
4-H Service Dog Evaluation Items

Handlers may give a single cue before any change of direction, change of speed, or change of position.

All exercises are performed on leash.

- 1. Accepting a Friendly Stranger** – The test begins with the dog seated at the handler's side. The judge walks up to the dog and handler and greets the handler in a friendly manner, ignoring the dog. The judge and handler shake hands and say hello. If the dog shows signs of shyness or breaks position to go to the judge it should be marked as needing more training.
- 2. Accepting an Exam** – The judge examines the dog to determine if it is clean and groomed. The dog must appear to be the proper weight, clean, healthy and alert. The judge lightly examines the ears, feet and coat. The handler will show the dog's teeth to the judge. Some squirming is acceptable; any dog showing shyness or requiring restraint should be marked as needing more training.
- 3. Heel** – The judge will use a heeling pattern similar to traditional obedience work. Heeling will include Forward, Right Turn, Left Turn, About Turn, and Slow; with at least two Halts during the judging. The dog should walk on a loose leash at the handler's left side. A Service Dog's heel position is slightly forged or having the loin even with the handler's leg. The dog sits only when cued by the handler. A dog that is straining at the leash or is totally inattentive to the handler should be marked as needing more training.
- 4. Walk Through a Crowd** – The dog and handler will walk around and pass close to at least three people and/or dogs. The dog should walk in heel position with only mild interest in the members of the crowd. A dog that jumps on or goes to people in the crowd should be marked as needing more training.
- 5. Coming When Called** – Handler will cue the dog to stay and walk to the end of the leash. The dog may be left in the sit, down, or standing position. The handler calls the dog and the dog comes in and touches its nose to either of the handler's hands. The dog is then cued to return to heel position. If the dog refuses to stay, if repeated prompts to come are required or if the dog is not within easy arm reach, the dog should be marked as needing more training.
- 6. Reaction to Distractions** – The judge will choose one noise, one movement and one food distraction: (noise) squeaky toy, crying baby doll, bike horn, (movement) ball bouncing, motorized stuffed animal, swinging white cane with ball end, (food) bowl of popcorn, open bag of chips, fast food wrapper. Dog and handler will walk past the distraction at a distance of about 5 feet away. The dog should appear confident. A dog that eats some food, or that panics or pulls to get away should be marked as needing more training.
- 7. Stay** - Handler will sit in a chair. The dog will lie alongside the chair on the left side for 3 minutes. Will be judged as a group exercise. A dog that will not settle beside the handler or tries to get into the handler's lap should be marked as needing more training.