

Need a hair cut? Hire a licensed hair cutter. Need a dog trainer? Good luck.

DOG TRAINER LONG ISLAND CERTIFICATION | JULY 22, 2012 | BY: JOHN VISCONTI



State Mandated Requirements to professionally cut this child's hair:

Graduation from an accredited cosmetology program;

Licensure through standard written test; hands on practical exam; application to a state board.

Continuing education (CEU's) to renew license

State Mandated Requirements to professionally train this dog:

Joke: What do you call a person who goes to Kinko's to purchase their own dog training business cards but can't tell the difference between a dog and a toaster oven?

Punch line: A dog trainer.

Bad joke; particularly for the unsuspecting dog-owning public who is simply looking to do the right thing by hiring a qualified trainer to help them train their dog.

In order to obtain a cosmetology license in barbering, cosmetology, esthetics, nail technology, or waxing, students must complete the requirements listed below:

Cosmetologist (hairstylist): 1,000 hours

Esthetician: 600 hours

Nail Specialist: 250 hours

Additionally, the student must pass board certified exams, both written and practical, and earn CEU's to renew their license.

In order to obtain a dog training license...oh, wait...there's no such thing. Not in NY; not anywhere in the US, even in the face of these facts:

- The CDC reports that 350,000 bites per year are treated at emergency rooms;
- By the age of 12, 50% of children will have been bitten by a dog;
- The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality published a study in 2010 showing that the number of Americans hospitalized for dog bites has almost doubled over the last 15 years;
- The ASPCA estimates that approximately 5 million to 7 million companion animals enter animal shelters nationwide every year, and approximately 3 million to 4 million are euthanized.

There are several reasons for the above statistics (incompetence of breeders; negligence of owners, to name two) but given the sheer volumes cited above, coupled with the lack of mandated standards for the field of dog training, one could easily and correctly assume that incompetent and [high risk](#), dog trainers are also responsible.

It's time for some consumer protection.

Requiring certification/licensure would not eliminate incompetence from the field of dog training, just as it hasn't completely eliminated incompetence in other licensed fields. But clearly, doing so would go a long way toward professionalizing the field and more importantly, providing consumer protection.

Dog trainers should be expected to pass a state mandated licensure test covering animal behavior; learning theory; teaching skills; ethology; canine development; training equipment; and animal husbandry.

At minimum, such a requirement would clear the field of amateur trainers who are causing untold amounts of damage.

Dog training is not about "common sense" nor is it about some unspecified intuitive "feel" for animals. It's not about being a "dog person" or having years of experience doing things incorrectly.

When I fly on a plane, I prefer to have a pilot who has passed all required tests prior to lift off.

When I need legal advice, I prefer to know my attorney has passed the BAR exam.

My doctor has several impressive looking licenses and certificates on her office wall; this makes me happy.

And yes, when I get my hair cut, it's nice to know my haircutter has a license.

No less should be required of a [dog trainer](#) entering the homes of people to help train a family member, their dog.

Given how much is at stake, it boggles the mind that there is no regulation in the field.

Sadly, those who are paying for this are dogs and their families.

