Veterinary Google Review Response Framework

The goal of a review response is not to convince the reviewer that they are wrong. The goal is to communicate professionalism, empathy, and credibility to the future clients who may read the review.

USE THIS SIMPLE FRAMEWORK:

Acknowledge | Reassure | Clarify | Close

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1. Acknowledge the experience

Start by recognizing the concern or emotion without automatically agreeing with the client's version of events.

Examples:

- We're sorry this experience was frustrating.
- We're sorry to hear that your visit did not meet your expectations.
- We understand how stressful it can be when a pet is sick and unexpected costs arise.
- We're sorry this experience was upsetting.

Avoid:

- We're sorry you feel that way.
- Unfortunately, you misunderstood.
- That is not what happened.
- You are leaving out important details.

The goal is empathy without unnecessary admission of fault.

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2. Reassure readers about what the practice values

Choose one value that is relevant to the concern.

- Clear and respectful communication is important to our team.
- We take concerns about patient care seriously.
- We recognize the importance of helping clients understand treatment recommendations and associated costs.
- Our goal is to provide compassionate care while communicating clearly about available options.
- We understand the importance of discussing costs and expectations clearly.

Avoid listing every value the hospital has. One relevant statement is usually enough.

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3. Clarify only when it adds value

Not every review needs a correction.

- A future client could be materially misled.
- A practice policy needs brief explanation.
- Leaving the statement unaddressed could create a significant misunderstanding about care, pricing, safety, or practice operations.

Keep clarification neutral and brief.

Instead of:	You signed an estimate stating payment was due, and our staff explained this to you multiple times.
Try:	Our hospital does require payment at the time services are provided, and we work to communicate that policy clearly.

Explain the policy or process. Do not explain the client's behavior.

4. Close appropriately

The closing should depend on the situation.

If further conversation may be helpful:

- We would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you directly about your concerns.
- Please feel free to contact our practice manager so we can better understand your experience.

If the issue has already been addressed:

- We appreciate you taking the time to share your feedback.
- Thank you for sharing your concerns.

If the reviewer is aggressive, threatening, repetitive, or making legal accusations:

You do not have to invite additional contact. It is appropriate to simply end the response after acknowledging the concern and, if needed, briefly clarifying a relevant policy.

Before posting: 6-question check

1	Am I responding for the future client reading this, or am I arguing with the reviewer?
2	Did I acknowledge the concern without admitting something I do not know to be true?
3	Did I avoid criticizing or correcting the client personally?
4	Did I avoid sharing unnecessary details about the pet, treatment, account, payment history, or interaction?
5	Does every sentence add value?
6	Would I be comfortable seeing this response screenshotted by itself?

If a sentence does not add value, remove it.

What not to do

- Reconstructing the entire visit.
- Quoting the medical record or account notes.
- Calling the client rude, abusive, dishonest, or difficult.
- Debating the client point by point.
- Using phrases like "the truth is," "actually," or "what really happened."
- Publicly defending individual employees.
- Arguing about legal issues in the review response.
- Automatically saying "please call us" when the practice does not actually want additional contact.
- Using the same canned response for every negative review.
- Writing a response as long as the original complaint.

A good rule to remember

> The more emotional the review is, the calmer and shorter the response should be.

A five-paragraph negative review does not require a five-paragraph rebuttal. In many situations, two or three calm, professional sentences make the practice look more credible than a detailed defense.

Simple response template

> Thank you for sharing your concerns. We are sorry that [brief acknowledgment of the experience]. We recognize the importance of [relevant practice value, such as clear communication, compassionate care, or cost transparency]. [Optional one-sentence neutral clarification if truly needed.] [Optional invitation to contact the practice if further discussion is appropriate.]

When no response may be appropriate

- Obvious spam or fake reviews.
- Reviews unrelated to the practice.
- Situations involving active legal matters where the practice has been advised not to respond.
- Situations where responding is likely to significantly escalate the issue.

For legitimate negative reviews, however, a short and professional acknowledgment is usually appropriate.