

Is Your Dog Ready for Pet Therapy Visits?

There are examinations to determine if a dog is ready to work as a therapy dog. As a dog owner, you are ultimately responsible for your dog's conduct. How do you know that you and your dog are ready? You know your dog better than any trainer or evaluator. Make your own evaluation by taking the following test.

- Yes No **Have you and your dog had any formal training?**
Have you attended at least a beginner training class? Do you still practice at home?
- Yes No **Is your dog well socialized?**
Is he accustomed to many kinds of situations, people and other dogs?
- Yes No **Does your dog like children?**
Does he wag his tail and want to gently play? Does he know not to jump up on children?

If you answered YES to these questions, please proceed.

- Yes No **Does your dog jump up on people? Does your dog lunge at people's faces?**
I don't permit this conduct. I use a sharp correction.
- Yes No **Do people cringe at the sight your dog?**
Do neighbors cross the street when you approach with your dog?
No, they smile and pet him fondly.
- Yes No **Does your dog growl at strangers, children or anyone else (mailman, delivery drivers)?**
- Yes No **Do unfamiliar places and noises stress out your dog?**
Dogs under stress may shake, cower, snap, nip, growl, bark, vomit, and/or urinate.
- Yes No **Does your dog ever bark incessantly?**
I don't permit this conduct. He stops barking when I tell him to do so.
- Yes No **Are you surprised when your dog does put his best paw forward?**
No, I trained him well and I expect him to behave.
- Yes No **Does your dog have any health problems?**
My dog has regular vet appointments, is up to date on vaccinations and I check him regularly for lumps and sensitive areas.
- Yes No **Does your dog consume any Raw Animal Protein in their diet?**
Raw meat is not sterile, and may contain E. coli, Salmonella and Campylobacter, which can be shed by the dog, presenting a higher infection risk to humans.

If you answered NO to these questions, please proceed.

- Agree **How does your dog behave when he is bumped, ears are pulled, at the Vet and Groomer?**
He compliantly accepts the treatment.
- Agree **How does your dog react to rolling objects: wheelchairs, walkers, carts, bikes, roller blades, skateboards?**
He calmly watches with curiosity as they move past.
- Agree **What happens when your dog sees another dog?**
He exhibits mild curiosity and wags his tail.
- Agree **How does your dog accept a treat?**
He sits and waits until given the signal, then gently takes it from my hand.

Do these behaviors describe your dog? Then you are ready to take the Canine Good Citizen test.

ALL questions should be answered as indicated. If you did not, then you might want to consider taking a training course before venturing out to do therapy work with your dog.