
2. The questions for the examination are developed by individuals with expertise in dog training and are reviewed for construction, accuracy, and appropriateness by the CCPDT.
3. The CCPDT, with the advice and assistance of PTC, prepares the examination.
4. The content for the examination is described in the Content Outline.
5. The Certification Examination for Professional Dog Trainers - Knowledge Assessed is weighted in approximately the following manner:

DOMAIN	% of Exam
I. Applied Learning Theory	25%
II. Instructional and Teaching Skills	32%
III. Canine Behavior, Ethology, and Well-being	26%
IV. Professional Skills, Ethics, and Laws & Regulations	17%

## Content Outline – CPDT-KA

The Content Outline, generated through regular surveying of dog trainers, describes what a professional dog trainer should know and be able to do. This information is sorted into four (4) broad categories called domains. Each domain is organized into two lists: Tasks and Knowledge Areas.

**Knowledge Areas** represent what dog trainers KNOW. They reflect the concepts and topics a professional should understand and be familiar with.

**Tasks** represent what surveys in the industry have indicated dog trainers actually DO. They are skills a dog trainer should understand and have the ability to perform if necessary.

**NOTE:** CCPDT candidates and certificants must adhere to all CCPDT Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics, Policies, and Position Statements. Not all of the Tasks represent a skill a CCPDT certificant is allowed to engage in as a primary means of training. However, a professional should understand the application of these tasks. Understanding the application of a task is not the same as choosing to apply the task.

## ***Domain I. Applied Learning Theory (7 Tasks)***

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01. Apply learning theory appropriately and humanely to change and/or maintain behavior
02. Create, adjust, and evaluate effectiveness of training plans
03. Identify and appropriately use reinforcers and punishers
04. Select and humanely use appropriate training techniques
05. Identify and implement appropriate reinforcement schedules
06. Collect and/or interpret data
07. Identify, set, and adjust criteria

Knowledge Areas drawn upon to perform tasks in Domain I include:

K01, K02, K03, K04, K05, K06, K07, K08, K09, K10, K17, K18, K19, K20, K35, K43, K44, K51, K52, K54, K58

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## ***Domain II. Instructional and Teaching Skills (12 Tasks)***

01. Teach and coach clients in private and group settings
02. Create maintenance and management plans for clients
03. Create training plans for clients
04. Teach clients how to apply learning theory to change and/or maintain behavior
05. Teach safety and management skills to clients
06. Manage environment to promote learning
07. Teach clients mechanical training skills
08. Develop, implement, and adapt lesson plans and class curricula
09. Teach clients to use equipment and tools related to canine care and training safely, effectively, and consensually
10. Communicate with clients effectively
11. Identify and apply appropriate teaching and instructional theories to help clients achieve specific training goals
12. Teach clients to recognize and interpret dog body language, vocalizations, behavior, and indicators of health/well-being

Knowledge Areas drawn upon to perform tasks in Domain II include:

K03, K04, K06, K07, K08, K09, K11, K12, K13, K14, K15, K16, K17, K18, K19, K20, K21, K22, K23, K24, K25, K26, K27, K42, K43, K46, K52, K53, K54, K56, K57, K58, K61, K62, K63, K64, K65

### ***Domain III. Canine Behavior, Ethology, and Well-being (8 Tasks)***

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01. Observe, interpret, evaluate, and monitor interactions involving dogs
02. Observe, interpret, evaluate, and assess dog body language and vocalizations
03. Recognize and respond to basic health and well-being needs and concerns of dogs
04. Review dog's vaccination and other medical records
05. Interpret behavior/training history and training progress
06. Identify and select appropriate physical and mental enrichment
07. Select and properly fit appropriate training and management equipment
08. Create a safe training environment and reduce risks of injury and disease

Knowledge Areas drawn upon to perform tasks in Domain III include:

K07, K15, K27, K28, K29, K30, K31, K32, K33, K34, K35, K36, K37, K38, K39, K40, K41, K42, K43, K44, K45, K46, K48, K49, K50, K51, K52, K53, K54, K55, K56, K57, K58

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### ***Domain IV. Professional Skills, Ethics, and Laws and Regulations (7 Tasks)***

