



Vancouver Island Animal Training Association

Code of Ethics

As a Professional Member of the Vancouver Island Animal Training Association (hereinafter referred to as "VIATA"), I recognize that I am to abide by the following standards:

GENERAL STATEMENTS

Professional Members of the Vancouver Island Animal Training Association must make every effort to uphold and promote the highest standards of ethical practices both as described herein and, where this Code omits, act as good faith and good conscience should dictate.

Professional Members should consider and protect the interests of VIATA and its members.

TRAINING AND HANDLING METHODS

Professional Members should hold as their utmost priorities:

- the welfare of all animals with which they come in professional contact;
- the positive quality of the relationship between client and animal; and
- the employment and promotion of only humane techniques in the training and handling of animals.

Professional Members should actively discourage, reject and avoid the use of and teaching of:

- inhumane or unkind physical or psychological treatment of animals;
- physical or psychological punishment of animals.

Desired behaviours of animals are to be positively reinforced. Professional Members should, where appropriate, guide clients towards humane, instructive means of communication with their animals.

Undesirable behaviours are to be managed, redirected, ignored and/or further addressed by training incompatible behaviours.

Training and handling are to be free of intimidation, threats and pain. Animals that are experiencing physical and/or emotional distress during handling or restraint should be trained to a level of non-distress.

When representing information about animal handling, training and behavioural information as 'scientific', Professional Members should be able to refer to the sources of the information.

EDUCATION

VIATA encourages all members to join as learners in the evolving field of humane animal treatment, to learn about reward-based methods and share alternative solutions to aversive methods.

Professional Members should continue to educate themselves with regard to new methods, techniques and equipment and keep an open mind about new developments.

In particular, Professional Members are expected to educate themselves about animal communication in order to understand how an animal is feeling, because only with such understanding is it possible to assess whether or not a method or a tool falls within the definition of "humane".

BUSINESS PRACTICES

Professional Members are expected to treat clients, members of the public and other animal care providers with respect and compassion and serve to guide them rather than to judge them. Professional Members' public communications must be respectful in nature, whether sharing, supporting, assisting or educating one another, including but not limited to public meetings, internet communications, email group postings, internet blogs, etc.

Professional Members in general, and animal trainers in particular, should refrain from giving guarantees regarding the outcome of training, because there is no sure way to guarantee the cooperation and performance of all parties involved and because the knowledge of animal behaviour is incomplete. This should not be confused with a desire to guarantee client satisfaction with professional services.

Professional Members should, where appropriate, actively promote responsible, humane and ethical training, breeding, selling and stewardship of animals.

Professional Members should credit the work of others appropriately where publication or broadcast of such work is made, and refrain from infringement upon another professional's signature mark, copyright, business name or slogan.

Professional Members must use only the properly authorized logos provided by VIATA when marketing in print or electronic media.

Professional Members should represent VIATA in good faith, while refraining from public or private promotion or endorsement of any product or service in the name of VIATA.

Professional Members should not claim to be representing VIATA on a public forum without the express written consent of the Board of Directors of VIATA.

Professional Members should avoid knowingly soliciting other Professional Members' clients within the same trade, except where some arrangement of co-operation is made.

CONCLUSION

Professional members are required to abide by the Code of Ethics or they may forfeit their membership, as well as all related membership dues and/or fees, as provided for in VIATA's Constitution & Bylaws.

REVISIONS

Submissions for revision to the Code of Ethics shall be accepted at any time, and the Code will be reviewed and voted on by a General Meeting of members.

I have read the Code of Ethics of the Vancouver Island Animal Training Association and agree to abide by it.

Signature _____ **Date:** _____

Name (Please Print) _____