

NATIONAL PET TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

Policies & Procedures Manual

Raising standards in pet transport

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This manual governs NPTA certification standards, conduct expectations, complaints and appeals, assessment procedures, and certification status.

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How to Use This Manual

This manual is part of the NPTA certification program and should be read together with the applicable NPTA Study Guide and candidate exam instructions. The Study Guide provides learning material; this manual establishes NPTA standards, procedures, and conduct expectations.

NPTA certification is voluntary and is not a government license, legal opinion, or substitute for compliance with federal, state, local, carrier, or international requirements.

1. Governance & Fairness

1.1 Organization and Purpose

The National Pet Transport Association (NPTA) is an independent standards and certification body dedicated to raising standards in pet transport. NPTA develops voluntary standards, learning materials, and certification for pet transporters who choose to demonstrate their knowledge and commitment to safe, humane, and professional transport.

1.2 Program Director Responsibilities

The Program Director is responsible for:

- Setting, reviewing, and updating NPTA standards, study materials, and examinations.
- Granting, denying, suspending, reinstating, and revoking NPTA certification according to published criteria.
- Maintaining reasonable consistency and impartiality in certification decisions.
- Maintaining appropriate certification, assessment, complaint, and program records.

1.3 External Advisors

NPTA may consult external subject-matter experts, including veterinarians, rescue professionals, regulatory resources, and experienced transporters, when reviewing standards, animal-welfare questions, or complex cases. Unless specifically delegated under the conflict-of-interest process, advisors are consultative and do not independently grant or revoke NPTA certification.

1.4 Fairness and Independence

NPTA is committed to:

- Treating applicants and certified transporters fairly and consistently.
- Publishing clear eligibility criteria, assessment methods, and conduct expectations.
- Providing a reasonable process for complaints and appeals.

- Avoiding certification decisions based on personal relationships, favoritism, or unrelated commercial interests.

1.5 Responsibility for Legal Compliance

Participation in NPTA is voluntary. Each transporter remains individually responsible for determining and complying with all laws, regulations, permits, registrations, carrier rules, and animal-health requirements that apply to the transporter's activities and routes.

2. Complaints & Appeals Policy

2.1 Purpose

This policy explains how complaints and appeals may be submitted to NPTA and how NPTA will review and respond to them. Its purpose is to support fair, consistent, and transparent certification decisions.

2.2 Scope

This policy applies to:

- Applicants and candidates for NPTA certification.
- NPTA Certified Transporters.
- Other parties directly affected by an NPTA certification decision or by conduct of an NPTA Certified Transporter that is relevant to the certification.

2.3 Definitions

Complaint: A concern regarding NPTA's certification process or conduct by an NPTA Certified Transporter that may violate NPTA standards or the Code of Conduct.

Appeal: A request for review of a specific NPTA certification decision, such as denial, suspension, revocation, or an assessment-related decision, based on an alleged error, procedural problem, or unfairness.

2.4 Submission Requirements

Complaints and appeals must be submitted in writing and should include:

- The submitter's full name and contact information.
- Whether the submission is a complaint or an appeal.
- A clear description of the issue, including relevant dates and persons involved.
- Supporting records, documents, screenshots, or other evidence when available.

Complaints and appeals should normally be submitted within 30 days of the event or decision. NPTA may consider a later submission when circumstances reasonably justify the delay.

2.5 Acknowledgment and Response

- NPTA will normally acknowledge receipt within 5-7 business days.
- NPTA will aim to provide a written decision within 30 days. If additional time is reasonably required, NPTA will provide an update where practical.

2.6 Review Process

NPTA may:

- Review the information submitted and relevant NPTA records, policies, and standards.

- Request additional information from involved parties.
- Seek consultative input from an appropriate subject-matter expert for serious or complex matters.

2.7 Decisions and Outcomes

Following review, NPTA may uphold, modify, or overturn the original decision; issue a warning or corrective condition; allow a retake; suspend or revoke certification; or determine that no NPTA action is warranted.

NPTA will communicate the outcome and key reasons in writing to the complainant or appellant, subject to reasonable privacy limitations.

2.8 Conflicts of Interest

If the Program Director has a close personal, financial, or other material conflict concerning a matter under review, NPTA will disclose the conflict where appropriate and seek independent input or delegate the review where practical.

2.9 Finality

A decision issued after the appeal process is normally final. NPTA may reopen a matter if new, material evidence becomes available that could not reasonably have been provided earlier.

3. Code of Conduct for NPTA Certified Transporters

NPTA Certified Transporters agree to follow this Code as a condition of initial certification and continued recognition.

3.1 Animal Welfare and Safety

- Prioritize animal safety and welfare during planning, loading, transport, transfer, and delivery.
- Use vehicles, primary enclosures, restraints, and equipment that are secure, clean, and suitable for the animal and transport method.
- Observe animals at appropriate intervals and respond promptly to signs of distress, illness, injury, overheating, excessive cooling, or other welfare concerns.
- Seek appropriate veterinary care when an animal's condition reasonably requires it.