01. Collect and store dog, client, and business records as appropriate
02. Identify need for, and refer to, veterinarians and other professionals
03. Explain policies and roles/rights/responsibilities to clients
04. Identify and resolve conflicts
05. Use problem-solving and critical thinking skills
06. Create and follow best business and ethical practices
07. Understand and follow laws, regulations, and ethical

guidelines Knowledge Areas drawn upon to perform tasks in

Domain IV include:

K10, K13, K14, K15, K16, K19, K21, K22, K46, K47, K50, K59, K60, K61, K62, K63, K64, K65, K66, K67, K68, K69, K70, K71, K72, K73, K74, K75, K76

## Knowledge Areas

- K01. Applied behavior analysis
- K02. Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence sequences
- K03. Setting and changing training and behavior criteria
- K04. Stimulus (i.e., cue) discrimination and control, generalization, salience, overshadowing, blocking, context effects, etc.
- K05. Learning Theory/Behavior change processes (e.g., reinforcement, punishment, classical conditioning, operant conditioning, extinction, counterconditioning, systematic desensitization, flooding, deprivation, habituation, sensitization)
- K06. Training techniques (e.g., shaping, fading, luring, chaining, back-chaining, targeting, capturing, prompting, mimicry, body blocking, molding)
- K07. Risks and benefits of different training and behavior change techniques
- K08. Reinforcers (primary, secondary/conditioned, etc.), markers, and no-reward markers
- K09. Reinforcement schedules (e.g., continuous, fixed ratio, intermittent ratio, fixed interval, intermittent interval, differential, variable ratio, variable interval, jackpots, contrast effects)
- K10. Data collection and documentation
- K11. Client motivation
- K12. Client needs and limits
- K13. Client assistance and accommodations
- K14. Consultation/lesson preparation
- K15. Safety
- K16. Emergency plans
- K17. Training goals
- K18. Measurable goals
- K19. Management plans
- K20. Training and behavior change plans
- K21. Private and group lessons
- K22. Lesson plans and class curricula
- K23. Teaching, training, coaching, and consulting skills (e.g., motivational interviewing, active listening, mechanical skills, learning modalities)
- K24. At-home practice
- K25. Maintenance plans
- K26. Follow-up schedules
- K27. Evaluation of training plan effectiveness
- K28. Ethology
- K29. Canine species-specific behavior
- K30. Dog senses
- K31. Dog cognition and perception
- K32. Genetic influences
- K33. Breed-specific traits
- K34. Developmental stages
- K35. Behavior as observable, measurable, and reproducible
- K36. Action patterns/motor programs
- K37. Predictability, frequency, and intensity of behavior
- K38. Bite level/severity of bite
- K39. Dog-dog interactions
- K40. Socialization
- K41. People-dog interactions
- K42. Dog-client compatibility
- K43. Training or behavior problems
- K44. Dog attention and engagement
- K45. Displacement behavior
- K46. Cooperative care

- K47. Veterinarian release
- K48. Injuries, contagious diseases, and transmission in dogs
- K49. General health and well-being of dogs (e.g., body language, vocalizations, behavior, indicators of health/well-being)
- K50. Elements of dog's history (e.g., vaccination records, health, previous training and behavioral issues, home environment)
- K51. Dog freedom (e.g., agency, choice, consent-seeking, learned helplessness)
- K52. Management of environment (e.g., distractions, safety, proofing)
- K53. Management equipment (e.g., voice, crates, cones, gates)
- K54. Prevention as a strategy
- K55. Physical and mental enrichment recommendations
- K56. Training equipment and props (e.g., leashes, collars, jumps, hoops)
- K57. Demonstration or prop animals (e.g., dogs, cats, plush toys)
- K58. Stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, fluency, generalization, adaptation, maintenance of behavior)
- K59. Professional competency/case eligibility (working within one's skill set)
- K60. Policies: Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive (LIMA), Humane Hierarchy, CCPDT Joint Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics
- K61. Roles, rights, and responsibilities/needs, desires, and limits of trainer, client, and dog
- K62. Client-friendly communication and feedback
- K63. Conflict resolution
- K64. Critical thinking skills
- K65. Ending client relationships
- K66. Trainer health/well-being/mental health/self-care
- K67. Referrals to other professionals (e.g., veterinarian, behavior consultant, lawyer, insurance agent, nutritionist, fitness trainer)
- K68. Research methods
- K69. Scientific literacy
- K70. Professionalism, cultural competency, and business skills
- K71. Business practices
- K72. Laws and regulations
- K73. Definitions of service dog, therapy dog, and emotional support animal
- K74. Business and legal recordkeeping (e.g., signed confidentiality release form, informed consent)
- K75. Documentation, reports of training sessions, training logs
- K76. Storage of client information

## Sample Examination Questions

In the following questions, choose the one best answer.

