

Fox Valley Therapy Dog Club Inc.

Evaluation Tip Sheet

If you and your dog would like to become a registered team with the Fox Valley Therapy Dog Club, the following tips should help you prepare for the evaluation process.

Every effort shall be made to have a noisy, active and occasionally disruptive “milling crowd” on the evaluation floor THROUGHOUT the testing. This “crowd” may also be equipped with canes, crutches, wheel chairs, braces or any other devices found at our site visit locations. These and other items may also be dropped throughout the exam.

You can expect that you and your dog will make physical contact with the evaluator and/or other designated assistants in the form of hand shakes, a pat on the back, an examination of the dog, hugs, being touched by a cane or crutch, laying next to a person and coming in contact with various parts of a walker or wheel chair.

You and your dog will be evaluated as a TEAM.

Those areas evaluated will be the team’s ability to perform requested tasks like:
Walking towards and through a groups of people with the dog on a loose lead and under control,

Putting the dog on a sit and down (sit/stay and down/stay)

Moving past a tempting item on the floor, the human team member picks the item up and returns it to the evaluator/assistant while the dog is not allowed to touch the item

Calling the dog to come

The sit, down and recall may be accomplished with more than one command but
CANNOT BE FORCED.

Sits and downs will also be utilized during contact with assistants posing as clients/patients.

The dog will also be tested on its ability to deal with being separated and out of sight from its handler for 2 minutes. The dog must remain calm but is not required to be absolutely still.

The team will also be evaluated on its ability to work with other teams. The dog must be able to calmly accept another team approaching. The team being evaluated will be required to move with, sit/stay next to and across from another “working” team (evaluator/assistant and their dog) and calmly remain in requested positions for a short time. The working team will also encounter an item of interest in the vicinity of the evaluating and working teams. The working team will be expected to comply under control, with the dog exhibiting no signs of aggression or fear.

TEST TEAMS ARE UNDER JUDGEMENT THE MOMENT THEY STEP ONTO THE GROUNDS OF THE EVALUATION SITE.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Our Therapy Dog Evaluation is NOT the AKC Canine Good Citizen Test
- The actual evaluation process takes about 12 minutes per dog.
- All exercises must be performed with the dog on a flat buckle collar.
- All exercises must be performed with the dog on a 6 – 8 foot leash. This leash can be cotton, nylon or leather. This leash cannot be flexi, chain or over 8 feet long.
- Treats and toys are not allowed, BUT verbal praise and petting is encouraged.
- The handler is encouraged to work with the dog and evaluator/assistants as if it were a real “on site” visit. – a handler who stands back quietly and allows a dogs to feel helpless or frightened in a scary setting or let a “patient” touch their dog in a way the handler knows is uncomfortable for the dog will be scored lower than a handler who helps promote a positive interaction between the dog and “patient”.
- A dog that shows signs of aggression may be dismissed at the Evaluator’s discretion.
- Per club policy: visiting teams will be 1 registered handler with 1 registered dog. Handlers will not be allowed to run more than one dog, at a time, through the evaluation process.
- Plan to feed your dog AFTER the evaluation. Makes sure your dog has had plenty of exercise before you enter the evaluation building. A DOG THAT ELIMINATES IN THE EVALUATION BUILDING WILL BE DISMISSED.
- Every handler will have the opportunity to review their team evaluation sheet upon completion of the event. If you have failed the evaluation, pay close attention to the areas on the evaluation that resulted in a failing score. Those areas will require further training.
- Teams showing an inability to remain under control will fail the evaluation.
- You will have three opportunities in a twelve month period to pass this evaluation.
- Suggested Reading: “Therapy Dog Today” by Kris Butler