

Therapy Dog Evaluation

Step #1 Meeting the Evaluator

Note: Small dogs may be carried during this step.

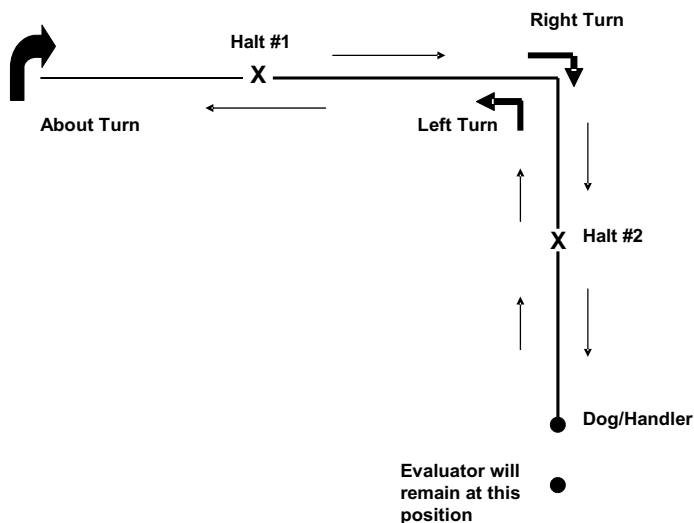
The Evaluator, wearing a smock, will approach the dog and handler with their arm and hand outstretched. The dog does not have to sit and may approach the Evaluator in a quiet and friendly manner. The dog must not jump up on the Evaluator. Jumping up is a failure.

The Evaluator will then shake hands and speak to the handler in a pleasant manner for a few seconds. The conversation will continue with the Evaluator asking the handler's permission to pet the dog. When permission is given, the Evaluator will pet the dog on the head and check the dog for appearance and grooming. The dog must not show shyness or resentment (a slight leaning away or movement away will not be taken as shyness). The Evaluator will then run their fingers lightly through the coat, fondle the ears and head, and lift each front foot. A small dog held in the handler's arms will have both front feet handled lightly.

After examining the dog, the Evaluator will step back three or four paces, walk around behind the dog and handler and return to a position in front. The Evaluator should not stare at the dog. During this portion of the evaluation, the Evaluator will also be assessing the dog's overall social skills with people. Any growling, snarling or cowering is a failure.

Step #2 Dog Under Control

To test the handler's control of the dog, the handler/dog team will be asked to traverse an "L" pattern as directed by the Evaluator.



The Evaluator and an assistant will demonstrate the pattern to the group before putting the first team through the exercise. The handler/dog team will begin the test in front of and facing away from the Evaluator who will remain in place while the handler and dog perform the exercise. (The start/finish spot may be marked with masking tape if necessary.) The Evaluator will instruct the team to proceed as follows:

Forward – the team will proceed away from the Evaluator

Left turn – the team will turn left at the pylon

Halt – the team will halt when instructed

Forward – the team will continue along the course

About Turn – the team will turn around through the pylons and proceed back towards the Evaluator

Right Turn – the team will turn right at the pylon

Halt – the team will halt when instructed

Forward – the team will continue along the course

Halt at the End – the team will halt in front of the Evaluator

Although the dogs does not have to heel, it should stay reasonably close to the handler. The dog does not have to sit when it halts. The dog does not have to be on the left side of the handler. Any pulling or straining at the lead, or changing sides so as to interfere with the movement of the handler will be a failure.

NB. The course may be set up in a reciprocal arrangement with corresponding changes in instructions.

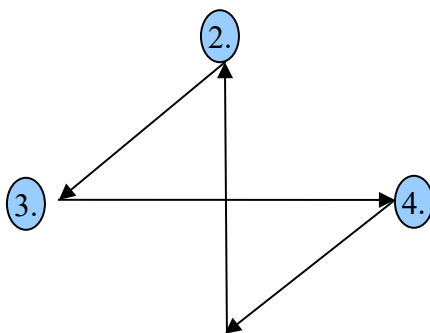
Step #3 Negotiating a Milling Crowd

Note: Small dogs may be carried during this step.

The Evaluator will mark the floor with numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 as shown in the diagram and ask four assistants to take positions, one at each of the numbers. The assistants will, when directed, cross back and forth until instructed to stop, simulating a milling crowd or busy institutional hallway. The crowd will not intentionally avoid the dog or block his progress, but move as if they are making their way through a congested area. The handler/dog team will proceed through the crowd from position 1 to position 2, to position 3, to position 4 and back to position 1. The team will repeat the pattern to complete the step.

When walking through the crowd, the dog may show interest in the people without being overly exuberant (leaning heavily, pushing against people or jumping up). The dog must walk with confidence on a loose lead and should stay reasonably close to his handler. The dog should not pull or strain on the lead and must not interfere with the handler's movements.

Shy, resentful or anxious dogs will be failed.



1.

Step #4 Dog meeting Dog

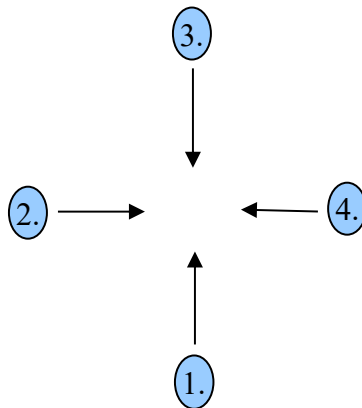
With the dog in the left hand position and on a short lead, four handlers and dogs will face each other at a pre-set distance of eight feet (see diagram). The handlers will not tell the dogs to stay when placed in position and will not otherwise communicate with the dog or the other handlers during this step. The Evaluator will instruct three of the handlers to keep their dogs on a short leash, while the other handler will be told to let their leash out to its full length.