- 1.) If an owner calls before class and says that his puppy has had diarrhea for the past two days, the trainer should
  1. advise the owner to put the puppy on a bland diet.
  2. instruct the owner to immediately take the puppy to the vet.
  3. tell the owner not to bring the puppy to class and to call its veterinarian.
  4. ask the owner for more details to determine whether the puppy should come to class.
  
- 2.) Which of the following information would be most important to obtain before a dog comes to class?
  1. Owner's training goals
  2. Dog's previous training
  3. Dog's vaccination and behavior history
  4. Dog's breed, age, and reproductive status
  
- 3.) A slip collar should not be left on an unsupervised dog because
  1. the collar may loosen and slip off the dog.
  2. the dog may catch the collar on something and strangle.
  3. it is difficult to put identification tags on this type of collar.
  4. the dog can only tolerate the collar for a short period of time.
  
- 4.) Which outcome is expected when an unpleasant stimulus is removed following a response?
  1. Positive punishment
  2. Negative punishment
  3. Positive reinforcement
  4. Negative reinforcement
  
- 5.) How should a dog trainer aid an owner with limited mobility?
  1. Tell the owner to bring someone to assist during class
  2. Refer owner to a colleague with experience training assistance dogs
  3. Discuss a variety of options and agree on reasonable accommodations
  4. Recommend board and train, giving the dog back to the owner with instructions
  
- 6.) A frightened dog may display which of the following behaviors?
  1. Mounts owner or dogs during playtime
  2. Instigates "keep away" with other dogs
  3. Wags tail with ears set neutrally on head
  4. Scans facility and does not focus on owner
  
- 7.) Which of the following is the most appropriate type of equipment for a dog with a collapsed trachea?
  1. Prong collar
  2. Body harness
  3. Breakaway collar
  4. Limited slip collar

- 8.) Which of the following conditions is common in large, deep-chested breeds and is associated with exercise, excessive food and water intake, and/or stress?
1. Heat stroke
  2. Hip dysplasia
  3. Gastric torsion
  4. Thyroid disease

**CORRECT ANSWERS TO SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

1.3; 2.3; 3.2; 4.4; 5.3; 6.4; 7.2; 8.3

## References

The following list of references may be helpful in preparing for the examination. This list does not attempt to include all acceptable references nor is it suggested that the Examination for Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge Assessed is necessarily based on these references.

### Instruction

#### **Books**

Alexander, Melissa C. (2003). Click for Joy. Sunshine Books.

Barry, Jim. (2008). The Ethical Dog Trainer: A Practical Guide for Canine Professionals. Dogwise Publishing.

Dunbar, Ian. (2003). Doctor Dunbar's Good Little Dog Book. (3rd ed.) James & Kenneth Publishers.

Killion, Jane. (2007). When Pigs Fly! Training Success with Impossible Dogs. Dogwise Publishing.

Martin, Kenneth & Debbie. (2011). Puppy Start Right: Foundation Training for the Companion Dog. Sunshine Books.

Miller, Pat. (2008). Play with Your Dog. Dogwise Publishing.

Ryan, Terry. (2008). Coaching People to Train Their Dogs. (2nd ed.) Legacy Canine.

Smith, Cheryl S. (2007). Visiting the Dog Park: Having Fun, Staying Safe. Dogwise Publishing.

Wilde, Nicole. (2003). It's Not the Dogs, It's the People! A Dog Trainer's Guide to Training Humans. Phantom Publishing.

Yin, Sophia. (2011). Perfect Puppy in 7 Days: How to Start Your Puppy Off Right. CattleDog Publishing.

