



Test Requirements

Thank you for your interest in becoming a member of Ottawa Therapy Dogs Inc. (OTD). Before you may become a registered therapy dog team with OTD, it is necessary for you and your potential therapy dog to be evaluated by a certified evaluator. Below is a list of the test items that you and your dog will be required to pass in order to be eligible for registration with OTD.

- 1) **Accepting a Friendly Stranger:** This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to approach and speak to the handler in a natural, everyday situation. The Evaluator and handler shake hands and exchange pleasantries. The dog must show no sign of resentment or shyness, and must not try to go to the Evaluator.
- 2) **Accepting Petting and Restraining hug:** This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to touch it while it is out with its handler. The dog should sit at the handler's side as the Evaluator approaches and begins to pet the dog on the head and body only. The dog may stand in place to accept petting. The dog must not show shyness or resentment.
- 3) **Appearance and Grooming:** This practical test demonstrates that the dog will welcome being groomed and examined and will permit a stranger, such as a veterinarian, groomer, or friend of the owner, to do so. It also demonstrates the owner's care, concern and sense of responsibility. The Evaluator inspects the dog, then combs or brushes it, and lightly examines the ears and each front foot. (Nails must be clipped short and be rounded smooth to avoid scratching fragile skin in those visited by OTD Therapy Dogs.)
- 4) **Sit & Down:** This test demonstrates that the dog has training, will respond to the handler's commands to sit and down. The handler may take a reasonable amount of time and use more than one command to make the dog sit and then down.
- 5) **Stay in place / Recall:** This test demonstrates that the dog will stay and will come when called by the handler. The dog will remain in the place commanded by the handler (sit or down position, whichever the handler prefers). When instructed by the Evaluator, the handler tells the dog to stay and walks forward the length of a 20 foot line. The dog must remain in place, but may change position. On the recall, the Handler will walk 10 feet from the dog, turn to face the dog, and call the dog. The handler may use encouragement to get the dog to come. Handlers may choose to tell the dog to "Stay" or "Wait" or they may simply walk away, giving no instructions to the dog.
- 6) **Praise / Interaction:** This test demonstrates that the dog can be easily calmed down following play or praise. The handler may use verbal praise, petting, playing with a toy and/or a favourite trick for 10 seconds and then the handler must calm the dog.
- 7) **Walking on a Loose Leash:** This test demonstrates that the handler is in control of the dog. The dog can be on either side of the handler, whichever the handler prefers. There must be a left turn, a right turn and an about turn, with at least one stop in between and another at the end. The dog need not be perfectly aligned with the handler and need not sit when the handler stops.
- 8) **Reactions to Distractions -- Noise, Run-by:** This test demonstrates that the dog is confident at all times when faced with common distracting situations, such as the dropping of a large book or a jogger running in front of the dog. The dog may express a natural interest and curiosity and/or appear slightly startled, but should not panic, try to run away, show aggressiveness or bark.
- 9) **Leave It:** The handler with the dog on a loose leash walks past food on the ground (placed with a distance of three feet) and on command, the dog should ignore the food.

- 10) **Reactions to Another Dog:** This test demonstrates that the dog can behave politely around other dogs. Two handlers and their dogs approach each other from a distance of about 10 yards, stop, shake hands and exchange pleasantries, and continue on for about 5 yards. The dogs should show no more than a casual interest in each other.
- 11) **Walking Through a Crowd:** This test demonstrates that the dog can move about politely in pedestrian traffic and is under control in public places, including around medical equipment (such as a wheelchair, crutches, cane, walker). This test also demonstrates the dog's confidence when exposed to people with challenges (uneven gait, shuffling, breathing heavily, coughing wheezing or other distractions which may be encountered in a facility). The dog and handler walk around and pass close to several people. The dog may show some interest in the strangers, without appearing over-exuberant, shy or resentful. The handler may talk to the dog and encourage or praise the dog throughout the test. The dog should not be straining at the leash.
- 12) **Say Hello:** (if normally the dog is carried, this exercise must be done carried as well as placed on the lap of the person being visited): The OTD Certified Evaluator will test the willingness of each dog to visit a person and that the dog can be accessible for petting (i.e. small dogs can be placed on a person's lap or can be held, medium & larger dogs can sit on a chair or stand close to the patient to be easily reached).
- 13) **Reaction to Swarming:** This test demonstrates that the dog is confident at all times when faced with being swarmed, such as when a number of people simultaneously approach and surround the dog. The dog may express a natural interest or curiosity and / or appear slightly startled, but should not panic, try to run away, show aggressiveness or bark.
- 14) **Taking a Treat:** This test demonstrates that the dog will either refuse the treat, or if they do take it, they do so very gently. The dog may not use its teeth, snap or lunge for the treat. The handler is not permitted to give a command or cue.

Additional Information:

- Small dogs (defined as any dog which may be carried) must also be tested in arms for Items #1, #2, #12, & #13.
- Dogs must be tested on a flat collar, harness or cloth martingale.
- Treats may not be used during the test (with the exception of #14, which we will provide)
- Dogs will be tested for hand-shyness and restraining hug
- Adult monitored children may be present with parental consent.