

# AMERICAN WORKING DOG ASSOCIATION



**Certifying K-9s With Pride**

## SERVICE DOG CANINE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

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## Introduction

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), many people with disabilities use a service animal in order to fully participate in everyday life. As of March 15, 2011, only dogs are recognized as service animals under titles II and III of the ADA. Dogs can be trained to perform many important tasks to assist people with disabilities, such as providing stability for a person who has difficulty walking, picking up items or a person who uses a wheelchair, preventing a child with autism from wandering away, or alerting a person who has hearing loss when someone is approaching.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) continues to receive many questions about how the ADA applies to service dogs. The ADA requires State and local government agencies, businesses, and non-profit organizations (covered entities) that provide goods or services to the public to make "reasonable modifications" in their policies, practices, or procedures when necessary to accommodate people with disabilities. The service dog rules fall under this general principle. Accordingly, entities that have a "no pets" policy generally must modify the policy to allow service dogs into their facilities.

Currently, ADA does not require documentation, such as proof a service dog has been certified, trained or licensed as a service dog, as a condition of entry. The current national trend in the assistance dog industry is a Public Access Standard (PAS) and Public Access Test (PAT) such as developed by Assistance Dogs International (ADI) as the minimum training standards for public access.

In the spring of 2018 the American Working Dog Association (AWDA) agreed to update and promote standards for a service dog certification in accordance with the provisions set forth in the ADA for title II (State and local government facilities) and title III (public accommodations and commercial facilities), *September 15, 2010*. This service dog certification is designed to benefit people with disabilities by offering a certification standard that reflects national trends.

## Purpose

AWDA Service Dog certification is designed to evaluate the appropriate behavior of service dog teams in public.

## Equipment Requirements

ADA does not require service animals to wear a vest, ID tag, or specific harness. As a gesture of courtesy to the public, any working gear that visually identifies the dog as a service dog is highly recommended. Some relevant equipment includes a leash, handle, collar, harness, vest, backpack, cape, bandana, or leash slide. Which options are best depend on the team's needs and preferences, and may change over time. Protective clothing should be provided for the dog, including warning, cooling, and rainproof jackets and properly fitted boots when conditions warrant them.

## Certification

Upon successful completion of the certification requirements, a certificate will be issued to the dog. The certificate will contain a unique identifying number provided by the evaluator. The number will contain the designation SD (service dog), year of the certification, a three-digit sequential number, evaluator initials and the two-digit state abbreviation of the evaluator's state of residence (e.g. SD2017001JDIL would indicate the first service dog certification conducted by John Doe from Illinois in 2017). The certification signifies the dog holding the certification has met the requirements of an established standard of knowledge and performance skills.

The evaluation is based on a pass/fail system. The evaluation is conducted by AWDA certified evaluators. Up to three (3) evaluators/apprentice evaluators can be present during a single evaluation. Handlers will be advised of results at the end of the entire evaluation in an official debriefing with the evaluators. Debrief will include positive feedback, as well as, constructive criticism.

**Cancellation Policy:** AWDA will make every effort to complete the evaluation on the day scheduled. It will be at the sole discretion of the evaluator to make the cancellation. Factors that could affect the certification include, but are not limited to, severe weather, extreme heat/cold or sudden illness.

**Appeals Process:** All decisions by the evaluator are final on the day of testing; however, a handler may file a written appeal of the evaluation results with the AWDA National Administrator within thirty (30) days following the evaluation. A written response to the appeal will be returned to the handler within thirty (30) days of receipt of the appeal.

**Grievance Policy:** Any handler who wishes to file a grievance about an evaluator or an evaluation must do so in writing to the AWDA National Administrator within thirty (30) days. A written response to the appeal will be returned to the handler within thirty (30) days of the receipt of grievance.

### **General Requirements for Certification:**

The AWDA Service Dog Certification general requirements for certification were developed from the Public Access Standard and the from training/experiences of AWDA certified handlers, trainers and evaluators.

All documentation must be available the date of the evaluation, if requested by evaluator for review. Documentation copies may be submitted to evaluator for review prior to evaluation date via postal service or electronic mail; however, the documentation copies submitted may not be returned.

1. Dog must be a minimum of twelve (12) months of age.
2. Dog must have proof of current rabies vaccination.
3. Dog must have proof of successful completion of a nationally recognized obedience evaluation which meets or exceeds the American kennel Club's Dog Good Citizen (GCG) test.
4. Dog must have training records over a period of six (6) months. Records will document a minimum of twelve (12) logged training sessions during that time period.

### **General Certification Guidelines:**

The AWDA Service Dog Certification general certification guidelines were developed from the Public Access Standard and from the training/experiences of AWDA certified handlers and evaluators.

