

Purpose

This Public Access Title (OPAT) examines the temperament and disposition of the dog in public settings. Throughout the evaluation, the dog's behavior will be assessed for a calm disposition, stability and reliability in situations typically encountered by service dog teams. The OPAT will also verify that the handler is in control of the dog at all times, that the dog is safe to be in a public setting, and that the dog demonstrates the high standard of training expected of service dogs. Handlers should work with an O.D.O.R. Service Dogs Inc. Evaluator to make sure they understand the specific details of each part of the evaluation prior to the evaluation.

All evaluations will be filmed. In the event that the Evaluator cannot be physically present, the team being evaluated may submit the filmed video of each of the exercises, with the assistance of a helper to record the OPAT and perform any exercises requiring an additional person. Both the dog and handler must be completely visible in the frame at all times. As this Public Access Title requires multiple locations and can be time consuming, it is acceptable for the evaluation to be filmed in multiple sessions over a 2 week period, if necessary.

Evaluation Specifications

In order to earn the OPAT title, the team must satisfactorily demonstrate that:

- the dog can remain calm and steady around crowds, traffic, and other dogs;
- the dog is well-mannered and unobtrusive in public;
- the dog is appropriately focused on the handler and responds to cues without showing signs of stress;
- the handler is able to control the dog while maintaining a positive team relationship

Dog Behavior

If the dog displays any of the following behaviors during the evaluation, the team will not earn the title:

- Aggression or growling;
- Inappropriate or excessive barking;
- Nipping or biting;
- Baring teeth;
- Lunging at other people or animals;
- Not under the handler's control within one minute;
- Inappropriate elimination (defecation or urination); or
- Fear (startle with a quick recovery is acceptable), distress or anxiety (such as cowering, attempting to flee, hiding or trembling).

Handler Behavior

If the handler performs any of these behaviors during the evaluation, the team will not earn the title:

- Hitting, kicking, or shaking the dog;
- Physically or verbally intimidating the dog;
- Throwing something at the dog with the intent to harm or intimidate; or
- Physically manipulating the dog into a position.

Training Aids

The handler may praise the dog at any time throughout the evaluation. Treats and toys may be used to reward the dog at the completion of a task, but may not be used to lure the dog. Nothing worn by the dog should ever be used inappropriately, or for corrections.

Dogs may wear any of the following during the evaluation:

- Properly fitted flat, buckle or martingale collar;
- Non-constricting/non-corrective harness (front or rear attachment,) to include a Service Dog vest; and/or
- Head halter.

Dogs may **NOT** wear any of the following during the evaluation:

- Prong/pinch collar;
- Choke collar;
- Electric collar (such as shock, vibrating, GPS, and similar); or
- Studded or prong harness.

Protective Footwear

When performing an exercise outdoors on surfaces such as pavement, asphalt, gravel, sand, or wood, the handler should demonstrate at the start of filming each exercise that they have touched the surface with the palm of their hand for at least five (5) seconds to evaluate the temperature. If the handler is unable to hold their hand to the surface for the full five (5) seconds because the surface is too hot, the dog must wear boots or other protective gear for the exercises filmed on that surface.

Care and Well-being

The dog should be clean and well-groomed (e.g., nails, fur, etc.) and have no offensive odor. The dog should be friendly and relaxed. The handler's responses to questions about the care of the dog should indicate that the handler understands and is responsive to the dog's needs. The dog should be in good body condition.

Team Relationship

It is important for a Service Dog Team to have a positive and close relationship. Both the handler and the dog should be relaxed; there should be positive reinforcement for the dog's good

behavior. It should be clear to the Evaluator that the handler understands what type of praise and positive reinforcement the dog enjoys and uses those methods to encourage their dog.

Team Access Rights

The Evaluator will ask the handler questions to ensure that the handler is familiar with their legal rights to access, and the limitations of those rights within their location. Accommodations may be made for individuals with cognitive and/or speech issues.

Public Access Exercise Overviews

Dog Distraction

The dog performing the OPAT must remain calm and under control of the handler, not display aggression, vocalizations, or a desire to play as an assistant walks past the team with a decoy (neutral) dog within 6 feet (2 meters) of the team.

