

**FVE 10 PRINCIPLES OF VETERINARY CERTIFICATION**

The veterinary certificate, being a formal declaration of a veterinarian¹, plays an important role in the prevention and control of animal health and welfare issues and related public health issues. Veterinary certificates must be clear and reliable. For this reason the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) developed a position paper outlining the main principles of veterinary certification. The paper was published in 1998 (FVE/98/053). Now, more than 15 years later, the time had come to revise and to update the original document. The FVE Veterinary Statutory Body Working Group proposed the following 10 principles of veterinary certification.

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Disclaimer

These 10 principles represent best practice in veterinary certification

1. Veterinarians should certify only those matters, which are within their own knowledge, can be ascertained or attested either personally or by another veterinarian, who has personal knowledge of the matters in question and is authorised to provide the certificate.
2. Veterinarians should not issue a certificate which might raise questions of a possible conflict of interest.
3. Veterinarians must not allow commercial, financial or other pressures to compromise their impartiality.
4. Certificates should be written in simple terms which are easy to understand.
5. Certificates should not use words or phrases, which are capable of more than one interpretation.
6. Certificates should be:
 - a. Produced on one sheet of paper or, where more than one page is required, in such a form that any two or more pages are part of an integrated whole and indivisible.
 - b. Given a unique number, and a record should be retained by the issuing person or by the Institution or Company they work for.
7. Veterinarians should only sign certificates written in a language they understand.
8. Certificates should clearly identify the subjects of certification.
9. Veterinarians should only sign original certificates. Where there is a legal or official requirement for a copy of the certificate (marked as such) it can be provided.
10. When signing a certificate, veterinarians should ensure that:
 - a. Their signature is legible;
 - b. The certificate bears not only the signature but also, in clear lettering, their name, qualifications and address and (where appropriate) their official or practice stamp;
 - c. The certificate bears the date on which the certificate was signed and issued and (where appropriate) the time for which the certificate will remain valid;
 - d. No part of the certificate is left blank so that it could subsequently be completed by some person other than the veterinarian;
 - e. The certificate contains no deletions or alterations, other than those initialled and stamped by the certifying veterinarian.

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¹ Defined by FVE as "a professional with a comprehensive scientific education, licensed by the legal authority, to carry out, in an independent, ethical and personally responsible capacity, all aspects of veterinary medicine, in the interest of the health and welfare of animals, the interest of the client and of the society".