1. Evaluator will have sole discretion in the administration and conduct of an evaluation to deviate, within reason, from established guidelines due to circumstances beyond their control. Any deviation for one dog team must be afforded to all service dog evaluations during the same evolution (day or seminar).
2. Evaluator will not take their own certification evaluation and evaluate other dog teams during the same evolution (day or seminar).
3. Evaluator will not be routinely involved in the day to day training of the service dog evaluated.
4. No electronic, shock, prong, pinch or choke collars may be used on any dog during any certification. Electronic or shock collars are permitted for use only for dog safety concerns and the device controller should be in plain view of the evaluator.
5. The dog must be under the control of the handler at all times, capable of heeling, moving through crowds, and remaining non-aggressive to both people and other dogs. When certified, the dog must not bite or snap at either people or other dogs, nor growl at humans. The only exception is a dog that is attacked or provoked by another dog or human will not be penalized for self-defense.
6. Dog and handlers will be dismissed from evaluation if an evaluator observes any act of aggression or act of abuse or neglect of the dog by the handler. Dog teams will not be allowed to continue in the event an act of aggression is observed during the evaluation.
7. Handler is ultimately responsible for the safety of themselves and their dog. Handler should immediately notify evaluator of any safety issues or concern to determine impact to the evaluation.

## General Performance Objectives:

The AWDA Service Dog Certification general performance objectives were developed from the Public Access Standard and from the training/experiences of AWDA certified handlers, trainers and evaluators.

1. Handler should maintain a professional demeanor and show respect and consideration to other people and property.
2. Handler should demonstrate the ability to work and control the dog when exposed to a variety of different types of locations, noises, odors, people, other animals and environments.
3. Handler should know pertinent dog laws (leash laws and public access) and willing to politely educate public about assistance dogs and access rights.
4. Dog should demonstrate sufficient obedience through its reaction to handler's commands.
5. Dog should not solicit food or petting from other people while working.
6. Dog should not sniff merchandise or people or intrude into another dog's space while on duty.
7. Dog should socialize to tolerate strange sights, sounds, odors, etc. in a wide variety of public settings.
8. Dog should ignore food on the floor or dropped in the dog's vicinity while working outside the home.
9. Dog should work calmly on leash. No unruly behavior or unnecessary vocalization in public settings.
10. Dog should not urinate or defecate in public unless given a specific command or signal to toilet in an appropriate place.

## ADA Requirements

DOJ published revised final regulations implementing the ADA for title II (State and local government services) and title III (public accommodations and commercial facilities) on *September 15, 2010*, in the Federal Register. These requirements, or rules, clarify and refine issues that have arisen over the past 20 years and contain new, and updated, requirements, including the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design (2010 Standards).

Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

This definition does not affect or limit the broader definition of "assistance animal" under the Fair Housing Act or the broader definition of "service animal" under the Air Carrier Access Act.

Some State and local laws also define service animal more broadly than the ADA does. Information about such laws can be obtained from the State attorney general's office.

Under the ADA, State and local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that serve the public generally must allow service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go. For example, in a hospital it would be inappropriate to exclude a service animal from areas such as patient rooms, clinics, cafeterias, or examination rooms. However, it may be appropriate to exclude a service animal from operating rooms or burn units where the animal's presence may compromise a sterile environment.

Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

### Inquiries, Exclusions, Charges, and Other Specific Rules related to Service Animals

- When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. Staff may ask two questions: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform. Staff cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

- Allergies and fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people using service animals. When a person who is allergic to dog dander and a person who uses a service animal must spend time in the same room or facility, for example, in a school classroom or at a homeless shelter, they both should be accommodated by assigning them, if possible, to different locations within the room or different rooms in the facility.
- A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his service animal from the premises unless: (1) the dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it or (2) the dog is not housebroken. When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, staff must offer the person with the disability the opportunity to obtain goods or services without the animal's presence.
- Establishments that sell or prepare food must allow service animals in public areas even if state or local health codes prohibit animals on the premises.
- People with disabilities who use service animals cannot be isolated from other patrons, treated less favorably than other patrons, or charged fees that are not charged to other patrons without animals. In addition, if a business requires a deposit or fee to be paid by patrons with pets, it must waive the charge for service animals.
- If a business such as a hotel normally charges guests for damage that they cause, a customer with a disability may also be charged for damage caused by himself or his service animal.
- Staff are not required to provide care or food for a service animal.

## **Disability Related Tasks**

The dog must be individually trained to perform identifiable tasks on command or cue for the benefit of the disabled human partner. This includes alerting to sounds, medical problems, certain scents such as peanuts or situations if training is involved.

A task is a certain behavior or set of behaviors the dog is trained to habitually perform in response to a command or a particular situation such as the onset of a seizure, which cues the dog to perform a task. The task must be related to a disabling condition of the human partner, helping them in some way.

A dog has been "individually trained" to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a disabled individual when the dog is deliberately taught to exhibit the desired behavior or sequence of behaviors by rewarding the dog for the right response(s) and communicating, if only through silence, when the dog has made the wrong response in a particular situation. A task is learned when the dog reliably exhibits the desired behavior whenever needed to assist his/her partner on command or cue. An example of work that is individually trained would be that performed by a guide dog, who takes directional commands, goes around obstacles in the team's path, halts to indicate a curb or some other change in elevation and refuses the "Forward" command in specific situations that would result in injury, such as an automobile entering the team's path. Examples of individually trained tasks include retrieving a phone, providing deep pressure therapy during a panic attack or providing balance support on a staircase to prevent a fall.

