

CWA 1000:2025 – Dog Training Business Standard

Date: 10/1/2025

WD (Working Draft)

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To be published in the United States of America

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Foreword

The Canine Welfare Alliance (CWA) is an independent initiative established to promote the highest standards of professionalism, welfare, and safety within the dog training industry. The work of preparing this standard has been carried out through the review of documents or statements (e.g. code of ethics, standards of practice) across a wide range of dog training-related organizations (see Bibliography).

Any trade names or examples of practices included in this document are provided for the convenience of users and do not constitute an endorsement.

For a detailed explanation of the purpose, objectives, and principles of this standard, see the Introduction section.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the Canine Welfare Alliance.

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Introduction

The welfare of dogs entrusted to professional training services is of increasing concern to dog owners, industry professionals, and policymakers worldwide. Variations in training practices, facility operations, safety measures, and business ethics have led to inconsistent levels of care, and in some cases, risks to both animals and the public.

The purpose of this document is to establish a comprehensive framework of requirements and recommendations for dog training businesses of all sizes, from sole proprietors offering in-home lessons to large organizations operating dedicated facilities. This standard emphasizes transparency, safety, professional conduct, and canine welfare, while remaining flexible enough to accommodate a diversity of training approaches and business models.

The Canine Welfare Alliance developed this standard with the following objectives:

- to provide dog owners with confidence that businesses adhering to this standard operate with high levels of professionalism, safety, and animal welfare;
- to support dog training professionals in building and maintaining practices that are ethical, effective, and sustainable;
- to create a consistent baseline of business practices and welfare safeguards that can be independently assessed through third-party auditing;
- to provide a voluntary model for excellence that may complement or inform future regulatory or licensing initiatives.

This standard is not intended to prescribe a specific philosophy or method of training. It recognizes that a variety of approaches may be effective when used appropriately, provided that the welfare, safety, and humane treatment of dogs remain the primary concern.

The requirements and recommendations set out in this document are designed to be scalable, enabling implementation by both small and large training businesses.

The adoption of this standard is voluntary. However, businesses choosing to comply will be able to demonstrate their commitment to quality, transparency, and the welfare of the dogs in their care.

The Canine Welfare Alliance Standard is based on the following principles, which form the foundation for responsible and ethical dog training businesses:

- Dog Welfare First – The physical and psychological well-being of dogs must always take priority over convenience, tradition, or profit.
- Transparency – Clear, accurate, and honest communication with clients and stakeholders ensures trust and accountability.
- Professional Conduct – Businesses must act with integrity, respect, and fairness, avoiding misleading claims or unethical practices.



- Safety – The health and safety of both dogs and humans must be protected through appropriate facilities, equipment, and operational procedures.
- Competence and Education – Trainers and staff should maintain appropriate skills, knowledge, and qualifications, and pursue ongoing professional development.
- Evidence-Informed Practice – Training methods and business operations should reflect current knowledge, experience, and, where available, scientific evidence, while recognizing diverse effective approaches.
- Continuous Improvement – Businesses should monitor performance, address risks, and strive to enhance practices over time.
- Accountability – Compliance with the standard should be open to independent evaluation, with results shared in a way that builds consumer confidence.

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1 Scope

This document specifies requirements and provides guidance for the operation of pet dog training businesses of all sizes, including sole proprietors, partnerships, and organizations with multiple employees or facilities.

The standard applies to businesses offering training services in a variety of contexts, including but not limited to:

- in-home training;
- group classes in community or commercial settings;
- private lessons;
- facility-based training (day training, board-and-train);

The requirements cover areas including:

- business integrity and transparency;
- client communications and contractual arrangements;
- staff qualifications, training, and conduct;
- animal welfare and humane handling practices;
- safety, health, and emergency preparedness;
- facilities, equipment, and environmental conditions;
- recordkeeping and documentation;
- continuous improvement and accountability.

This standard does not prescribe or mandate specific training methods or philosophies. It recognizes that a range of training tools and approaches may be employed, provided that they are applied in a humane, safe, and professional manner, and that they prioritize the welfare of the dog.

This standard is intended to be used by:

- dog training businesses seeking to demonstrate their commitment to high standards;
- consumers seeking assurance about the quality and welfare standards of training providers;
- auditors, assessors, or oversight bodies conducting independent evaluations;
- policymakers and organizations considering frameworks for professional accountability in dog training.

The standard is not intended to replace legal or regulatory requirements. Where applicable laws and regulations exist, they take precedence.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