#### **DVDs**

Donaldson, Jean. (2007). Perfect Paws in 5 Days - featuring Jean Donaldson's Modern Dog Training Methods. Perfect Paws Productions.

Sdao, Kathy. (2012). What Not to Err: Training Mistakes that Create Headaches for Dogs. Tawzer Dog LLC.

### Animal Husbandry

#### **Books**

Eldredge, Debra, Carlson, L., Carlson, D., Giffin, J., Adelman, B. (2007). Dog Owner's Home Veterinary Handbook (4th ed.) Turner Publishing Company.

### Ethology

#### **Books**

Aloff, Brenda (2005). Canine Body Language - A Photographic Guide - Interpreting the Native Language of the Domestic Dog. Dogwise Publishing.

Bradshaw, John. (2011). Dog Sense: How the New Science of Dog Behavior Can Make You a Better Friend to Your Pet. Basic Books.

Coppinger, Raymond & Lorna. (2001). Dogs: A Startling New Understanding of Canine Origin, Behavior & Evolution. Scribner.

Handelman, Barbara. (2008). Canine Behavior: A Photo Illustrated Handbook. Dogwise Publishing.



McConnell, Patricia B. (2003). *The Other End of the Leash: Why We Do What We Do Around Dogs*. Ballantine Books.

#### **DVDs**

Byrnes, Carol A. (2008). *What is My Dog Saying? : Canine Communication 101*. Diamonds in the Ruff.

Hetts, Suzanne & Estep, Daniel. (2004). *Fundamentals of Canine Behavior*. Island Dog Press.

Hetts, Suzanne & Estep, Daniel. (2013). *Canine Body Postures: The Professional's Video Guide to Understanding the Body Language of Dogs*. Animal Care Technologies, Inc.

### **Learning Theory**

#### **Books**

Burch, Mary & Bailey, Jon. (1999). *How Dogs Learn*. Howell Book House.

Donaldson, Jean. (2013). *The Culture Clash: A Revolutionary New Way to Understanding the Relationship Between Humans and Domestic Dogs*. (2nd ed.) Dogwise Publishing.

Miller, Pat. (2008). *The Power of Positive Dog Training*. (2nd ed.) Howell Book House.

Pryor, Karen. (2006). *Don't Shoot the Dog! : The New Art of Teaching and Training*. (3rd ed.) Ringpress Books.

Reid, Pamela J. (1996). *Excel-erated Learning: Explaining in Plain English How Dogs Learn and How Best to Teach Them*. James & Kenneth Publishers.

Rogerson, John. (2011). *The Dog Vinci Code*. John Blake Publishers.

Sondermann, Christina. (2008). *Playtime for Your Dog: Keep Him Busy Throughout the Day*. Cadmos Publishing.

Yin, Sophia. (2010). *How to Behave So Your Dog Behaves*. (2nd ed.) T.H.F. Publications, Inc.

#### **DVDs**

Bailey, Bob. (2006). *The Fundamentals of Animal Training*. Dog Sports Video.

Sdao, Kathy. (2009). *Get Smart About Training*. Tawzer Dog LLC.

### **Equipment**

#### **Books**

Ganley, Dee, Bond, C. & Theriault, D. (Eds.) (2008). *Changing People, Changing Dogs: Positive Solutions for Difficult Dogs*. Dogwise Publishing.

Tucker, Maggie Tai. (2001). *Professional Standards for Dog Trainers: Effective, Humane Principles*. Delta Society.

Weinberg, Dani. (2006). *Teaching People Teaching Dogs - Insights and Ideas for Instructors*. HowIn Moon Press.

### **Online Videos**

Animal Behavior Resources Institute. <https://www.youtube.com/user/ABRIAnimalBehavior/> :  
Conditioning an Emotional Response by Jean Donaldson; Fitting the Gentle Leader by Becky Shultz, BA;  
Fitting the Easy Walk Harness by Janet Velenovsky, CPDT-KA, CDBC, KPA CTP, ACCBC; Tips for Using the  
Easy Walk Harness by Janet Velenovsky, CPDT-KA, CDBC, KPA CTP, ACCBC

## **Additional Animal Behavior & Training Resources**

### **Books**

Chance, Paul. (2013). Learning and Behavior. (7th ed.) Cengage Learning.