Spontaneous behavior a dog occasionally exhibits such as licking someone's face or barking does not qualify as a "trained task" under ADA even if it accidentally or coincidentally has a beneficial result. While everyone enjoys the emotional, social and safety benefits that a dog's presence can provide, those benefits do not constitute trained tasks that would transform a disabled person's pet into a legitimate Service Dog under ADA.

Trained tasks that mitigate the effects of a disabling condition are the legal basis for granting access rights to disabled handlers under ADA. An assistance dog with this special training is viewed as assistive technology / medical equipment, not as a pet. Businesses have the right to ask a disabled person, "What Tasks does your service animal perform?" This question can be asked if there is any doubt about the dog's legal status and whether to impose their restrictive pet policies. An acceptable answer might be, "my service dog is trained to get help for me in a medical crisis by \_\_\_\_\_." (Fill in the blank as to the specific task) You do not have to reveal your disability in formulating your reply.

Businesses also have the right to exclude any animal, including a service animal, who threatens the health or safety of other people through aggressive or unruly behavior. An assistance dog can also be evicted for disruptive behavior that interferes with a business providing goods or services. The DOJ used the example of a dog barking in a movie theater.

## Guide Dog Tasks:

Although it is uncommon to discuss guide dog work in terms of tasks being performed, a guide dog's four to six-month education involves mastering a set of tasks which, taken together, allow a blind or visually impaired individual to negotiate the unseen environment with greater safety and independence. One guide dog user of my acquaintance neatly summarized the work performed by guide dogs as follows: "Guide dogs take directional commands and institute a path of travel, indicate changes in elevation, indicate and avoid oncoming traffic, navigate around obstacles and locate objects on command."

The human partner makes most of the decisions for the team, giving the dog directions and determining, after listening to the flow of traffic, the most optimal time to cross each street. Guide dogs are carefully conditioned to refuse the "Forward" command under certain circumstances where it would be unsafe to proceed, something termed "intelligent disobedience." A dog does not have the reasoning power to comprehend the inherent danger in traffic. The net effect of the conditioning, however, is a habitual reaction from the dog to specific stimuli which substantially improves team safety. It should be noted this skill deteriorates over time if the handler forgets to appropriately praise the dog for avoiding a situation. Like other assistance dogs, a guide dog relies heavily on the team leader's feedback, especially praise, to reinforce and motivate desired behaviors.

The tasks or duties listed below have been grouped into three primary skill categories: Obstacle Avoidance, Signaling Changes in Elevation and Locating Objects. The majority of guide dogs work through a harness with a U-shaped handle that attaches to the harness and allows for vertical and some lateral movement. Some but not all may learn to do leash guiding as well. Whenever navigating around obstacles, the dog is schooled to return to the original path of travel as soon as possible. This may include moving into a road to walk around something then locating the safer pedestrian path once clear of the obstacle. Schools in North America vary in how much work is put into the tasks listed under Locating Objects. Some handlers put in extra work on "Find" command tasks with very impressive results. While a few owner trainers and private trainers include retrieving in a guide dog's repertoire, the guide dog schools no longer teach it as a mandatory skill, so it has been listed under the title, "Other Possible Tasks."

### Obstacle Avoidance:

- Navigate around stationary obstacles like a lamp post, parking meters, pillars
- Navigate around hazards like an open manhole and deep potholes
- Navigate around low hanging obstacles like awnings or a tree branch to avoid a collision
- Avoid moving objects such as bicycles, people, strollers, shopping carts, wheelchairs
- Leash guiding around obstacles indoors or outdoors for a short distance
- Intelligent Disobedience as in refusing a command to go forward into the road if there is oncoming traffic or intersecting traffic in the team's path. The dog is also trained to halt, abruptly, rather than collide with a vehicle that intersects the team's path when it enters the intersection during the team's crossing

### Signal Changes in Elevation:

- Halt or Sit to indicate every curb
- Halt to indicate descending stairs at the top of a flight of stairs
- Halt to indicate steps up into a building or patio area
- Halt to warn of edge of subway or train platform
- Halt to warn of approach to edge of cliff, ditch, other outdoor drop-offs
- Halt when confronted by a barrier such as at construction site
- Intelligent disobedience - refuse a command to go forward if there is a drop-off

### Locate Objects on Command:

- Find an exit from a room; indicate door knob
- Find the elevator bank
- Find specific entrances and/or exits
- Find an empty seat, bench, or unoccupied area
- Find a customary seat in a particular classroom
- Follow a designated person such as a waiter to restaurant table, clerk to elevator, etc.
- Locate specified destination such as store in mall, hotel room or home from a distance, once all other decision points such as intersecting streets, hallways, etc. have been passed

**Other Possible tasks:**

- Retrieve dropped objects
- Find desired object like the morning newspaper on the porch

**Hearing Dog Tasks:**

Hearing dogs are schooled to alert to the specific sounds needed by their partners, primarily in the home setting. Some hearing dogs also work outside the home, alerting to specific sounds in public settings. Most are shelter dogs who receive three to six months of schooling from providers or dedicated owner trainers on sound alerts, obedience and public access manners.