Noise Distraction (Dropped Object)

The dog may acknowledge the noise with a normal startle/recovery, but may not in any way show aggression or fear as an assistant drops an object onto the ground behind the team.

Controlled Unload from Vehicle/Mode of Transportation

The handler will unload the dog and any necessary equipment (wheelchair, walker, crutches, etc.) out of the vehicle (or public transportation). The emphasis on this exercise is that the dog being evaluated remains unobtrusive and is unloaded in the safest manner possible for everyone.

Approaching the Building

The dog must stay in a working position and may not pull ahead nor lag behind as the team maneuvers through a parking lot or similar area. The dog must not display a fear of cars or traffic noises and must display a relaxed attitude.

Controlled Entry into a Building

The dog should remain confident with varying types of doorways (automatic doors, overhead blowers, rotating doors).

Navigating a Store

Inside the building, the handler and the dog must walk through the area in a controlled manner. The dog must readily adjust to speed changes, turn corners promptly, and travel through a crowded area without interacting with the public or merchandise

Shopping cart

The dog must pass by or walk next to a shopping cart within (4) feet or (1) meter. The dog should not show fear and/or leave its working position.

Recall

In a large, safe open public area the handler will perform a six (6) foot or two (2) meter recall with the dog remaining on leash. The dog should respond and should come close enough to the handler to be readily touched.

Sit

In a public area, the dog must be cued to sit and maintain the sit for 30 seconds.

Down with dropped food

A down will be performed at a table or seating area in a public setting, such as a restaurant, food court or outdoor market, where food will be dropped on the floor within one (1) foot or 30 centimeters of the dog. The dog should not leave the down or reach for the food.

Leave it with food on the ground

The dog will be walked past food that is either found on, or placed on, the ground in a public area within one (1) foot or 30 centimeters of the dog. The dog must not lunge for or eat the food.

Handler Shops

The handler retrieves items from the shelf or rack in the store to demonstrate a normal shopping experience while the dog maintains a working position or cued position.

Dog Settles (Restaurant/Shopping Mall/or other common public area)

This exercise should be performed in a public place such as a restaurant, a shopping mall or other common public area. The dog should not interfere with the normal flow of business. The dog must lie down and settle.

Off Leash

During the evaluation, where appropriate and safe, the handler will be instructed to drop the leash while moving. The handler must show the ability to maintain control of the dog and get the leash back in its appropriate position.

Dog Taken by Another Person

This exercise is to demonstrate that the dog can be handled by another person without aggression, fear, or excessive stress or whining.

Moving Up and Down Building Levels

The dog should be able to confidently accompany the handler from lower to upper building levels and back using the method(s) used by the handler on a regular basis. Regardless of the method chosen, the dog should remain confident and calm and in a working position. This may be accomplished by riding in an elevator, going up and down a set of stairs, or using a ramp.

Controlled Greeting

This exercise will evaluate whether the dog is able to greet a stranger in a controlled and appropriate manner. An adult or adult and child unknown to the dog will proceed to interact with the dog in a normal manner following the guidance given by the handler. The handler may also instruct the adult or adult and child when to cease interaction with the dog.

Public Restrooms

The dog should remain as unobtrusive as possible and not cause a disturbance while the team visits a public restroom. The dog should not try to visit other people by walking or peering under a partition between stalls. The dog may have a normal startle/recovery response to hand air dryers and other loud noises but must maintain its working position. In order to respect the privacy of other store patrons, care should be taken to make sure the restroom is empty of patrons before filming.

Controlled Exit from a Building

The team will leave the building in a similar manner to entering, with safety and control being of utmost importance. The dog must not pull or strain against the leash, nor try to push their way past the handler. The dog should remain confident with varying types of doorways (automatic doors, overhead blowers, rotating doors).

Approaching the Vehicle/Mode of Transportation

The team must maneuver through the parking lot to approach the vehicle. The dog must stay in a working position and may not pull ahead nor lag behind. The dog must not display fear of cars or traffic noises, and must display a relaxed attitude.

Controlled Load into Vehicle

The handler will approach their vehicle and load the dog into the vehicle in a safe and appropriate manner. Emphasis is on safety and control.