



FOR INTERNAL STAFF REFERENCE ONLY

AAHA Sample Declawing Staff Training Guide

Ensure your entire staff is on the same page about how you handle declawing inquiries. Secret shopping gives declaw opponents the “evidence” they need to post on social media. It is crucial that all staff members, from receptionist to veterinary technician to veterinarians are trained on how to respond to any inquiries on declawing to ensure consistent messaging.

- ✓ Ensure the entire staff knows what the hospital’s policy is on declawing and can refer callers to it if necessary. Hospital should have a written policy or position statement on declawing.
- ✓ Ensure the entire staff is adequately trained to talk about cat behavior and behavior modification techniques that help prevent cat scratching behaviors. Staff should also have cat behavior information on the hospital website or handouts available to refer cat owners to when necessary.
- ✓ If hospital offers declaw procedures, staff should always first discuss behavior modification alternatives to declawing. The declaw procedure should only be offered after consultation with the client about possible behavioral solutions to declawing.
- ✓ If hospital offers declaw procedures, entire hospital staff should be educated about what the procedure entails and should be prepared to talk about what is done to control pain for the patient.
- ✓ Hospital staff should not advertise or offer discounts or “deals” on declaw procedures, either on the phone or in person with a client. An advertisement promoting declawing is an obvious red flag and should be avoided if a hospital wants to prevent an activist attack.
- ✓ Hospital staff should be prepared for activists to call their hospital or possibly even to film undercover. Every interaction with every client should always be polite and professional.
- ✓ Hospital staff must be cautious not to talk disrespectfully about anti-declaw proponents. Declaw opponents should not be depicted as “too extreme” or “nuts” – this type of language will ignite the situation further and create deeper divisions.
- ✓ Anti-declaw proponents should always be referred to as “people who oppose declawing.”
- ✓ Anti-declaw proponents should always be treated with the same respect that clients are.