3.2 Legal and Regulatory Compliance

- Comply with applicable federal, state, local, carrier, and international requirements.
- Maintain required licenses, registrations, permits, and insurance applicable to their operations and accurately represent their regulatory status.
- Follow applicable requirements for animal documentation, health certificates, vaccination records, import/export documentation, and transport records.
- Maintain current USDA APHIS registration when required for the transporter's regulated activities.

3.3 Professional Conduct and Integrity

- Communicate honestly and clearly regarding services, pricing, timelines, limitations, and material risks.
- Represent experience, qualifications, and NPTA certification status truthfully.
- Treat clients, colleagues, partners, and the public professionally and without discrimination or harassment.
- Avoid false or misleading statements about competitors or other transporters.

3.4 Transparency With Clients

- Provide clear information about the transport plan, approximate timing, expected route or transfer arrangements, and communication methods.
- Promptly communicate significant delays, incidents, changes, or concerns affecting the animal or transport arrangement.
- Provide reasonable updates during longer transports without compromising safe driving or animal care.

3.5 Care Standards, Sanitation, and Biosecurity

- Maintain vehicles and equipment in a clean, sanitary, and safe condition.
- Use appropriate cleaning and disinfection practices between transports, particularly when animals originate from multiple sources.
- Provide appropriate ventilation, temperature management, rest, food, and water consistent with the animal's needs and applicable requirements.
- Take reasonable steps to reduce cross-contamination and disease transmission.

3.6 Confidentiality and Data Protection

- Respect client privacy and use personal and animal information only for legitimate transport and business purposes.
- Take reasonable steps to protect confidential information from unauthorized access, loss, or misuse.

3.7 Cooperation With NPTA

- Provide truthful and complete information in applications, renewals, complaints, appeals, and certification reviews.
- Cooperate reasonably with NPTA when a matter directly concerns certification status or compliance with NPTA standards.
- Promptly notify NPTA of loss of a required regulatory registration or license, or significant regulatory action that materially relates to animal transport.

3.8 Violations and Consequences

- Depending on severity, evidence, prior history, and risk to animals or the public, NPTA may use education or informal counseling, a written warning, corrective conditions or probation, suspension, or revocation.
- Certification action will follow the applicable NPTA complaint and appeal procedures.

4. Certification Standards & Procedures

4.1 Purpose

This section establishes the standards, eligibility requirements, and procedures for obtaining and maintaining NPTA certification.

4.2 Certification Overview

NPTA certification recognizes individual transporters who demonstrate:

- Knowledge of safe and humane pet transport practices.
- Understanding of animal-welfare, health, sanitation, and emergency considerations relevant to transport.
- Knowledge appropriate to the certification track selected (Ground, Air, or Air + Ground).

- Commitment to professional conduct and the NPTA Code of Conduct.

NPTA certification is voluntary and does not replace any government license, registration, permit, inspection, or carrier approval.

4.3 Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Complete the NPTA application truthfully and in full.
- Agree to the NPTA Code of Conduct and certification policies.
- Provide a current USDA APHIS registration number for verification when required by the NPTA certification program.
- Pay the applicable certification fee.

NPTA may request reasonable documentation needed to verify eligibility or certification information.

4.4 Competency Areas

- Animal welfare and safe handling during transport.
- Vehicle, crate, enclosure, restraint, and equipment suitability.
- Animal behavior, stress indicators, and welfare monitoring.
- Route planning, scheduling, transfer planning, and contingencies.
- Hygiene, sanitation, biosecurity, and disease-risk reduction.
- Applicable regulatory and carrier-rule basics.
- Professional communication, documentation, and client management.
- Emergency preparedness and response.

4.5 Certification Process

1. Application. The applicant submits the NPTA application and applicable fee. NPTA reviews the application for completeness and eligibility.

2. Study and Preparation. The applicant receives or accesses the applicable NPTA Study Guide, this Policies & Procedures Manual, the Code of Conduct, and candidate exam instructions. These materials constitute the core written preparation package for certification.

3. Assessment. The applicant completes the required NPTA examination for the selected certification track. The exam format and passing standard are provided before testing.

4. Decision. NPTA reviews eligibility and assessment results. Certification is granted or denied according to the published program requirements.

5. Issuance. Successful candidates receive an NPTA certificate and unique certification identifier. Certification status may be made available through an NPTA verification method or registry.

4.6 Certification Period and Renewal

NPTA certification is valid for two (2) years from the date of issue unless suspended, revoked, or otherwise ended under NPTA policy.

Renewal requirements may include:

- Confirmation of continued adherence to the Code of Conduct.
- Verification of required registration or eligibility information.
- Completion of any required update or refresher assessment announced for the renewal cycle.

- Payment of the published renewal fee.