It is a common misconception that hearing dogs typically alert a deaf or hard of hearing person to sounds by barking at them. Barking or growling is generally undesirable as it may not be heard by the deaf partner, will unnerve or frighten other people and if the handler shows approval, it can easily worsen the dog's fear or over protectiveness, which usually is the underlying cause of this response.

Instead of barking hearing dogs are trained to get the attention of their human partner by touch, (either a nose nudge or pawing) then the dog leads the partner to the source of the specific sound. Some trainers may teach the dog to lie down next to their partner to indicate a smoke alarm after alerting the partner to the event with a touch. Leading the partner toward the sound in the case of a fire alarm may not be safe. For that reason, a number of handlers prefer to have the dog indicate the smoke alarm indirectly and to wait for the human to decide what the next response should be. Responding to specific sounds in public or in a moving vehicle also requires a slight adjustment of the customary response to suit the location.

Some hearing dogs master additional tasks, enhancing communication between family members. This can be especially helpful in households with a child, those where more than one member has a hearing impairment or households where one or more members are non-verbal.

**Alert to Specific Sounds at Home**

- Doorbell ringing
- Knock on front door
- Rapping on patio door or window
- Smoke alarm sounding
- Wind up minute timer, oven or microwave timer going off
- Baby crying
- Family member or other calling the name of the dog's partner
- Child calling "mommy" [or other name, if applicable, such as daddy, grandpa, aunt]
- Phone ringing
- Alarm clock buzzing
- Computer equipment beeps
- Horn honking in garage or driveway
- Arrival of school bus

**Alert to Specific Sounds Away From Home**

- Siren of police car, fire truck or ambulance and indicate direction
- Smoke alarm in workplace
- Distinguish phone ringing on partner's desk at work from all other phones in workplace
- Name of partner if coworker, friend, family member calls out that name
- Cell phone or beeper
- Smoke alarm in hotel or work
- Fire drill at school or work
- Vehicle honking to attract attention

## Other Possible Tasks

- Retrieve unheard dropped objects like keys, coins, or other objects
- To enhance security when the team arrives home after dark, the dog enters the home first to turn on a light, nudging the metal base of a lamp with a touch lamp device
- Carry a note from the partner to another household member, searching the house to find that individual
- Carry messages between spouses, utilizing objects which signify dinner is ready or that the person needs help right away, and so forth.
- Have the dog find and return with the hearing-impaired person.
- Warn of a vehicle approaching from behind or making a sudden turn. A task that applies the intelligent disobedience principle to hearing dog work

## Service Dog Tasks:

Service dogs generally receive six months to a year of schooling on tasks, obedience and public access manners. Most dogs placed by non-profits since the 1970's have been trained to assist people who have a wide variety of mobility impairments. Some teams have mastered up to fifty tasks, enjoying the challenge of such an advanced education. The list of tasks in this section are a broad sampling of what has been developed over the past quarter century to address daily living needs and safety issues.

A number of the traditional tasks listed below are proving useful to individuals with hidden disabilities such as a seizure disorder, a psychiatric disorder, a potentially life threatening medical problem or conditions which cause chronic pain. Creative providers, graduates and owner trainers who are expanding the service dog concept into these additional areas will hopefully share the experimental tasks they develop with the larger community someday, providing task training particulars so others can benefit. In some cases, a responsible third party, usually a parent or a spouse facilitates the interactions between a disabled person and his or her service dog to optimize the benefits to be obtained from including a service dog in the independent living plan of that individual.

For specific tasks to address specific symptoms of disabilities like Parkinson's Disease or MS or Epilepsy or any other disabling condition, one option is to research the subject by consulting with training providers familiar with those conditions. A second option is to send out a specific information request on email lists in the assistance dog field, gathering a variety of input. As a precaution, a second query, asking trainers and handlers for recommended ethical and /or safety guidelines in connection with any task being considered, may yield valuable input to assist with assessing the appropriateness of the suggested task for a particular team. A third option is to search archives for newspaper stories, magazine articles, television newscasts and documentaries which may focus on a particular disability or provider or type of assistance dog. Books on training guide, hearing or service dogs, autobiographies, biographies and works of fiction may in some cases, provide additional information on the desired topic.

A myth that ought to be challenged is the belief on the part of some that service dogs are only for the most severely impaired or end stage of a degenerative disease like MS. Someone who is considered much more moderately disabled, struggling with the difficulties of living alone, maintaining a job or raising a family could find teamwork with a highly trained service dog to be of enormous benefit in achieving the goal of remaining as self-sufficient as possible. A number of tasks enumerated in this section could empower such individuals to conserve energy, reduce or avoid pain, minimize dependency on loved ones, prevent injuries or get help in a crisis.

