

Therapy Dog Certification Test

**REMEMBER, YOU AND YOUR DOG ARE BEING EVALUATED AS
A BONDED, WORKING TEAM.**

This test will be conducted by a Dogs With A Purpose certified evaluator. Not only will you be tested during exercises but the evaluator will be observing you from the moment you enter the room until the moment you exit the room.

The test will be held in a group setting with a maximum of 5 dog and handler teams. There should be no interaction between dogs while on the premises of the testing site. This includes the parking lot, waiting room, and testing area. If at anytime before or during the testing a dog shows any aggression, barking, lunging towards people or other dogs, if a dog marks or eliminates inside the building or shows poor behavior you will be asked to leave.

All dogs must perform each exercise with a satisfactory grade. Each dog will get one retry per exercise if needed to try to redeem themselves.

Retired Racing Greyhounds are not required to sit, dogs with physical limitations are allowed to test. All dogs must have passed the AKC Canine Good Citizens test and the Dogs With A Purpose pre-test. It is up to the evaluators to make the decision if a dog is a good candidate to become a Therapy Dog.

Collar and Leash Rules:

During the test, the dog is allowed to wear a flat buckle collar or a non-corrective harness with a six-foot leash attached. There are no exceptions to this rule. This means no martingales, no-pull harnesses, gentle-leaders, or pinch collars.

The Test

1. ENTERING A DOORWAY WITH DISTRACTIONS

This portion of the test is to simulate the arrival at a facility where you will first meet with the coordinator.

PART A-

This part of the test requires the dog team to exit the testing area and re-enter through the waiting room.

Once all of the teams are in the waiting room lined up, the first team will come up to the doorway and ask their dog to "Sit" and "Wait" to the left or right of them in the doorway. An instructor or evaluator will ask the team if they are ready, then squeeze through the doorway around the dog and handler while making a loud noise. The dog must remain quietly in a "Sit/Wait" beside the handler the entire time..

PART B

After the dog has remained by their handler's side, the handler will be asked to enter the testing area leaving their dog in a "Wait". The evaluator or instructor will announce to invite their dog in a few seconds later. The dog must wait in the doorway when left and when called through the doorway they must enter the facility in a calm manner. The only time you wouldn't have your dog wait in the doorway would be when entering or exiting an elevator, at that time it is okay if you and your dog go through at the same time.

2. PHYSICAL EXAM

This part of the test is to see how the dogs react to their body being touched, maneuvered and hugged by strangers.

As soon as the dogs are invited in by their handlers per the evaluator they will head over in a group to an instructor or evaluator to be examined. The dog's collar/harness and leash will be checked. The dog's nails, ears, teeth, and grooming will be checked. All four feet will be lifted and the tail will be examined. The instructor will gently hug the dog to check for sensitivity to touch and pressure, and space. Growling, pulling, lunging, jumping up (unruliness), shyness, aggressiveness, or resisting any part of the examination is an automatic failure.

3. WAITING AT THE SIGN IN TABLE

This part of the test simulates signing in at a facility.

The teams will go to the sign in table. The dogs can "Wait" in a "Stand", "Sit", or "Down". The dogs may not pull away, jump on the table or interact with other dogs.

4. GROUP SIT/STAY

During this part of the test, the evaluator will be observing how your dog behaves when left alone in a "Sit/Stay" with other distractions around him/her.

The evaluator will ask the handlers to line up with their dogs by their side in a sit/stay. They then will be asked to walk to the end of their six-foot leash. Next, the evaluator will ask them to return to their dogs and release them from the stay. The evaluator will be looking for the dog to remain in the sit/stay command until the handler returns to them to release them.

5. GROUP DOWN/STAY

During this part of the test, the evaluator will be observing how your dog behaves when left alone in a "Down" with other distractions around him/her.

The evaluator will ask the handlers to line up with their dogs by their side in a "Down/Stay". They then will be asked to walk to the end of their six-foot leash. Next, the evaluator will ask them to return to their dogs and release them from the "Stay." The evaluator will be looking for the dog to remain in the "Down/Stay" command until the handler returns to them, the dog can then remain in the "Down" command for the next piece of the test.

6. RECALL ON A LONG LEASH

In this part of the test, we will be able to see how close the working relationship and bond is between the dog and handler based on recall.

The evaluator will ask the handlers to keep the dogs in a "Down" by their side. The six-foot leash will be exchanged for a long leash. The handlers will then be asked to give a "Wait" command. The evaluator will then ask them to go to the end of the leash.

One at a time the evaluator will tap the handler on the shoulder to signal them to call their dogs. (The order of the calling is decided by the evaluator at that time. Any dog has a chance of being called first, last, or in between. The evaluator will be looking to see if the dog comes willingly and happily when called. If completed successfully it shows how much focus, control and bonding the handler has over their dog.

