



SHARE-A-PET

Therapy Obedience Professional Dog Certification Requirements



TOP-1 Polite greeting

This exercise demonstrates that the pet will allow a friendly stranger to approach and speak to the handler. The evaluator walks up to the dog and handler and greets the handler in a friendly manner, ignoring the dog. The evaluator and handler shake hands and exchange pleasantries. The dog must show no sign of resentment or shyness, and must not break position or try to go to the evaluator. **The dog must not jump or bark.**

TOP-2 Petting

This exercise demonstrates that the dog will allow all types of petting. With the dog sitting or standing at the handler's side, the evaluator pets the dog on the head and body. The evaluator should engage in exuberant, sudden and clumsy petting. The handler may talk to his or her dog. The dog must not show shyness or resentment.

TOP-3 Grooming and handling

This exercise demonstrates that the dog is well groomed with filed nails and parasite free and will welcome being groomed and examined. The evaluator inspects the dog to determine if it is clean and groomed. The dog must appear to be in healthy condition (i.e., proper weight, clean, healthy and alert). The evaluator examines the ears, picks up each front foot, hugs the dog, and gently tugs its tail. It is not necessary for the dog to hold a specific position during the examination, and the handler may talk to the dog, praise it and give encouragement throughout. The dog must not be uncomfortable being touched in any way. **The dog must not growl or bark.**

TOP-4 Sit and down stay

This exercise demonstrates that the dog will respond to the handler's commands to sit and down and remain calmly in place. The handler may take a reasonable amount of time and use more than one command to get the dog to sit and then down. The evaluator must determine if the dog has responded to the handler's commands. The handler may not force the dog into position. When instructed by the evaluator, the dog should remain in each position for one minute.

TOP-5 Walking on a Loose Lead

This exercise demonstrates that the handler is in control of the dog. The dog may be on either side of the handler. The dog's position should leave no doubt that the dog is attentive to the handler and is responding to the handler's movements and changes of direction. The dog need not be perfectly aligned with the handler and need not sit when the handler stops. The evaluator should instruct the handler to walk a course that includes a right turn, a left turn, and an about turn with at least one stop in between and another at the end. The handler may talk to the dog along the way, praise the dog, or give commands in a normal tone of voice. The handler may sit the dog at the halts if desired.

TOP-6 Reaction to Another Dog

This exercise demonstrates that the dog can behave politely around other dogs. **The dog must not growl at the other dog(s).** Two handlers and their dogs approach each other from a distance of about 20 feet, stop, shake hands, and remain in place for 30 seconds. The dogs should show no more than casual interest in each other. Neither dog should jump on the other dog or its handler. Slight curiosity and sniffing are okay.

TOP-7 Reaction to distraction

This exercise demonstrates that the dog is comfortable at all times when faced with common distracting situations in a nursing home or hospital. The evaluator will select and present two distractions. Distractions should include rolling a wheel chair or a walker towards the dog, dropping a crutch or cane, and creating loud noises. The dog may express natural interest and curiosity and/or may appear slightly startled but should not panic, try to run away, show aggressiveness, or bark. The handler may talk to the dog and encourage or praise the dog throughout the exercise.

TOP-8 Wheelchair petting

This exercise demonstrates that the dog will remain in place when instructed to do so by the handler. The handler will walk the dog up to a person in a wheelchair. Large dogs need to sit next to the wheel chair during the exercise and small dogs (under 20 lbs) need to sit calmly on the lap of the person in the wheelchair. The handler should ask the dog to stay while being petted and then walk around the dog from one side to the other and behind the chair with the dog remaining in place the whole time. The handler may use encouragement to get the dog to stay. Handlers may choose to tell dogs to "stay" or "wait" or they may simply walk around, giving no instructions to the dog. The dog must not show resistance to petting or struggle to get away from the wheelchair. **The dog must not jump on the individual in the wheelchair.**



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TOP-9 Separation from owner

This exercise demonstrates that the dog can maintain position and not react poorly when the owner walks further away. While a dog is being held on leash by another person, the handler will leave the room for a full minute. The handler can instruct the dog to stay while leaving. The dog should remain in position until the owner returns and not whine, bark, growl, paw at the handler or show undue concern.

TOP-10 Walking through a crowd with walkers and wheelchairs

This exercise demonstrates that the dog can move about politely in pedestrian traffic and is under control in hospital and nursing home situations. The dog and handler walk around and pass close to several people (at least three). One of the three should be walking with a walker. The dog may show some interest in the strangers but should continue to walk calmly next to the handler without evidence of over-exuberance, shyness or resentment. The handler may talk to the dog and encourage or praise the dog throughout the test. The dog should not jump on people in the crowd or strain on the leash. The dog should not try to play with the balls under the walker legs.

TOP-11 Leave it

This exercise demonstrates that the dog is trained to leave a high value item on the floor, such as a toy or food. The handler will be instructed by the evaluator to lead the dog to the item. The dog may show interest in the item but must not pick the item up, and should easily walk away from it. Handler should instruct the dog to 'leave it' when appropriate.

TOP-12 Taking a Treat

This exercise demonstrates that the dog is capable of taking a treat gently from the hand of someone. The dog must demonstrate control in taking a treat and should not take it with too much exuberance. The dog's teeth should not touch the person's hand.

Equipment

All tests must be performed on 4 or 6ft. non-retractable leash. Dogs should wear well-fitting buckle or slip collars made of leather or fabric. Special training collars such as pinch collars, head halters, etc. are not permitted in the TOP test. The owner/handler can bring the dog's brush or comb to the test as well as a few appropriate treats for their dog.

Encouragement

Owners/handlers may use praise and encouragement throughout the test. The owner may pet the dog between exercises. Food and treats are only permitted during the final test exercise. Use of toys, squeaky toys, etc. to get the dog to do something is not permitted.

Failures – Dismissals - Exceptions

Any dog that eliminates during testing must be marked failed. Any dog that growls, snaps, bites, attacks, or attempts to attack a person or another dog must be dismissed from the test. Any dog that fails to pass all twelve items, unless otherwise excepted, must also be marked failed.

If a dog fails two or less items on the test, they will be given an opportunity to pass these failed items whenever the tester is available. Dogs will have two chances to pass each item on the test during a test. Dogs that fail more than two items will be required to retake the entire test. Dogs may retake the test as many times as is necessary, but must pay for the test each time.