## Retrieve Based Tasks

- Bring portable phone to any room in house
- Bring in groceries - up to ten canvas bags
- Unload suitable grocery items from canvas sacks
- Fetch a beverage from a refrigerator or cupboard
- Fetch food bowl(s)
- Pick up dropped items like coins, keys etc., in any location
- Bring clothes, shoes, or slippers laid out to assist with dressing
- Unload towels, other items from dryer
- Retrieve purse from hall, desk, dresser or back of van
- Assist to tidy house or yard - pickup, carry, deposit designated items
- Fetch basket with medication and/or beverage from cupboard

- Seek & find teamwork - direct the dog with hand signals, vocal cues to: retrieve an unfamiliar object out of partner's reach, locate TV remote control, select one of several VCR tapes atop TV cabinet, other surfaces
- Remove VCR tape from machine after eject button pushed
- Use target stick to retrieve an indicated item off shelves in stores retrieve one pair of shoes from a dozen in closet
- Use laser pointer to target an item to be retrieved
- Drag Cane from its customary location to another room
- Pick up and return cane if falls off back of wheelchair
- Pickup or fetch Canadian crutches from customary location
- Drag walker back to partner
- Fetch wheelchair when out of reach

### **Carrying Based Tasks (Non Retrieval)**

- Move bucket from one location to another, indoors & outdoors
- Lug a basket of items around the house
- Transport items downstairs or upstairs to a specific location
- Carry item(s) from the partner to a care-giver or family member in another room
- Send the dog to obtain food or another item from a care-giver and return with it.
- Dog carries a prearranged object to care-giver as a signal help is needed
- Carry items following a partner using a walker, other mobility aids
- Pay for purchases at high counters
- Transfer merchandise in bag from a clerk to a wheelchair user's lap
- Carry mail or newspaper into the house

### **Deposit Based Tasks**

- Put trash, junk mail into a wastebasket or garbage can
- Deposit empty soda pop can or plastic bottle into recycling bin
- Assist partner to load clothing into top loading washing machine
- Dirty food bowl [dog's] - put into kitchen sink
- Put silverware, non-breakable dishes, plastic glasses in sink
- Deliver items to "closet" [use a floor marker to indicate drop location]
- Deposit dog toys into designated container
- Put prescription bag, mail, other items on counter top

### **Tug Based Tasks**

- Open cupboard doors with attached strap
- Open drawers via strap
- Open refrigerator door with a strap or suction cup device
- Open interior doors via a strap with device to turn knob
- Answer doorbell and open front door with strap attached to lever handle
- Open or close sliding glass door with a strap or other tug devices
- Shut restroom door that opens outward via a leash tied to doorknob
- Close stall door that opens outward in restroom by delivering end of the leash to partner
- Shut interior home, office doors that open outward
- Shut motel room exterior door that opens inward
- Assist to remove shoes, slippers, sandals
- Tug socks off without biting down on foot
- Remove slacks, sweater, coat
- Drag heavy coat, other items to closet
- Drag laundry basket through house with a strap
- Drag bedding to the washing machine
- Wrestle duffle bag or other objects from the van into the house
- Pull a drapery cord to open or close drapes
- Assist to close motel room drapes by tugging on edge near bottom of drape, backing up

- Operate rope device that lifts blanket and sheet or re-covers disabled person when he or she becomes too hot or cold.
- Alternatively, take edge of a blanket and move backwards, tugging to remove it or assist someone to pull the blanket up to their chin if cold

### **Nose Nudged Based Tasks**

- Cupboard door or drawers - nudge shut
- Dryer door - hard nudge
- Stove drawer - push it shut
- Dishwasher door - put muzzle under open door, flip to shut
- Refrigerator & freezer door - close with nudge
- Call 911 on K-9 rescue phone - push the button
- Operate button or push plate on electric commercial doors
- Turn on light switches
- Push floor pedal device to turn on lamp
- Turn on metal-based lamps with touch-lamp device installed - nudge base
- Assist wheelchair user to regain sitting position if slumped over
- Help put paralyzed arm back onto the armrest of wheelchair
- Return paralyzed foot to the foot board of a wheelchair if it is dislodged

### **Pawing Based Tasks**

- Cupboard door - shut it with one paw
- Dryer door - shut it with one paw
- Refrigerator & freezer door - one forepaw or both
- Call 911 on K-9 rescue phone - hit button with one paw
- Operate light switch on wall - jump up, paw the switch
- Depress floor pedal device to turn on appliance(s) or lamp
- Jump up to paw elevator button [steady dog if he tries it on slippery tile floor]
- Operate push plate on electric commercial doors
- Close heavy front door, other doors - jump up, use both forepaws