7. GETTING AROUND PEOPLE

In this part of the test, we will see if the dog has been taught to walk properly on the leash. The evaluator will also be looking to see if the dog can remain calm when multiple people approach them at once to pet them.

As the team walks around with the dog on a loose leash, multiple people will interact with the team. People will ask to meet the dog. Pulling on the leash, jumping up, shyness, not wanting to visit, showing aggressiveness, licking, or not walking on a loose leash will not be allowed.

8. VISITING WITH A PATIENT IN A WHEELCHAIR

The dog should show a willingness to visit a person in a wheelchair. Small dogs should be willing to be placed in the person's lap. Larger dogs should get close to the chair so the person can reach them. For this exercise, the "patient" in the wheelchair might be wearing a hospital type mask. There will be many occasions where you may encounter patients wearing a mask or are using special medical equipment, such as oxygen.

In this exercise, the handler will begin with their dog in a "Sit/Wait" beside them. They will then introduce him/herself and their dog. They will then ask the person in the wheelchair if they would like to visit with their dog. After confirming they want to visit with the dog the handler will ask if their wheels are locked and will visually confirm so. Next, they will bring the dog to the front of the chair to be pet and then around the side to be pet. If the dog is small, they ask if they can put the dog in the patient's lap. We will provide a towel or blanket for the patient to put in their lap. *this will be provided during the test, *On Therapy Dog visits the facility will provide protection for the patient's laps.

The handler will be assessed on their ability to introduce him/herself and their dog and on if they asked if the wheels were locked or not. The dogs may not lick, scratch, bite, excessively sniff, or jump on the patient. When the dog is at the front or the side of the wheelchair they can "Stand" or "Sit" as long as the person in the wheelchair can reach them effectively.

9. VISITING WITH A PATIENT IN A WHEELCHAIR WHO HAS A TREAT/LEAVE IT

The dog should be able to walk around the wheelchair when it is being offered a treat from the patient that could potentially be lethal, such as medications wrapped in food.

The team will come up to the chair as before while still making sure to ask if they want to visit and if their wheels are locked.

The team will approach the wheelchair head on and have their dog "Sit", the patient will offer a treat to the dog. The handler will kindly decline the offer with an excuse as to why their dog cannot have the treat. Any lunging, licking, grabbing, or pulling does not constitute a satisfactory "Leave It".

10. LEAVE IT ON THE FLOOR AND THE WALKER COMBINED

In this part of the test, there will be treats, toys, and a blue bowl of water. The team must pass by them without the dog pulling on the leash or taking the treats. At the end of the treats, toys, and bowl there will be an instructor at the walker offering your dog a treat. Again, no pulling on the leash is allowed. The team will walk by the items on the floor with the dog on the inside nearest to the "Leave It". A total Leave It must happen.

The dog must be on a loose leash and cannot cross behind or in front of the handler. The dog cannot lunge or lick any of the items on the floor. The team will approach a patient with a walker. The handler will introduce them and the patient will attempt to give the dog a treat. The dog cannot lick or grab the treat from the hand of the person at the walker.

11. REACTIONS TO UNUSUAL SITUATIONS WHILE ON A WALK

The team may encounter many situations during visits. This exercise will demonstrate the dog's ability to function in unusual, noisy situations.

This exercise will start and end with the dog in a sit by the handler's side. The team will walk in an L pattern, making a right turn, about turn, and left turn. During this pattern, the evaluator will ask for a "Sit" and "Down". There will be people on crutches, in a wheelchair, dropping loud items,

talking loudly, running, and maybe another dog. The dog must be able to perform a "Sit" and a "Down" under these stressful circumstances.

12. MEETING ANOTHER DOG WHILE ON A WALK

The dog must be able to encounter other dogs without any incidents. This exercise will demonstrate that the dog can meet with another team with no issues.

The teams will go to opposite ends of the room. They will start with their dogs by their side in a "Sit". The evaluator will have them walk towards each other and meet in the middle of the room, stop their dogs, and put them in a "Sit/Wait". They will then exchange greetings briefly, then walk away.

The dogs cannot lunge towards each other and must remain in the "Sit/Wait" beside their handler until the greeting is over.

13. READING TO CHILDREN IN A DOWN/STAY

This will display that the dog can stay still while interacting with children during reading time. The dog must stay in a "Down" in front of the handler and not get up, act frightened or excited.

One team at a time, the handler will sit in the chair with their dog facing them in a "Down". They will give the signal that they are ready. The other teams will walk around the reading team along with other people making noise and walking quickly. The dog must remain in a "Down/Stay" the entire time of the exercise until the handler releases them.