

Standards of Care, Safety and Sanitation

For Professional Cat Groomers, Bathers and Stylists

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Introduction

It should be the goal of every Cat Groomer, Bather and Stylist to treat all cats entrusted to their care with kindness, patience, respect and compassion, ensuring their safety, health and well-being.

Cat Groomers, Bathers and Stylists should exhibit professional behavior and maintain their businesses with honesty and integrity toward their clients at all times while encouraging professionalism, compassion and participation in continuing education within the industry.

These standards of care, safety and sanitation were sourced, discussed and unanimously agreed upon by The Professional Cat Groomers Association of America's Board of Directors.



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Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

“Cat/Feline” - Any cat accepted for grooming, bathing or styling.

“Cat Grooming,” “Cat Styling,” “Grooming,” or “Styling” – Clipping, trimming, styling, bathing or drying a cat for financial remuneration.

“Cat Groomer,” “Cat Stylist,” “Groomer,” “Stylist,” “Bather/Brusher” or “Bather/Dryer” – An individual who clips, trims, styles, bathes or dries a cat for financial remuneration and who adheres to these industry standards of care for safety and sanitation.

“Cat Grooming or Styling Facility,” “Grooming Salon” or “Facility” – A commercial establishment where a cat may be bathed, brushed, clipped, trimmed and/or styled. This may be a brick-and-mortar facility, a mobile unit, or home grooming facility.

“House Call” or “House Call Cat Groomer” – A person who clips, trims, styles, bathes or dries a pet within the confines of the customer’s private home, grounds, or business.

“Cat Student,” “Cat Trainee” or “Cat Apprentice” - A person who is engaged in learning and acquiring knowledge of cat grooming or styling, either under the direction and supervision of a Cat Groomer or Stylist or while enrolled in a grooming or styling school, academy or training program.

“School,” “Academy” or “Training Program” - An establishment or program that teaches cat grooming and/or styling in a course of instruction which incorporates these industry standards of care for safety and sanitation.

“Cage Dryer” or “Box Dryer” - A piece of equipment that is attached to, or near, a cage or enclosure for the purpose of drying or aiding in the drying of a cat contained in a cage or enclosure, and which is capable of functioning without a person manually holding a dryer.

“Feline,” and “Cat” are used interchangeably throughout this document.

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“Crate” or “Cage” – A safe and humane containment method of keeping and/or housing cats in the facility.

“Continuing Education” – Any program or course of study intended to enhance knowledge of subjects relevant to one’s profession.

“Cat Pet First Aid” – The recognition of injury or illness and protocol for ensuring the cat receives appropriate care.

“Feline Friendly ” – Any product, chemical, tool or piece of equipment, which is safe for use around, cats. Cat Specific Shampoos and other Grooming Products used directly on the cat are recommended.

“Feline Restraint” – Any cat friendly harness used or attached to a grooming arm, tub, or other facility fixture or equipment to hold the cat safely and under control. Figure 8 harnesses are the preferred Restraint only if a Restraint is absolutely necessary.

“Flea and Topical Flea Medication” – Any product used for the removal of fleas, ticks and lice must be Cat Specific. Using any other product can cause neurological disorders and or death.



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Facility Standards

Feline Housing Standards

All cats entrusted to the care of a Cat Groomer, Bather or Stylist must be treated humanely and compassionately to include:

1. All feline housing provided by the facility must be in good repair, safe, secure, stable, durable, well protected, comfortable and in an escape controlled environment.
2. Felines should be able to sit, stand and turn around comfortably in the provided crate or enclosure.
3. Crates
 - a. Crates must be adequately ventilated for the cat's health, safety and comfort. It is preferred to keep the cat in his own carrier until the groomer has him on the table or in the tub.
 - b. Crates and enclosures must be of material that is easy to clean.
 - c. Crates should be arranged so personnel can safely see and access all areas of the crates.
 - d. A separate room to house cats is preferred versus having them in the general holding area along with dogs. If a separate room is impossible, cover the front of the cats' cage with a towel to limit his exposure to other animals including other cats.
 - e. Cage bar spacing is important to consider especially for smaller cats, as they can and will try turning their heads to squeeze through small openings.
 - f. All windows need to be enforced to eliminate accidental cat escapes.

4. No more than one cat may be housed per crate or enclosure.
5. Felines confined for more than three hours must be offered fresh water.
6. Felines confined for more than three hours must be offered the use of a clean litter box.



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Cat Facility Standards

Every facility should provide a safe and healthy working environment for all personnel and the cats left in their care.

Cat Facility Bathing Areas

1. All bathing areas should be in good repair and safe operating condition.
2. Products and/or chemicals used in the process of grooming and styling must comply with all applicable local, state and federal guidelines, rules and regulations and be feline friendly.
3. Tubs for the bathing of cats should have a cushioned non-slip bottom surface.
4. Water temperature should be set at an appropriate level for the feline and care must be taken to prevent discomfort or injury from excessively hot or cold water.
5. There should be a non-slip surface on the floor by each tub for groomers, bathers and stylists.