### **Bracing Based Tasks (No Harness)**

- Transfer assistance from wheelchair to bed, toilet, bathtub or van seat - hold Stand Stay position, then brace on command, enabling partner to keep their balance during transfer
- Assist to walk step by step, brace between each step, from wheelchair to nearby seat
- Position self and brace to help partner catch balance after partner rises from a couch or other seats in a home or public setting
- Prevent fall by bracing on command if the partner needs help recovering balance.
- Steady partner getting in or out of the bathtub
- Assist partner to turn over in bed; have appropriate backup plan
- Pull up partner with a strap [tug of war style] from floor to feet on command, then brace till partner catches balance

### **Harness Based Tasks - Mobility Assistance** *(Only appropriate for large sturdy adult dogs with sound joints, proper training)*

- Assist moving wheelchair on flat [partner holds onto harness pull strap] avoiding obstacles
- Work cooperatively with partner to get the wheelchair up a curb cut or mild incline; handler does as much of the work as possible, never asking the dog to attempt an incline unaided
- Haul open heavy door, holding it ajar using six-foot lead attached to back of harness, other end of lead attached to door handle or to a suction cup device on a glass door
- Tow ambulatory partner up inclines [harness with rigid handle or pull strap may be used]
- Brace on command to prevent ambulatory partner from stumbling [rigid handle]
- Help ambulatory partner to climb stairs, pulling then bracing on each step [rigid handle or harness with pull strap may be used to assist partner to mount a step or catch balance]
- Pull partner out of aisle seat on plane, then brace until partner catches balance [harness with a rigid handle and a pull strap, or pull strap only]

- Brace, counter balance work too, assisting ambulatory partner to walk; the partner pushes down on the rigid handle as if it were a cane, after giving warning command, when needed
- Help ambulatory partner to walk short distance, brace between each step [rigid handle]
- Transport textbooks, business supplies or other items up to 50 lbs in a wagon or collapsible cart, weight limit depends on dog's size, physical fitness, type of cart, kind of terrain
- Backpacking - customary weight limit is 15% of the dog's total body weight; 10% if a dog performing another task, such as wheelchair pulling in addition to backpacking; total weight includes harness (average 3 - 4 lbs.). Load must be evenly distributed to prevent chafing.

#### **Other Kinds of Assistance in Crisis**

- Bark for help on command
- Find the care-giver on command, lead back to location of disabled partner
- Put forepaws in lap of wheelchair user, hold that upright position so wheelchair user can access medication or cell phone or other items in the backpack
- Wake up partner if smoke alarm goes off, assist to nearest exit

#### **Medical Assistance Tasks (Sample)**

- Operate push button device to call 911, an ambulance service or another person to help in a crisis; let emergency personnel into home and lead to partner's location
- Fetch insulin kit, respiratory assist device or medication from customary place during a medical crisis
- Lie down on partner's chest to produce a cough, enabling patient to breath, when suction machine and/or care-giver unavailable

# Service Dog Public Access Standard / Public Access Test

**Overview:** The Public Access Standard (PAS) / Public Access Test (PAT) evaluates the dog's obedience and manners as well as the handler's skills in a variety of situations which include:

Handler's ability to:

1. Safely load and unload the dog from a vehicle.
2. Enter a public place without losing control of the dog
3. Recover the leash if accidentally dropped
4. Cope calmly with an access problem if an employee or customer questions the individual's rights to bring a dog into that establishment.

Dog's ability to:

1. Safely cross a parking lot, halt for traffic, and ignore distractions
2. Heel through narrow aisles
3. Hold a Sit-Stay when a shopping cart passes by or when a person stops to chat and pets the dog
4. Hold a Down-Stay when a child approaches and briefly pets the dog
5. Hold a sit-Stay when someone drops food on the floor
6. Hold a Down-Stay when someone sets a plate of food on the floor within 18" of the dog, then removes it a minute later
7. Remain calm if someone else holds the leash while handler moves 20 feet away
8. Remain calm while another dog pass within six feet

**Purpose:** The purpose of this PAS/PAT is to provide general, minimum evaluation criteria for service dog behavior. The test items are pass / fail. The dog must be successful on all items of the test to pass. Test items that are not available in the tester's general area (e.g. elevators) or are unreasonable due to a handler's disability (e.g. shopping cart use) may be adjusted/omitted at the discretion of the evaluator.

## PAS/PAT Items:

### 1. Training/Controlling Aids:

Teams should keep the use of treats and training aids to a minimum when in working mode. A service dog is generally expected to be already trained to do its job without coaxing through these means. This does not mean the dog must be handled like a robot. Verbal praise and even petting to reward good behavior in public can be integral to maintaining your bond and encouraging your dog to enjoy working. Transition away from using training aids as your default so that you can rely on your dog's training even if the training aid runs out or breaks. Pain- or fear-based training and control, including harsh leash or other physical corrections, are not acceptable. Other, often more effective methods are available that have a greater chance of preserving and encouraging a positive team relationship—which can be essential to your dog's health and happiness. Consequently, outfitting a dog with any device designed to train or control by causing pain or anxiety (such as prong collars, choke collars, shock collars, and studded/prong harnesses) is not an accepted alternative to other training. A properly used head collar or non-prong, no-pull harness is acceptable long-term only if the handler needs such an item due to their disability. This kind of device should only be used as an emergency failsafe (e.g., safety for balance issues), and cannot be relied on to control the dog. Martingale and limited-slip collars are good for keeping a dog from backing out of its collar if the dog has a neck almost as wide as its head but should not be used for corrections.

