

Canadian Association of Service Dog Trainers ^{CASDT}

Recommended Training and Testing Procedures for Owner Trained Programs



Until either a Canadian Industry Standard or a National Standard of Canada for Service Dogs is developed CASDT is recommending the following be used as an Interim training and testing process for Owner Trained Dogs. CASDT membership will be provided with all assessment, public access tests and certification documents.

Note: CASDT will not allow any breed (or mixed breed) to enter the program that is banned in any Canadian jurisdiction.

Step 1 - Requirements

- Documentation must be provided to confirm that the individual has a disability.
- This information is protected under the province of The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act along with any other relevant information on the persons application form.

Step 1 - Potential Service Dog Assessment

- The dog must be a minimum of six months of age and not older than four years of age.
- This assessment is to be used to evaluate a potential service dog and handler for placement in an Owner Trained Program.
- The initial assessment of the dog is done at pet friendly locations wherever pets are allowed.
- Dogs exhibiting severe stress, fear or aggression are disqualified.
- The dog must be a suitable breed and size for the disability of the handler.
- Any dog that pass this assessment is not a service dog in training until they successfully complete a probation period.

Step 2 - Probation Period

- A mandatory probationary period whereby the service dog team works in public spaces with a CASDT organizations Dog trainer for 20 one-hour sessions.
- The intent of the probation is to further evaluate the dog and handler for suitability to owner train and to rule out any signs of dog aggression, fear, or severe stress.
- Handlers' typically commit to participating in these training sessions once or twice a week over a three- month period.
- Probation sessions should be done in stores or public places that allow dogs.
- The trainer should provide the dog with a vest/ harness during these training sessions.
- The vest/harness is returned at the completion of the training.
- The training should focus on Public Access Testing (PAT) requirements.
- After 20 training sessions the service dog and handler are eligible for Public Access testing (PAT).

Step 3 – Public Access Testing (PAT)

- Once the team has made it through the probationary period, the team must then take a Public Access Test (PAT)
- The purpose of the Public Access Test (PAT) is to ensure that dogs who have public access are stable, well behaved, and unobtrusive to the public and ensures the handler has control over the dog and the team is not a public hazard.
- This test assesses the dog's ability to remain stable and focused on its handler even when various stimuli are introduced.
- The dog cannot express any fear-based aggression.
- This test is NOT intended as a substitute for the CASDT Certification Test.
- Any dog that displays any aggressive behavior (growling, biting, raising hackles, showing teeth, etc.) will be eliminated from the test.
- Any dog that eliminates in a building or shows uncontrollable behavior will be eliminated from the test.
- The bottom line of this test is that the dog demonstrates that he/she is safe to be in public and that the person demonstrates that he/she has control of the dog always.
- All testing shall be done with equipment appropriate to the needs and abilities of the team.
- All dogs shall be on leash always, except in the vehicle at which time it is optional.
- This test is to take place in a public setting such as a mall where there are a lot of people and natural distractions.
- The individual will handle the dog and can use any reasonable/humane equipment necessary to ensure his/her control over the dog.
- The evaluator will explain the test thoroughly before the actual testing, during which he/she will follow discreetly to observe when not directly interacting with the individual on a test related matter.
- Successful teams that pass this test become a "Service Dog Team in Training" and should be issued a vest/ harness and ID card for the CASDT organization indicating the team is in training.

Step 4 – Training

- Next comes an intensive training period with the CASDT organizations local dog trainer.
- Training should be offered weekly and the handler should endeavour to come out a minimum of twice monthly.
- Any handler who fails to participate in any training sessions over a two-month period should be removed from the program and return all equipment and service dog team in training identification.
- This whole process takes anywhere from one year to a year and half, before a final certification test can be administered.

Step 5 - Certification Testing

- The decision to proceed with certification testing must be recommended by the trainer.
- The team must have worked at training for a minimum of 6 months.
- CASDT recommends this test be administered over a two-day period (minimum) taking 2-3 hours per day to properly evaluate the dog and handler.
- Any dog that displays any aggressive behaviour (growling, biting, raising hackles, showing teeth, etc.) will be eliminated from the test.
- Any dog that eliminates in a building or shows uncontrollable behaviour will be eliminated from the test.
- In conjunction with advanced obedience in a public setting, the handler must demonstrate a minimum of 3 tasks the dog does to mitigate their disability.
- Team must score 90% to pass this test
- The dog must be at least 2 years of age (neutered / spayed) and microchipped – Proof of these procedures must be provided.
- Upon successful testing the team should be issued an updated ID card and documentation stipulating the team is certified.

Step 6 - Recertification

- CASDT recommends that organization recertify service dog teams every three years dependant on the type of disability.
 - For example, a dog trained to work with a handler who has seizures should be assessed annually.
 - Whereas a dog that works with a handler with PTSD should be assessed every three years.
- The purpose of the recertification process to evaluate any changes in the persons disability and add further training into the dog if required.
- As well, any potential behavioural changes in the dog that could cause its retirement from service can be observed.
- All recertification testing will utilise the certification test.