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Service Dog in Training Manners Evaluation

Dog's name: _____ Handler's name: _____

Date of test: _____ Tester's name: _____

Result:	Pass	No Pass
Tester signature:		

Purpose

This evaluation is intended as a tool to help mark progress along a service dog training journey. This journey has many gray areas in the transition from pet-friendly environments to no-pet places. Accordingly, this guide alone should not be misinterpreted as a black-or-white stamp of approval or disapproval. However, a dog's ability to fairly proficiently execute these behaviors is a good indicator that the dog is ready to start training in no-pet places, as local laws or permissions allow.

Scoring and organization

This evaluation is divided between guidelines and activities. Guidelines apply throughout the evaluation, while activities are separate events for individual evaluation.

Scores on guidelines are yes or no because these represent a necessary backdrop, but this scoring does not mean that teams cannot (or should not) improve beyond the minimum needed to earn a yes. The tester may score each guideline either during activities or at the end. *Teams must score a yes on each guideline to pass*, but the tester's notes on these items can be more important in helping teams understand how to make training progress.

Teams are scored on a 1 to 5 proficiency scale for the activities, with 1 described as "not at all proficient" and 5 as "completely proficient". A score of 1 on an item means roughly that the dog shows no understanding of what's expected. A score of 5 means the dog has a full understanding of what's expected, reliably performs the behavior with practically no flaws, and the team has excellent communication as is relevant to the behavior. *A team must score at least a 3 on each activity to pass the evaluation.*

In continuing their training development, teams should be mindful not only of improving any shortfalls, but also of incorporating the detailed feedback given on each item. When administered by a knowledgeable tester, this evaluation is both a snapshot of progress and a valuable resource for future training.

Guidelines

Guidelines apply throughout the evaluation. After or throughout the testing, the tester should note below whether and how the team meets each of the guidelines. The emphasis should be on providing feedback that is useful for the future.

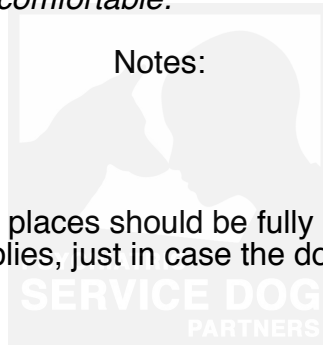
G1. It is important that throughout their experience in these types of environments, the dog is generally comfortable with the situation. The dog should not have a baseline nervousness or high stress level, as the dog might indicate by showing ongoing stress signs. It is okay to show moderate stress where it is normal for the situation, but a quick recovery is key. A dog that is either generally uncomfortable or particularly stressed in situations described in this document may need to be desensitized through further training before passing this evaluation.

Dog is not overly stressed or uncomfortable:

Yes

No

Notes:



G2. Any dog going out to no-pet places should be fully housetrained. Even so, it may be advisable to carry clean-up supplies, just in case the dog has an accident.

Dog is housetrained:

Yes

No

Notes:

G3. The public places its trust in service dogs not to be dangerous. It is fundamental that the dog not exhibit aggression, such as growling, nipping/biting, showing/baring teeth, or lunging in an attacking manner. The dog also should not cause significant disturbances, such as through inappropriate, excessive barking, or by quickly lunging or moving in ways that are unpredictable and possibly frightening or dangerous to others.

Dog's behavior does not present a danger or cause a significant disturbance:

Yes

No

Notes:

G4. A dog's needs for basic care must be met if it is to work as a service dog. For

Dog: _____

example, the dog should be sufficiently bathed and groomed so that it does not produce offensive smells or excessive shedding (to an extreme degree that would be noticeable and similarly inappropriate in humans). Perfuming the dog is not advised. The dog should also not have or exhibit an obvious medical problem that requires treatment, such as a painful limp, emaciation, or uncontrolled parasites, that may interfere with the ability to comfortably work or safely be around others.