### 2. Leash Tension:

Teams should maintain an appropriate level of looseness in the leash or harness. The dog should not continuously/repeatedly strain at the leash—the leash should normally form a "J" shape by dipping down without tension. Harness or leash tension is okay if it is actively needed for disability mitigation. For example, guide and other mobility dogs can work by pulling somewhat in response to a cue or other stimulus. Retractable leashes are acceptable only for needed disability-specific work. In either of these cases, you should always maintain control without excessive pulling or wandering.

### 3. Inappropriate Service Dog Conduct:

A dog should not display any inappropriate behaviors such as:

- Growling or inappropriate, excessive barking
- Nipping or biting
- Showing or baring teeth
- Lunging at other people or dogs
- Being out of handler's control
- Inappropriately eliminating (urinating or defecating)

### 4. Working Position:

A dog should be comfortable and confident in its working position. Dogs should not hide behind out of fear or forge ahead out of uncontrolled disconnection. Each team's working position will be different to meet its unique requirements. One handler may need the dog to be in a slightly forward heel position in order to use the dog's trained reactions for hallucination discernment. A wheelchair user may need the dog in front to pull the chair, or behind to go through a narrow doorway. A small dog may work exclusively from the user's lap when the person is seated in place. This may be to provide deep pressure therapy (like a weighted blanket for anxiety/autism) or for proximity to food for allergen detection. Some small dogs may even be held or pouched by default, in order to monitor for metabolic changes in the smell of the user's breath. All service dogs, regardless of size, should be trained to be under consistent control on the ground, in order to be prepared for situations where carrying is not possible (airport checkpoints, for example). See "2. Leash Tension". Dogs should never be placed in situations that are dangerous to themselves or others. For example, a small dog should not be on the ground in a raucous, shoulder-to-shoulder festival. Similarly, handlers should take care not to allow their dogs in positions that may trip or knock over others, such as lying in a narrow aisle with foot traffic.

### 5. Vehicles and Public Transportation:

Teams should be prepared to safely use any form of transportation of which they might avail themselves (personal car, taxi, bus, metro/subway/light rail, cable car, train, airplane, or other form of mass transit). For those in rural environments who anticipate never traveling by any other means, a car might be the only type of vehicle the team trains to use. However, since we cannot always anticipate where life will take us, it is wise to gain exposure to as many types of transportation as you can. Training under controlled settings and keeping it under threshold is preferable to hoping these skills won't be needed and being in for a shock at your dog's reaction to a bus's air brakes hissing, for example. Your dog should be able to wait until instructed to enter or exit the vehicle. The handler should be able to unload the dog and any other necessary equipment (wheelchair, walker, crutches, cane, etc.) with the dog following their instructions. The dog should be on a leash, harness, or other device when exiting the vehicle and stay with the handler and under control. Safely using a form of transportation includes not only entering and exiting, but also riding. What's appropriate is specific to the type of vehicle in question. Many handlers use a crash rated seatbelt harness in cars to prevent their dogs from becoming projectiles in a crash. Be sure an airbag is not armed for your dog's seat, since they're not designed to be safe for dogs. These safety choices are up to the individual but remember that you don't always control whether you're in an accident, and it's better to be safe than sorry. As a special warning, be sure to have a system ready when boarding or detraining from a subway car. These doors automatically close and aren't watching to make sure you're both on together. Many teams prefer to go through the doors in parallel so it's harder to be separated. If you have an over-the-shoulder leash or one otherwise attached to you, seriously consider taking it off and holding it to prevent avoidable harm if you are separated. A dog should be trained to ride in vehicles without significant anxiety or otherwise being worked up. The dog should remain under control at all times without the need for coercion.

### 6. Parking Lot Behavior:

Teams should transit the parking lot safely. The dog should be able to remain in working position unless cued to do otherwise. The dog should be able to navigate a parking lot environment with confidence and remain focused on its handler.

### 7. Controlled Entry into a Building:

Teams should be able to enter a building in a controlled and safe manner. A dog should be confident when encountering varied types of flooring, the blasts of overhead blowers, automatic doors, and other sensations associated with places of business. If trained to do so for disability mitigation, the dog should be able to safely operate doors for the handler.

## 8. Navigating a Store:

Teams should be able to move through stores together with the dog in working position. The dog should not attempt to solicit attention from others, knock into shelves, or interact with merchandise, such as by sniffing or licking. The dog should be able to walk past areas such as the bakery section, meat section, and pet food aisle, and be able to disregard such distractions to keep sufficient focus on the handler. (If the dog has been trained specifically to sniff food to aid with the user's disability, then the dog can work at identifying the trigger by sniffing the food from a reasonable distance.) The handler should be able to interact with the public and remain in control of their dog at all times. Unless it is okayed beforehand with the handler and the other party, the dog should not solicit attention from others. If the dog happens to behave inappropriately, the handler should regain control quickly and respectfully. Assuming the person can use a cart, the dog should be able to maintain a working position beside while the person uses the cart. Generally, it is not a reasonable accommodation for a service dog to be placed in a shopping cart.

