

# VETERINARY BEHAVIOR CONSULTANTS

Patrick Melese D.V.M., M.A., DACVB  
Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Behaviorists  
Forensic/Expert Witness Services

## Fees for Expert witness research and testimony

I am glad to have my assistant or myself discuss whatever an attorney needs to know prior to your designating me as long as the information does not preclude me from serving the opposing counsel should you decide not to retain me. There are few qualified Veterinary Behaviorists in the U.S. (less than 80 in practice in North America and most do not accept legal cases and few are well experienced in legal work) and, in order to avoid unnecessarily disqualifying myself, I request to be formally retained before discussing such barring information. Although serving as an expert witness is only a small part of my behavior practice, I have served on a fair number of cases (usually several per year on average) over the last >30 years and have been retained about equally by both plaintiff and defense attorneys as well as for animal control administrative impounds and abatement proceedings. I have given a number of depositions and also appeared in Superior and Federal courts but most cases tend to settle even before I am deposed.

Expenses start when details of the case are discussed. They include beginning a case file, making alternative professional arrangements (i.e., turning away other opportunities so that I have time for your case) and so forth. You are also utilizing my name, experience and credentials. This credibility may well assist you in settling cases before trial as it has for others in the past. Additionally, formally retaining me as an expert witness prevents the opposing side from retaining me. For these reasons, the initial designation fee (\$1,150 portion) is **non-refundable**. We will gladly e-mail you a detailed fee schedule for this work. Professional hours spent on the case will be charged against the retainer until it is used up then the retainer must be replenished prior to further work. Additional professional services and expenses (if any) will be billed separately.

Charges apply “portal to portal.” Expenses such as trips out of town and associated expenditures are additional and have minimum charges to allow for scheduling out of the clinics/office as needed. Please note that when attorneys reserve time for case-related events during clinic hours, we turn away or reschedule paying clients so we must be paid for reserved time unless practice cancellation policies are followed (at least 48 business hours) even though the case may be settled “at the last moment.” **To be designated/retained as an expert**, I typically **request a letter** stating this fact as well as a **designation/retainer check** for the agreed upon amount (please request tax ID number/W9 from me directly for your accountant) and that all parties agree to rate sheet/contract terms. Exceptions to this (e.g., if you clearly have an already known need for a number of hours of teleconferences, documents available to review, preparing to assess an animal, etc. requiring larger retainer) need to be discussed with Dr. Melese prior to beginning services in this capacity. In general, work will not be started prior to receiving at least the designation check and I will not consider myself “retained” and should not be designated as an expert on your case until that point without prior written arrangement and acknowledgment of agreeing with proposed fee structure. Please let us know if you would like to designate and/or retain me for your case and if you would like us to send our more detailed fee schedule.

Sincerely,



Patrick Melese D.V.M., M.A., DACVB  
Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Behaviorists  
Veterinary Behavior Consultants

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*Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Behaviorists*

## **Biography/ C.V.**

Dr. Melese is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists (became board-certified in 2000) and director of VETERINARY BEHAVIOR CONSULTANTS, a veterinary practice dedicated to preventing and solving behavior problems in animals since 1988. Until 2003 Dr. Melese was on the faculty of the University of California School of Veterinary Medicine where he started and ran a satellite animal behavior service in the North County San Diego area. He was also concurrently appointed as a lecturer in Animal Behavior at U.C. Davis and in that capacity supervised and mentored residents in Clinical Behavior, helped teach veterinary students and perform clinical research. Since then, Dr. Melese has reactivated his San Diego based private behavioral specialty practice where he continues to see clients and their pets with behavior problems, teaches senior veterinary students from all over the US and international schools rotating through his specialty service and provides local and national continuing education for veterinarians and others. Dog aggression cases represent a majority of Dr. Melese's animal behavior specialty caseload but he sees cats, horses and other species for most any behavior problem.

Dr. Melese's training includes a B.S. and a Master's degree from the Department of Zoology at the University of California, Davis in 1980 where his subjects were Animal Behavior and Neuroscience. Afterwards, Dr. Melese worked with Professor Benjamin Hart, D.V.M., PhD. doing behavioral research and publishing several papers in physiological psychology at the U.C. Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. He continued to work with Dr. Hart through veterinary school and assisted with the Veterinary Teaching Hospital Behavior Service until graduating in 1986.

Since receiving his Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.) from U.C. Davis in 1986, Dr. Melese has been active in the field of Clinical Animal Behavior. He has kept abreast of recent advances in the behavior literature, attended and presented numerous seminars and consulted with colleagues in the field throughout the world. He has worked as a consultant to practitioners, clients, breeders and institutions with specific behavioral problems. Dr. Melese also regularly serves as an expert witness in animal behavior (including injuries from dogs or other animals) cases in Superior Court cases (federal court also) as well as evaluating allegedly aggressive pets at shelters and impounded by Animal Control Departments. His presentations and lectures have included veterinary students, Veterinary Medical Association meetings, dog and cat clubs, equine groups, professional dog training meetings, and Animal Health Technology programs. Dr. Melese has also been featured speaker at local (San Diego Humane Society and S.P.C.A., Escondido Humane Society) and national (American Humane Association) humane organizations. Dr. Melese has been active in studies to test new treatments for animal behavior problems and has been selected by several of the major pharmaceutical companies to be a Southwestern investigation location for clinical trials to test new behavioral medications and products.

Over the years, Dr. Melese has been featured on numerous television news segments and special reports on the local, regional and national stations (Networks, PBS Television, etc.) in the San Diego Union/Tribune, several regional newspapers in California and other states and on several radio talk shows. He has even been featured on international programs shown in Japan and Korea.

Dr. Melese is an active and longstanding member of the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior, and the Animal Behavior Society where he has given presentations at both of their national meetings. He is also a member of the San Diego County Veterinary Medical Association, California Veterinary Medical Association and the American Veterinary Medical Association (has presented at several AVMA national meetings). Dr. Melese founded Veterinary Behavior Consultants in 1988, a veterinary referral and consulting practice limited to animal behavior problems and has also been a respected general practice veterinarian (medicine and surgery) for many years. Dr. Melese owned and operated the Tierrasanta Veterinary Hospital in San Diego for a number of years until it was sold. Dr. Melese remains one of just a handful of board-certified Veterinary Behaviorist in private specialty practices south of UC Davis and lives in San Diego (and part time in Port Townsend, Washington) with his family sharing his life with dogs, cats & horses.

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