



Prior to Test *Come Prepared!*

Test will not be conducted if these prerequisites are not met

- **Bring proof of up to date rabies vaccination record.**
- **Clean and properly fitted collar** *You should be only able to put two fingers between dog and collar*
 - **Acceptable collars are buckle, martingale, or slip. If the dog has been trained using a harness, then harness can be used** *Dogs must be on a clean collar with no poop bags dangling on leash, as this is distracting.*
 - **Unacceptable collars or harnesses are gentle leader, prong or Ecollars** *Gentle leaders look like a muzzle, prong collars are not safe for the patient and electric collars are cumbersome and not permitted*
- **Clean leather or cotton leash** *Depending on the dog's height and handler's height, a four, five or six foot leash is the perfect length, we do not want to leash to drag on the ground, or dangle in someone's face. For the safety of dog and client, no retractable leashes are permitted.*
- **Dog must be in good health and weight**
- While not required for test, if you wish for us record your dog as a Canine Good Citizen (CGC), be sure to bring documentation today.

Therapy Dog Test

First Impressions

When a therapy team walks into a room or facility people notice. The team must always be in control; dog must be calm but enthusiastic. Understand that our evaluator and her team are watching as soon as you enter the testing area. They will watch how you enter, how the dog interacts with others. As a therapy team, you will often encounter new facilities and situations with new sounds and smells. We want to make sure you and your dog are confident and comfortable and that if there are any unusual events, you as the handler are prepared to give your dog reassurance and gentle guidance.

Health and Appearance

- **Is dog's coat clean and brushed with no mats?** *We all know that "greasy dog smell and filmy feeling"; no one wants to pet that. No Spot On tick medication applied within 48 hours.*
- **Are dog's nails cut short and filed?** *Many people we visit have very delicate skin. Just the hint of any nail close to a person might break the skin of an elderly individual. Regular nail trims are required for dogs.*
- **Is dog at a healthy weight?** *Can you feel your dog's ribs without too much effort? Dogs that are overweight find this work very taxing. Lastly, people notice and comment on overweight dogs.*
- **Are dog's ears clean and clear of infection?** *Check your dog's ears*



- *regularly and keep their ears clean to avoid infection; when someone touches an ear that is infected, it's painful and the dog might react.*
- **Are dog's teeth brushed and clean?** *Teeth should be brushed regularly for dog's overall health and to keep teeth, gums and breath clean.*

Temperament

Therapy dogs need to be very confident and calm in a wide variety of situations. We look for "calm enthusiasm" in our therapy dogs.

- **Dog must be comfortable with someone wearing a hospital mask and making noises simulating oxygen** *Dog cannot back away or growl*
- **Dog must be comfortable when evaluator approaches with hand sanitizer on hands** *Many hospitals require anyone petting a dog use hand sanitizer; dog should be familiar with the smell and not back away*
- **Dog should not shy away from someone wearing an unusual costume/outfit, or hat** *Evaluator might wear a funny hat while trying to engage with the dog; simulating an example of a new situation. Dog cannot shy away, bark or growl or become overly excited and jumpy.*
- **Dog must be comfortable with someone using a walker or being wheeled towards dog**
- **Dog must be comfortable if someone awkwardly pets dog** *Many of the people we visit have difficulty with gross motor skills.*
- **Dog must be comfortable with being petted if a stranger is in a wheelchair** *Dog must get close enough for the individual to touch and interact with dog without needing to lean over.*

Control

Remember that you and your dog are being tested as a therapy **team**. As a Pets & People certified team you will be covered by our insurance if your dog harms someone provided you are adhering to all of our protocols. We need to be confident that you, as handler, have complete control and your dog respects your authority.

- **Dog must wait at the handler's side when a person approaches to say hi without petting the dog** *Dog must sit parallel (not at 45 degree angle or facing) to handler so that the dog takes up less space, is more approachable for a friendly stranger.*
- **Dog must sit /or lie down on cue from handler** *Dog should do this while being parallel to handler; some breeds or dogs with health issues might not be able to do this. If this is the case, please let the evaluator know.*
- **Dog must remain in sit or down position and allow evaluator to reach over their head to stroke the dog** *Again, dog must be parallel to handler and we look for calm enthusiasm from the dog. We test that a dog can tolerate hands coming over them because we cannot control how everyone we visit will reach for the dog.*
- **Dog must tolerate someone touching paws, ears, back end and tail** *Dog cannot cower, growl or back away when evaluator touches dog. People will*



want to touch the dog and sometimes they are a bit awkward.