Pryor, Karen. (2002). Click! For Life - Clicker Training for the Shelter Environment A Working Guide. Karen Pryor Clicker Training.

Sternberg, Sue. (2002). Great Dog Adoptions, A Guide for Shelters. Latham Foundation Press.

Sternberg, Sue. (2003). Successful Dog Adoption. Howell Book House.

# **APPENDIX A: Application of the Least Intrusive Minimally Aversive (LIMA) Effective Behavior Intervention and the Humane Hierarchy**

## **What Is LIMA?**

“LIMA” is an acronym for the phrase “least intrusive, minimally aversive.” LIMA describes a trainer or behavior consultant who uses the least intrusive, minimally aversive strategy out of a set of humane and effective tactics likely to succeed in achieving a training or behavior change objective. LIMA adherence also requires consultants to be adequately educated and skilled in order to ensure that the least intrusive and aversive procedure is used.[1]

LIMA does not justify the use of punishment in lieu of other effective interventions and strategies. In the vast majority of cases, desired behavior change can be affected by focusing on the animal's environment, physical well-being, and operant and classical interventions such as differential reinforcement of an alternative behavior, desensitization, and counter-conditioning.

## **LIMA Is Competence-Based**

LIMA requires trainers/consultants to work to increase the use of positive reinforcement and eliminate the use of punishment when working with animal and human clients. In order to ensure best practices, consultants should pursue and maintain competence in animal behavior consulting and training through continuing education, and hands-on experience. Consultants should not advise on problems outside the recognized boundaries of their competencies and experience. [2]

## **Positive Reinforcement and Understanding the Learner**

Positive reinforcement should be the first line of teaching, training, and behavior change program considered, and should be applied consistently. Positive reinforcement is associated with the lowest incidence of aggression, attention seeking, avoidance, and fear in learners. [3]

Only the learner determines what may be reinforcing. It is crucial that the consultant understands and has the ability to appropriately apply this principle. This fact may mean that the consultant assesses any handling, petting, food, tool, and environment each time the learner experiences them. Consultant bias must not determine the learner's experience. The measure of each stimulus is whether the learner's target behavior is strengthening or weakening, not the consultant's intent or preference.

## **Systematic Problem Solving and Strategies**

The trainer/consultant is responsible for ensuring learner success through a consistent, systematic approach that identifies a specific target behavior, the purpose of that behavior, and the consequences that maintain the behavior.

A variety of learning and behavior change strategies may come into play during a case. Ethical use of this variety always depends on the trainer/consultant's ability to adequately problem solve and to understand the impact of each action on the learner, as well as sensitivity toward the learner's experience.

## **Preventing Abuse**

We seek to prevent the abuses and potential repercussions of inappropriate, poorly applied, and inhumane uses of punishment and of overly restrictive management and confinement strategies. The potential effects of punishment can include aggression or counter-aggression; suppressed behavior (preventing the consultant from adequately reading the animal); increased anxiety and fear; physical harm; a negative association with the owner or handler; increased unwanted behavior; and new, unwanted behaviors. [4]

## **Choice and Control for the Learner**

LIMA guidelines require that trainer/consultants always offer the learner as much control and choice as possible. Trainer/consultants must treat each individual of any species with respect and awareness of the learner's individual nature, preferences, abilities, and needs. [5]

### **What Do You Want the Animal TO do?**

We focus on reinforcing desired behaviors, and always ask the question, “What do you want the animal TO do?” Relying on punishment in training does not answer this question, and therefore offers no acceptable behavior for the animal to learn to replace the unwanted behavior. These LIMA guidelines do not justify the use of aversive methods and tools including, but not limited to, the use of electronic, choke or prong collars in lieu of other effective positive reinforcement interventions and strategies.

When making training and behavior modification decisions, trainers/consultants should understand and follow the *Humane Hierarchy of Behavior Change – Procedures for Humane and Effective Practices*, outlined in the diagram [6]

For these reasons, we strongly support the humane and thoughtful application of LIMA protocols, and we applaud those individuals and organizations working with animals and humans within LIMA guidelines.