The dog, now allowed freedom of movement, will be closely observed by the Evaluator. After a reasonable length of time (10 to 15 seconds), the dog's leash will be shortened and the next dog will take its turn. Dogs are to be called upon one at a time so that handlers can be closely observed for any hand signals, jerking of the lead or other signals to the dog to stay.

Any aggression, dominance, shyness or resentment will be a failure.

Close observation of the dogs in this evaluation is very important, since a problem may arise without warning. Evaluators should be prepared to intervene if necessary.

Note – If there are only three handler/dog teams, then a triangle may be used. If there are two dogs left to be evaluated, a third handler/dog team may be brought back to make up the number (this handler/dog team is not being re-evaluated).



Steps #5, #6 and #7 Stationary Crowd Scene

Note: Small dogs may be carried during these steps.

The following steps are designed to test the dog's behaviour with a crowd of people and will be performed as a sequence one dog at a time. Our "crowd" will include a minimum of four people of which one will carry a cane and another will wear a baseball cap. Also in the immediate area will be a chair with a stuffed toy on it.

Step #5

The handler will walk around the inside of the circle twice with the dog closest to the people, allowing all the people to touch and stroke the dog. The dog may take the stuffed toy from the chair but the handler must be able to easily remove the toy from the dog's mouth. Small dogs may be carried but must be closest to the people to allow petting.

Step #6

While the people remain in the circle, the dog and handler leave the circle and proceed to a spot about ten feet away from the circle where they remain with their backs to the circle. One of the evaluators will pull a robe around themselves and over their head, and will join in the circle bending forward with arms hanging. The handler/dog team will return to the circle and advance as close as possible to the person in the robe. The dog may sit or stand. The person in the robe will remain quiet and motionless, staring at the ground. The dog will be observed for ten seconds for any reaction. Upon the Evaluator's instructions, the person wearing the robe will acknowledge the dog's presence with a pet, thus finishing the step with a positive experience. The person wearing the robe will remove it and rejoin the circle in preparation for the next step.

Step #7

The Evaluator will place the handler/dog team in the centre of the circle with the dog sitting beside the handler and facing the Evaluator. Upon command, the crowd will advance together with one arm outstretched and fist closed towards the dog. The people will move in a friendly and non-threatening manner, talk to and pet the dog, while using the dog's name. The Evaluator will be able to observe the dog's reactions and will be able to react quickly should a problem arise.

If, in any of the above steps, the dog exhibits shyness, resentment or aggression, the team will fail. If the handler blocks contact with the people in the circle, the team will fail. If the dog strains or pulls on the leash or impedes the movements of the handler, the team will fail.

Steps #8, #9, #10 and #11 Evaluator in Wheelchair with Distractions

The following steps are designed to test the dog's behaviour with a person in a wheelchair and his reaction to noisy distractions. These steps will be performed as a sequence one dog at a time.

If possible, only the handler/dog team being evaluated will remain in the evaluation area. Other teams will be asked to leave the room to wait their turn. Otherwise the other dogs may either become accustomed to the noisy distractions or become stressed by them which would, in either case, unfairly affect the evaluation.

Step #8

The handler will stand facing away from the Evaluator with his dog sitting by his side. The Evaluator, in a wheelchair, will approach from behind and move alongside the handler/dog team. The Evaluator will pet the

dog and talk to him in an excited manner. The handler of a small dog will be asked to place the dog in the Evaluator's lap (refusal is a failure). In the case of a larger breed, the Evaluator will place their arm over the dog's withers in a relaxed manner. The behaviour of the dog will be observed and any shyness, resentment or aggression will result in failure.

Step #9

The Evaluator will ask the handler if they may offer the dog a treat. The dog should take the treat gently, or may even refuse the treat (this refusal is not a failure). The treat should be held firmly for a few seconds before allowing the dog to take it. A refusal to perform this step is considered a failure. Any snapping or lunging by the dog for the treat is also considered a failure.

Note: The handler may supply the treat if they wish and may tell the dog to accept the treat.

Step #10

With the dog and handler still beside the Evaluator in the wheelchair, or with a small dog on the Evaluator's lap, an assistant, approaching from behind the team, will jog quickly across the room about six feet from the dog.

Step #11

Immediately following the jogger, another person, standing approximately six feet behind the dog, will drop either a bag of empty cans or a stainless steel bowl, creating a noisy distraction.

In steps 10 and 11, the Evaluator will observe the dog's reaction to and recovery from these distractions. The dog may be startled by the noise but it should not react in a shy, aggressive or vicious way. These reactions would constitute a failure.

Step #12 Dog Left Alone

On the odd occasion when the dog has to be left with another person for a short time, he should not show any separation anxiety.

At the conclusion of test #11, all handlers and dogs will return to the evaluation area. The handlers will be asked to leave their dogs with one of the ECTD members and leave the room for a period of approximately one minute. When the handlers return, the ECTD member will advise them of their dog's behaviour. If the dog displayed anxiety, the Evaluator will discuss the issue with them and ask them to work on that aspect of their training.

Note: This test does not affect the outcome of the evaluation.