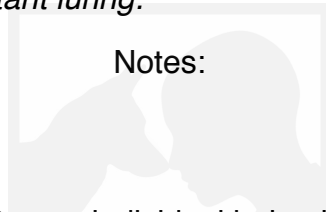
Dog is cared for so as to work comfortably while not presenting a danger or causing a significant disturbance:

Yes No Notes:

G5. Handlers should not need to lure a dog through a behavior for this evaluation. “Luring” a dog through a behavior is when the dog appears to execute the desired behavior, but only does so by closely following a treat, a leading hand (different from small hand signals), etc. Luring may assist in teaching a behavior, but does not show a dog understands the behavior and cue, so luring does not demonstrate proficiency.

Completed activities without blatant luring:

Yes No Notes:



G6. Once a dog entirely completes an individual behavior in this evaluation without luring (according to the tester), the test-taker is welcome to offer treats, a toy, or other rewards as appropriate. Reward timing exceptions are noted in activity descriptions. The frequency, variety, and types of rewards should match the individual dog's likes, needs, and progress. Advancing in training should correspond with using fewer rewards or fading them out completely, as long as the dog's performance is reliable without them.

Reward use (type, frequency, timing) is acceptable for training level:

Yes No Notes:

G7. Aversive training methods (such as strong leash corrections) should not be used. Especially before a dog graduates as a service dog, the dog should be rewarded in a way that fosters the dog's desire to work as part of a team.

Avoided aversive training during activities:

Yes No Notes:

Dog: _____

G8. With a service dog in training, it is key that the handler pay attention to the dog to catch desired and undesired behaviors and train appropriately. Early on in training, it is not a time to concentrate on shopping, reading labels, or even purchasing anything. The handler should be engaged with the dog, such as by providing feedback/rewards to motivate the dog, rather than ignoring the dog and letting the dog wander.

Handler showed acceptable focus on working with the dog as a team:

Yes

No

Notes:

Activities

Except for A1., the tester may vary the order of activities. Activities may not be combined when it alters the nature of either activity; for example, the startle recovery (A3.) should not be tested while waiting calmly (A1.). Unless otherwise explicitly noted, the dog must be on the ground for each evaluation activity, not held.

A1. *Waiting calmly*

The team should sit calmly while waiting to begin, filling out test paperwork and then either having a conversation, remaining silent, or going over guidelines and activities as the handler or tester prefers. The dog must wait quietly for 5 minutes. The dog is allowed to change positions and move, so long as it is not disruptive, struggling to leave, or trying to closely investigate or visit another person, object, or dog. Lap position is okay if the dog is not impinging on others' space or spilling over into an adjacent chair/area. It is acceptable to give a few calm rewards during this time (no more than five seconds of rewarding per minute—not constantly or as the only means to maintain control). It is also acceptable to give cues such as “leave-it” or “stay”, as long as the cues are not constant or excessive. A bystander should jog or move quickly past the team. The dog is allowed to notice and move, but should not lunge or act aggressively. The dog should return attention to the handler when cued.

Proficiency: (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (completely)

What went well? What could be improved?

A2. *Attention cue*

The dog should be able to respond to the handler with attention on cue. This could be a “watch” or “look” cue, a “touch” cue, or even the dog's name, if trained to focus on the handler when their name is said.

Dog: _____

Proficiency: (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (completely)

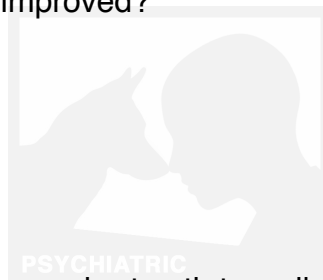
What went well? What could be improved?

A3. Startle recovery

The tester should drop a metal bowl, car keys, clipboard, or some other noisy object on the ground approximately 5–10 feet from the dog. The dog can startle and safely, non-aggressively break position when this happens, as long as the recovery is fairly quick and the dog is able to pay attention to the handler.