### **Purpose**

The Humane Hierarchy serves to guide professionals in their decision-making process during training and behavior modification. Additionally, it assists owners and animal care professionals in understanding the standard of care to be applied in determining training practices and methodologies and the order of implementation for applying those training practices and methodologies.

### **Hierarchy of Procedures for Humane and Effective Practice**

- 1. Health, nutritional, and physical factors: Ensure that any indicators for possible medical, nutritional, or health factors are addressed by a licensed veterinarian. The consultant should also address potential factors in the physical environment.**
- 2. Antecedents: Redesign setting events, change motivations, and add or remove discriminative stimuli (cues) for the problem behavior.**
- 3. Positive Reinforcement: Employ approaches that contingently deliver a consequence to increase the probability that the desired behavior will occur.**
- 4. Differential Reinforcement of Alternative Behavior: Reinforce an acceptable replacement behavior and remove the maintaining reinforcer for the problem behavior.**
- 5. Negative Punishment, Negative Reinforcement, or Extinction (these are not listed in any order of preference):**
  - a) Negative *Punishment*– Contingently withdraw a positive reinforcer to reduce the probability that the problem behavior will occur.**
  - b) Negative *Reinforcement*– Contingently withdraw an aversive antecedent stimulus to increase the probability that the right behavior will occur.**
  - c) Extinction – Permanently remove the maintaining reinforcer to suppress the behavior or reduce it to baseline levels.**
- 6. Positive Punishment: Contingently deliver an aversive consequence to reduce the probability that the problem behavior will occur.**

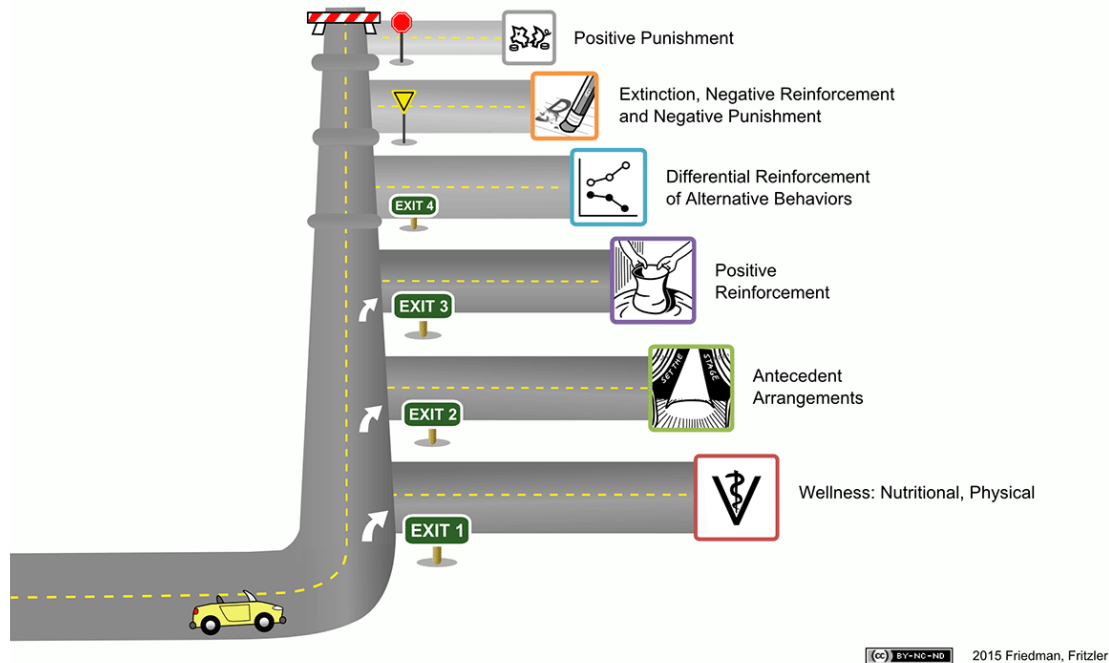
### **Useful Terms**

Intrusiveness refers to the degree to which a procedure affects the learner’s control. With a less intrusive procedure, a learner retains more control. The goal of LIMA is for its trainers/consultants to determine and use the least intrusive effective intervention which will effectively address the target behavior. In the course of an experienced consultant’s practice, he or she may identify a situation in which a relatively more intrusive procedure is necessary for an effective outcome. In such a case, a procedure that reduces the learner’s control may be the least intrusive, effective choice.