Cat Facility Grooming Areas

1. Grooming and drying tables should be safe, sturdy and in good operating condition.
2. Table tops for cats should be equipped with a non-slip surface that is easy to clean.
3. Grooming arms, by which the cat is restrained, should be cat friendly equipped with a fast/emergency release mechanism and secure.
4. Grooming loops or other restraint designed to encompass the cat's neck are prohibited.

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5. All other products, tools and equipment used in the performance of the work must be maintained in good working condition and used in a safe, professional manner.
6. Feline restraints must be safe and humane and follow current standards of practice for all felines.
7. The facility should be cleaned as necessary for cat and human health.
8. Crates, enclosures, tubs and tables will be cleaned between each cat.

Facility Dryers

1. All dryers should be appropriately maintained.
2. Cage or Box Dryers must be used in a safe, and humane manner. When cage drying:
 - a. The cat must be monitored at least every 15 minutes to insure its safety and comfort. Each cat confined in a cage or dryer needs to be monitored throughout the entire drying process. Heating level should be set for the comfort of the cat.
 - b. Only one cat may be housed per drying cage compartment.
 - c. Table top drying is preferred to cage drying with low velocity air movement and a heat level comfort and safe for the cat.
 - c. The enclosure should accommodate the cat, allowing it to sit, stand and turn around comfortably.

General Facility Standards

1. A first aid kit for the benefit of cats and all personnel, including eye wash products and equipment, must be on site.
2. The facility should be ventilated to provide for good air quality.

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3. Air temperature should provide for the safety, health and comfort of all personnel and all cats.
4. When cats are present, at least one person familiar with pet first aid must be in the facility.
5. Emergency action protocols should be in place to assure all cats within the facility receive proper care should an emergency situation arise.
6. Each facility must have the name and contact information of the closest emergency veterinarian readily available.
7. Feline friendly cleaning products and equipment shall be made readily available to all personnel.
8. The Facility must carry general and professional liability insurance.
9. The Facility must be in compliance with all local, state, and federal laws.
10. The Facility should keep and maintain records of all clients and their respective cats. Such records should include the name, address and phone numbers of the owner, the services provided, and the date such services were provided.
11. Records for each cat should be maintained for a minimum period of one year from the date of service.
12. Cat injury incident reports must be created in the event of any incident that occurs and kept on file for a minimum of three years.
13. Accurate safety and health records for all personnel must be maintained in accordance with local, state, and federal requirements.

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Feline Management, Handling and Safety Standards

General Professional Standards

1. All cats must be treated and handled safely, humanely and compassionately at all times.
2. No cat should be left unsupervised while on the grooming table or in the bathing tub.
3. All cats will be closely and frequently monitored during the drying process.
4. Cat Groomers, Bathers and Stylists must be knowledgeable in the safe and healthy handling of cats. Students, trainees or apprentices working in a facility must be under the supervision of a Cat Groomer or Cat Stylist.
5. When brushing, combing, bathing, topically conditioning skin and coat, grooming or styling the cat, all products, tools and equipment must be provided for the safety and health of the cat.

Work Standards

1. All Cat Groomers, Bathers & Stylists and must be in compliance with accepted industry standards.
2. Students, trainees or apprentices working in a facility must be under the supervision of a Groomer, but preferably a PCGAA educated cat groomer.
3. All personnel must conduct themselves in a manner that promotes the safe, humane and compassionate handling and management of cats.
4. Products, tools and equipment used in performance of the work must be cat-friendly and humane.

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5. The Cat Care Facility and their staff must present a clean, neat appearance.
6. Workstations must be cleaned between each pet.
7. All Cat Groomers, Bathers and Stylists should be knowledgeable in safe handling and management of cats to include:
 - a. Accepting cats from and returning them to owners.
 - b. Safe and humane approach and retrieval techniques.
 - c. Safe and humane handling techniques.
 - d. Safe and humane use of cat restraints.
 - e. No restraint shall encompass the cats' neck.
 - e. Safe and humane management of behavioral issues

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As a founding association of the Professional Pet Groomers and Stylists Alliance we encourage all Pet Groomers to apply species-specific standards.

On behalf of our members and all interested cat groomers, the PCGAA – Professional Cat Groomers Association of America has taken additional steps to fine-tune The Standards of Care, Safety and Sanitations “living” document to reflect the care of felines.

These standards are subject to periodic review and revision as warranted by advances in technology, scientific data and industry practice.

For more cat specific information and how you can apply our standards to your facility, please visit our website www.professionalcatgroomers.com



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