## 9. Working with Distractions:

A dog should be able to perform its duties and remain focused on the handler. If a dog becomes startled or distracted at any time, it should be able to quickly return its attention to the handler with very little or no redirection. The dog should not be aggressive or fearful or cause the handler to fall or stumble. See information under: "3. Inappropriate Service Dog Conduct". In addition to the basic contexts covered in other items on this public access standard, teams should focus training efforts toward environments that prepare them for both the more common and the more challenging places they will likely be. For instance, work or school environments are common for many people, and a dentist's office or airplane might be particularly challenging. There's a first time for everything you will encounter together, but it's wise to build up proficiency through piecemeal exposures to keep your dog under threshold and able to work. Dogs that are exposed to a high-pitched power tool sound in a familiar environment may be less likely to be afraid of the same type of sound later at the dentist's office. Similarly, riding on busses (etc.) is smart before hopping on a plane. The world is unpredictable, so a service dog must have developed psychological shock absorbers through a breadth of training so it can handle anything.

## 10. Obedience Training:

A dog should be able to reliably follow the basic cues bulleted below in real-world situations on the ground, regardless of its normal working position:

- Stay
- Wait
- Sit, Sit/Stays
- Down, Down/Stays
- Come, Recall
- Leave-it
- Heel
- Look/Focus on Handler

Handling a service dog in no-pet places requires skill beyond that of basic obedience. For example, a dog should be able to handle its leash being accidentally dropped. The dog should be able to remain in working position and focused on the handler, unless the dog temporarily leaves working position to retrieve the leash because it is trained to do so. A service dog must also tolerate the general public, since people are bound to approach and interact with your dog without the handler being able to notice in time to stop it. There are various behaviors associated with this. A dog should be able to greet a friendly stranger, ignore them, or move out of their way, whichever the handler have cued or trained the dog to do. A dog also must be able to accept touch from veterinary staff, groomers, and others. A dog should remain confident and calm and not get overly excited or show any signs of aggression or undue fear. Some handlers don't use a leash; they may exclusively use a harness or have some other justified means of control. In such cases, simply apply the sentiment in the leash statements in a reasonable manner.

## 11. Restaurant:

Teams should be able to enter a restaurant or eating area and the dog should not attempt to eat, lick, or closely sniff any food on the floor or on tables. (Once again, if the dog has been trained specifically to sniff food to aid with the user's disability, then the dog can work at identifying the trigger by sniffing the food from a reasonable distance.) A dog should not beg from anyone or attempt to interact with other patrons or waitstaff. The handler should be able to move and place the dog in a space that still allows the dog to perform its duties but does not interfere with the coming and going of other patrons and staff. For most teams, this placement is lying under or beside the table. Dogs should not be allowed on tables, chairs or benches at any time. It is acceptable for a small dog to be in the handler's lap for disability mitigation only if the dog does not attempt to eat, lick, or closely sniff at food or the table. A handler

should never feed their dog any food from the table. If you are in an outdoor eating area and your dog needs water, some handlers find it acceptable to water your dog from its own container. Be sure not to leave spilled water on any smooth surfaces, inside or out.

## **12. Elevator:**

Teams should be able to load into an elevator and travel up and down with the dog remaining confident and unruffled in a sit, down, or standing position. The dog should not closely sniff or attempt to consume anything on the floor or walls of the elevator or interact with others without prior consent. The team should be able to enter and exit the elevator in a controlled manner. The handler should always be mindful not to be separated from the dog by the closing of the elevator doors; see "5. Vehicles and Public Transportation" for a detailed warning.

## **13. Stairs**

If using stairs, a dog should maintain a position safe for all parties, which may differ from its usual working position. A dog should not cause the handler or others to fall or stumble. Teams that do not navigate stairways should be able to navigate wheelchair access ramps in a similarly safe manner. In this case, users are encouraged to make sure their dog can handle stairs in case a situation arises where someone else needs to handle the dog.

## **14. Working around Other Dogs:**

Service dogs should be able to maintain a working mode while in the presence of other dogs. They can take a casual notice of other dogs but should not approach or become overly distracted. It is unusual for most teams to run into other service dog teams, but it happens. What is more common is encounters with pets that likely have much less training, and this happens in no-pet places. Teams must be prepared for surprises, and this kind is important.

## **15. Use of Public Restrooms:**

A Handler can use accessible stalls with a service dog when such stalls are available. Otherwise, a handler can place a large dog in a stay command just outside of the restroom stall, if it is too small for both to occupy. Handlers should then maintain a connection with the dog by taking the leash under the stall door and keeping a hold on it. A handler should not allow a dog to walk under partitions into adjoining stalls, place its head into them, or look into them.