Additionally, wellness is always positioned as the first step of the hierarchy to ensure that a trainer/consultant does not implement a learning solution for behavior problems due to pain or illness. The hierarchy is a cautionary tool to reduce both dogmatic rule following and practice by familiarity or convenience. It offers an ethical checkpoint for consultants to carefully consider the process by which effective outcomes can be most humanely achieved on a case-by-case basis. The hierarchy is intended to be approached in order for each case. Rationale like,

“It worked with the last case!” is not appropriate. The evaluation and behavior change program of every animal should be a study of the individual (i.e., individual animal, setting, caregiver, etc.). Changing behavior is best understood as a study of one.

### Hierarchy of Behavior-Change Procedures Most Positive, Least Invasive Effective Intervention



#### References:

[1] Steven Lindsay, Handbook of Applied Dog Behavior and Training Vol 3 pgs. 29 & 726.

[2] Per the IAABC, APDT, and CCPDT Code of Ethics Principle 3.7

[3] "[The] use of positive reinforcement alone was associated with the lowest mean scores (attention-seeking score 0.33; fear (avoidance) score 0.18; aggression score 0.1). The highest mean attention-seeking score (0.49) was found in dogs whose owners used a combination of positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement. The highest mean avoidance score (0.31) was found in dogs whose owners used a combination of all categories of training methods. Owners using a combination of positive reinforcement and positive punishment had dogs with the highest mean aggression score (0.27)." Emily

J. Blackwell, Caroline Twells, Anne Seawright, Rachel A. Casey, The relationship between training methods and the occurrence of behavior problems, as reported by owners, in a population of domestic dogs, Journal of Veterinary Behavior: Clinical Applications and Research, Volume 3, Issue 5, September–October 2008, Pages 207-217, ISSN 1558-7878, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jveb.2007.10.008>.

[4] See [avsabonline.org](http://avsabonline.org) • Hutchinson RR. 1977. By-products of aversive control. In: Honig WK, Staddon JER, eds. Handbook of Operant Behavior. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall: 415-431. • Azrin NH. 1960. Effects of punishment intensity during variable-interval reinforcement. J Exp Anal Behav 3: 123-142. • Azrin NH, Holz WC, Hake DR. 1963. Fixed-ratio punishment. J Exp Anal Behav 6: 141-148. • Pauli AM, Bentley E, Diehl AK, Miller PE. 2006. Effects of the application of neck pressure by a collar or harness on intraocular pressure in dogs. J Am Anim Hosp Assoc 42(3): 207-211. • Drobatz KJ, Saunders HM, Pugh CR, Hendricks JC. 1995. Noncardiogenic pulmonary edema in dogs and cats: 26 cases (1987-1993). J Am Vet Med Assoc 206: 1732-1736. • Azrin NH, Rubin HB, Hutchinson RR. 1968. Biting attack by rats in response to aversive shock. J Exp Anal Behav 11: 633-639

[5] Brambell's Five Freedoms, used as animal and human welfare guidelines:

[6] S. Friedman, What's Wrong with this Picture? Effectiveness is Not Enough, APDT Journal March/April 2010

Please direct any questions regarding this standard of care to our administrator at [board@ccpdt.org](mailto:board@ccpdt.org).

## APPENDIX B: Position Statement: Electronic Collars and the Humane Hierarchy

The Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT) recognizes that there are many disciplines in the world of dog training. The CCPDT does not limit its certificant profile to one type of dog trainer or one type of training discipline. With that understanding, the CCPDT does not forbid the use of electronic collars that are used within the constraints of the Humane Hierarchy. (Please see the position statement on the Application of the Humane Hierarchy found in this handbook and at [www.ccpdt.org](http://www.ccpdt.org))

The CCPDT believes that the administration of an electric stimulus during training should only be used after all other training options have been considered and rejected. A CCPDT certificant should never authorize or employ the use of electric stimulation as an initial training option. We strongly believe that the use of an electronic collar should be the last form of training considered before its use.