Loose Leash Walking

Loose Leash walking is when a dog walks beside the handler, calmly and with slight slack in the leash. There should be a “U” in the leash between dog and handler. Dog cannot wander away from handler’s side nor pull to front. We look that the handler has control of dog but does not need to physically correct dog. Light corrections or slight verbal commands should be sufficient. If the leash is tight and in a straight line, that is not considered loose leash.

- **Loose leash walk with dog in a pattern called out by the evaluator “left, right, turn around”.** Evaluator will say “halt” or “stop” and both dog and handler must stop *Dog must calmly walk beside handler with all the turns called out and then stop parallel to handler.*
- **Next evaluator will says “forward” or “walk”** *We are evaluating that the dog is listening to handler when and if they need to move out of the way.*
- **Loose leash while walking around some equipment that is very closely placed together** *Patients’ rooms can be tight, and we want to make sure dog is able to comfortably visit patients even though there are unusual items to navigate around.*
- **Loose leash while walking with another dog in front and then behind** *Dog may not interact with other dogs while doing therapy visits, they may not react to the dogs. Dog may be curious, but not pull on leash, bark or growl.*
- **Loose leash with distractions of someone running behind and in front of them** *There might be a situation where dog and handler need to move very quickly, for example should medical personnel need to attend an emergency. Dog may not jump away or chase; we look for control.*
- **Loose leash while walking through a hectic area of people walking and using medical equipment** *You will encounter many new distractions when you do your visits. Dog must not react negatively to these distractions.*
- **Loose leash walking and standing calmly when a vacuum is being used** *Loud noises like a vacuum cleaner can be distracting and unnerving to a dog. For the safety of others, we do not want the dog to pull or lunge or bark at the vacuum cleaner*
- **Loose leash with distractions of noise, loud noises of something dropping** *We look that the handler has control of dog while there are different distractions - dishes dropped, a loud laugh, etc.*

Safety

As a therapy team, you are exposing your dog to situations that most dogs do not encounter. As handler, your responsibility is to be sure that your dog and those you visit are safe at all times.

- **Evaluator will act as though she does not want dog near her** *We can never assume that everyone wants to pet our dogs. Your job is to make residents feel safe and ALWAYS calmly protect your dog from harm.*



- **Evaluator will enthusiastically run up to dog with a loud and high pitched voice** *Some residents, children or staff are so happy to see the dog, that they give a big cheer and come running towards the dog. Dog may not jump or chase person.*
- **Loose leash with distractions of food on the floor and between chairs** *Throughout the entire test, food will be under furniture, and on the floor. Dog may notice food but not lunge for it. During a visit, food, pills, tissues, might be on the floor and you don't want the dog to eat something that could be poisonous, hurt or knock someone over while going for the item or show lack of control.*
- **Dogs 20 pounds and under will be evaluated on how they can be safely placed on evaluator's lap** *If you have a small dog, bring a blanket or mat that dog would use for being on a lap. Dog must settle in easily without a lot of movement. If your dog is not a lap dog how would you have a person in a wheelchair easily interact with dog?*
- **Evaluator will drop a food item in front of dog** *Dog must not lunge for food. Handler may say "leave it" to the dog calmly.*
- **Next, evaluator will pick up that food item** *Dog cannot display any resource guarding when food item is picked up the dog may not lunge, growl, try to bite.*
- **Dog must leave a food item when being offered food** *Sometimes people will offer something to the dog that is not suitable for the dog. In the test, your dog will be offered human food. Dog must leave it and not lunge toward food. Slight correction or gentle verbal command can be used..*
- **Evaluator will offer your dog a treat which dog CAN have!** *If your dog does not take treats from strangers - that is okay – BUT if a treat is given to the dog, we need to see that the dog takes the treat gently.*

Placement specific criteria

Library or School setting

- **Evaluator will sit on floor with dog** *Like a "read to dog" program. Dog must be comfortable with evaluator on floor. Children who read with dogs are generally lying on floor or sitting very close.*

Hospital or Hospice setting

- **Size permitting, dog must be comfortable lying in bed with evaluator** *Look that the dog is comfortable to be close but keep a safe distance from the patient. Handler must be able to help dog get onto and off bed carefully being sure not to touch patient. Dogs snuggling in bed are often used in hospice and hospital visits.*
- **Dog must walk on loose leash while the handler pushes a wheelchair** *As Hospice volunteer, you might be requested take a patient out for a walk. Dog must be comfortable with this kind of activity.*