Proficiency: (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (completely)

What went well? What could be improved?



A4. Working position

The tester will instruct the team on a short path to walk (at least 50 feet) to demonstrate the team's default working position in public. The dog should be able to walk around generally in heel position or in another working position the team uses, which can vary based on what the team needs or prefers. No strong leash corrections are allowed. If a leash is used, it should generally be loose (with a “J” in the leash); there should be little or no straining against a leash or harness unless it is reasonably needed for disability-related work at the time. It is acceptable to briefly give one or two treats as rewards during this activity, but not as lures to stay in working position (see G5.).

Proficiency: (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (completely)

What went well? What could be improved?

A5. Basic obedience

A dog does not have to be an expert in an encyclopedia of obedience-competition

Dog: _____

cues to be an effective service dog. However, the dog's training should aim for the dog to understand and be able to perform some basic obedience cues that are relevant to being a service dog. Exactly which cues are needed can vary based on how the dog will work, team preference, etc., and may change over time. The cues below are a starter set for this evaluation.

The dog should be able to either sit or lie down on cue.

The dog should be able to come on cue from a wait or stay from a short distance, such as from the end of a six-foot leash.

The dog should be able to walk past a low-to-mid-value food item on the floor without eating it. The dog should walk within approximately five feet of the food item. The leash should not be needed to stop the dog from getting the food item. Instead, the handler should use praise, attention cues, leave-it cues, or similar cues as needed to get the dog to walk past the food item and not strain or eat it.

Proficiency: (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (completely)

What went well? What could be improved?



A6. Supervised separation

Even for the most attached service dog teams, unpredictable emergencies happen and teams may have to be separated for a time. To begin preparing for such unusual or other everyday occurrences, the dog should be able to be left with another person while the handler exits the room and remains out of contact. The dog should stay with the alternate handler for approximately 30 seconds. The dog can reposition, move, and make some quiet noise, but the dog should neither bark at full volume nor completely lose control due to the distance of the handler. The alternate handler is not required to be an inanimate post; casually talking to or petting the dog a little is okay. Actively trying to keep the dog distracted is not okay, as this would not be an appropriate simulation.

Proficiency: (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (completely)

What went well? What could be improved?

A7. Working around other dogs

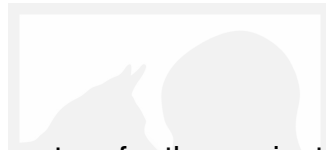
The dog should be able to focus on the handler while walking around a room for

A10. Friendly stranger

A person the dog doesn't know should be enlisted to interact with and pet the dog in a friendly way. An adult is recommended as the stranger for this portion of the evaluation, since children are usually much more distracting. The dog neither needs to stay completely still nor ignore the petting. The dog can interact with the person as cued, but must not be aggressive, present a danger, or provide excessive unwanted attention (mouthing a hand, excessive licking, etc.). The dog should avoid jumping up on people during a greeting. Normally, "four on the floor" is best during interactions (all paws on the ground). However, it can be okay for smaller dogs to stand or rise up some on their back legs if they are in no significant danger of frightening or putting their front paws on a person. The dog should redirect focus to the handler on cue, either during or right after the interaction.

Proficiency: (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (completely)

What went well? What could be improved?

**A11. Comfort with stores**

The team should remain outside a store for three minutes, within five feet of the door (as appropriate for the particular setting). There should be shopping carts and other distractions going by. The dog should not closely sniff items or approach a person without a cue or without the person being willing. It is acceptable to use treats during this to reward good behavior (not to distract or lure), for no more than five seconds per minute. It is also acceptable if the dog startles or exhibits an unwanted but benign behavior, if the dog responds to cues from the handler such as "leave-it" and the dog recovers focus on the handler without much delay. As permitted, the handler may choose to demonstrate the more complete proficiency of entering a store for a short while. The dog should appear comfortable with the sights, sounds, and distractions.

Proficiency: (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (completely)

What went well? What could be improved?