A CCPDT certificant is expected to exhaust all other training strategies before considering the use of an electronic collar. The CCPDT certificant should attempt or carefully rule out the following training strategies prior the use of electrical stimulation:

- Changes in antecedent stimuli
- Positive reinforcement of alternative behaviors
- A comprehensive program of counter conditioning and desensitization
- Negative punishment
- Negative reinforcement
- Consultations with other behavior professionals for alternative training suggestions

In the event that a CCPDT certificant determines that an electronic collar is the appropriate course of action for a particular dog, that trainer should never apply more than one electronic stimulation to a dog at the same time. Furthermore, the electronic stimulation should never be administered to any location other than the neck of the dog.

A CCPDT certificant who violates these directives in this position statement risks losing his or her certification. A certificant who loses his or her certification as the result of violating the directives in this position statement will have his or her name published on our website with the reason for the decertification.

Amended 5/23/2014

## APPENDIX C: Dog Training and Behavior Intervention Practices

### Purpose

This policy serves to govern those practices that a Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT) certificant may not use during the practice of dog training or behavior modification. This policy will clarify for dog owners and dog care professionals those practices in which a CCPDT certificant may not engage.

The CCPDT recognizes that this policy does not address every practice under debate in the dog training industry. The goal of this policy is to ensure that CCPDT certificants do not engage in certain practices which can in no way be considered humane or sound by scientific standards. It also acknowledges that certain additional practices remain under debate, such as the use of electronic stimulation collars. This policy is intended as a first step in ensuring that CCPDT certificants are not using practices that are potentially egregiously harmful to dogs, either physically or emotionally.

### Definition

For the purposes of this policy, an electrical stimulation collar is defined as a collar which is used in a mode that causes electrical energy to pass through any part of the dog's body.

### Policy

The following practices are never acceptable for use by a CCPDT certificant, for any reason:

- Helicoptering or hanging a dog (defined as lifting the dog off of the ground and either holding it off of the ground or swinging the dog off of the ground by the collar or leash for any period of time) or otherwise restricting the airway of the dog in any manner.
- Purposely lifting a dog by the collar, leash, or scruff such that two or fewer of the dog's legs remain on the ground.
- Applying a collar that delivers an electrical stimulation to a dog without first exhausting alternative intervention strategies, including, at a minimum, positive reinforcement of alternative behaviors, changes in antecedent stimuli, and either negative punishment, negative reinforcement, or extinction.
- Applying more than one (1) electrical stimulation collar to a dog at the same time.
- Applying an electrical stimulation collar to the genital region or abdomen area of the dog.
- Applying a toe or ear pinch (defined as applying a pinching pressure either with the hand or with a tool of any sort - including but not limited to a cord or wire - to a toe, ear or any other body part of the dog with the intention of causing the dog to perform or cease a behavior).
- Drowning (defined as submersion of the dog's head in water for any period of time).
- Applying a cattle prod to any part of the dog's body.

No trainer or behavior consultant who has been certified through a CCPDT certification program shall engage in any of the above-named acts for any reason. To report any such conduct by a trainer or behavior consultant whom you believe has been certified through one of the CCPDT's certification programs, please refer to the CCPDT's Certification Compliance and Disciplinary Procedures or contact our administrator at [administrator@ccpdt.org](mailto:administrator@ccpdt.org).

(Adopted 8/4/11)

## APPENDIX D: Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics

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.

Principal 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.

*Updated 4/30/23*



Certification Council for  
Professional Dog Trainers

## Attestation Statement

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**Please print. All fields are required. Incomplete forms will NOT be accepted.**

**Candidate's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Candidate's Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

The candidate named above is registering to sit for an examination offered by the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers. By signing this reference, you indicate that to the best of your knowledge and belief the candidate has successfully demonstrated a positive relationship with clients, including the safe handling of dogs, in the candidate's role as a dog trainer or canine behavior consultant.

**Reference Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reference Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reference Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **\* Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Check one:**     CCPDT Certificant    Certificate Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Veterinarian    License Number: \_\_\_\_\_

IAABC CDBC    Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ABS ACAAB    Board Certification Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ABS CAAB    Board Certification Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PPAB PCT-A    Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PPAB PCBC-A    Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*\* Attestation Statements are valid for one (1) year from the Signature Date provided the certification is still valid (if applicable).*