A certification not renewed by its expiration date may be shown as Expired.

4.7 Suspension, Revocation, and Reinstatement

Certification may be suspended or revoked for:

- Serious or repeated violations of the NPTA Code of Conduct.
- Materially false or misleading information provided to NPTA.
- Confirmed exam misconduct.
- Conduct materially compromising animal welfare, public trust, or the integrity of NPTA certification.
- Loss of an eligibility requirement when that requirement is necessary for continued certification.

Certification actions are subject to the Complaints & Appeals Policy. NPTA may establish reasonable conditions for reinstatement when appropriate.

4.8 Changes to Standards

- Material changes will be documented with a version number and effective date.
- NPTA will update affected study materials and assessments.
- Reasonable notice will be provided to applicants and certified transporters when a change materially affects certification requirements.

5. Exam & Assessment Procedures

5.1 Purpose

This section describes how NPTA develops, administers, scores, and protects certification assessments.

5.2 Assessment Types

NPTA currently uses written online knowledge examinations and may include scenario-based questions. Additional assessment methods may be introduced in future versions of the program after notice to candidates.

5.3 Exam Development

- Exam content is linked to the applicable NPTA competency areas, Study Guide, standards, and candidate materials.
- Questions are reviewed for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the certification track.
- NPTA may consult subject-matter experts when developing or reviewing assessment content.
- The Program Director approves final exam content and passing standards.

5.4 Exam Administration

NPTA examinations are delivered through the designated online assessment platform unless NPTA publishes another method.

Candidates must:

- Complete the exam in a single testing session unless the platform or NPTA instructions expressly provide otherwise.
- Complete the exam without unauthorized assistance.
- Not copy, photograph, screenshot, reproduce, distribute, or disclose exam questions or answer content.

- Follow identity, security, timing, and testing instructions provided by NPTA or the assessment platform.

5.5 Passing Scores and Results

The passing score for each certification exam will be published in the applicable candidate materials before testing. Candidates receive a pass/fail result and may receive additional score information or general feedback when provided by the assessment platform.

5.6 Retakes

A candidate who does not pass may retake the examination after a minimum waiting period of 24 hours. Any retake fee, attempt limit, or additional preparation requirement will be disclosed in the current candidate instructions before the retake.

5.7 Exam Integrity and Misconduct

Exam misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Cheating, copying, or receiving unauthorized assistance.
- Sharing exam content, screenshots, question lists, or answers.
- Impersonating another candidate or allowing another person to test in the candidate's place.
- Attempting to defeat or bypass assessment security controls.

NPTA may invalidate an assessment result and may deny, suspend, or revoke certification when exam misconduct is supported by credible evidence. The candidate may use the applicable appeal process.

5.8 Recordkeeping

NPTA will maintain reasonable records of applications, exam attempts, scores, certification decisions, and material exam-version changes consistent with NPTA privacy and record-retention practices.

5.9 Changes to Exam Procedures

NPTA may update exam formats, procedures, or passing standards as needed. Material changes will be documented and reflected in candidate materials, with reasonable notice where practical.

6. Registry of Certified Transporters

6.1 Purpose

NPTA maintains a verification method or registry to confirm certification status and support public confidence in the program.

6.2 Registry Information

The public verification record may include:

- Certified transporter's name.
- Unique NPTA certification ID.
- Certification track or designation.
- Issue and expiration dates.
- Current status, such as Active, Expired, Suspended, or Revoked.

6.3 Public Verification

Certification status may be verified through the current NPTA-published verification page or designated verification system using the transporter's NPTA certification ID.

6.4 Privacy

NPTA will limit public registry information to information reasonably necessary to verify certification. Personal contact information will not be published solely for certification verification unless the transporter has separately authorized publication.

6.5 Status Updates

NPTA will update certification status when certifications are issued, renewed, expired, suspended, revoked, or reinstated.

7. Document Control & References

7.1 Document Control

The Program Director maintains the official version of this manual. Superseded versions should be retained for program records. Material changes should identify the new version number and effective date.

7.2 Regulatory References

NPTA standards are informed by applicable regulatory and industry resources. Candidates remain responsible for checking current requirements because laws, regulations, carrier rules, and animal-health requirements may change.

- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS) - Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations.
- USDA APHIS - Transporting Animals in Commerce: Resources & Guidance.
- Electronic Code of Federal Regulations (eCFR), Title 9, Chapter I, Subchapter A, including transporter registration and applicable transportation standards.
- Applicable destination-state animal health requirements and carrier-specific animal transport rules.

7.3 Relationship to Study Materials

If a material conflict is identified between this manual and an NPTA Study Guide or candidate instruction sheet, NPTA should correct the materials promptly and notify affected candidates when appropriate. For NPTA program administration, the most recently effective NPTA policy controls. Government laws and regulations always control over NPTA materials.

End of Manual - NPTA Policies & Procedures Manual, Version 1.0