



Akron  
Children's

# **Doggie Brigade**

## **Evaluation Procedure**

# Doggie Brigade Evaluation:

**You must be  
in control of  
your dog at  
all times.**

**Tips for the  
evaluation  
include:**

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Support your dog through the evaluation by using positive verbal and visual cues along the way. Remember you are a team.

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You will not be allowed to 'Jerk' on your dog's collar or physically model a behavior (for example: pushing on the dog's rump to get them to sit).

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You are welcome and encouraged to ask your evaluator questions for clarification.

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Treats are **not** permissible during the evaluation with the exception of the "Offered a Treat" exercise.

**Acceptable  
Equipment –  
For Evaluations  
and Visits. \***  
**The type of  
equipment you  
test in will be  
the same type  
they must wear  
while visiting.**

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Harnesses: front clip, back clip step-in, vest, or slip harness (limited slip only). Room for petting must be available.

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Buckle, snap, or quick-release collars in leather or fabric.

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Limited-slip collars (such as Martingales), provided they don't have metal links.

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Leashes or leads, **NO** more than six feet in length, made of leather or fabric, with only one connection point.

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Metal hardware, such as buckles, slip rings, and D-rings are acceptable as part of any of the above equipment.

# **Not Acceptable Equipment for Evaluations and Visits.**

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Special training collars, such as prong, electric or spray collars.

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Metal collars and harnesses, including Martingales that have metal links.

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Full-slip collars of any type.

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Leashes that have any amount of metal chain.

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Retractable or bungee leashes.

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Leashes that are longer than six feet.

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Hands-free leashes, such as those secured around the handler's waist or shoulder.

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Puches, purses, or bags designed to carry a dog.

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Novelty items.

# Evaluation Checklist:

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Completed Doggie Brigade Volunteer Application.

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Completed Doggie Brigade Veterinary Record.

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Your completed Handler's Questionnaire (If you are a Pet Partner).

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An acceptable collar or harness and acceptable leash.

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Proof of your Therapy Dog Certification from Bright & Beautiful, Therapy Dog International or Alliance of Therapy Dogs, Inc.

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A brush that your dog is accustomed to, and that would be appropriate to take on a visit. Your brush cannot have metal teeth.

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Treats to use for one specific evaluation exercise.

**Handler is Scored  
on the Following  
Elements:  
\*Proactive  
handling and  
consistently  
supports their dog  
as demonstrated  
by the  
following:**

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Regularly praising, encouraging, or reassuring your dog throughout the evaluation.

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A deep knowledge of your dog's body language cues indicating stress, fear and anxiety, and can help their dog recover.

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Consistently acts as your dog's best advocate.

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The team works together smoothly and communications with each other.

# The Dog is Scored on the Following Elements:

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Reliably responds to verbal or hand cues.

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Maintains connection with you: for example, looking for guidance, even amid distraction.

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Displays body language communicating a relaxed, content and confident state.

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Enjoys and seeks out interactions with volunteers.

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Demonstrates basic obedience skills such as Sit, Down (lay prone), walk on loose leash, Stay and Come (from 10 feet).

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Your dog must be able to accept petting, hugging touching, examining, and holding by a variety of people.

# Evaluation:

\* The  
evaluation  
can take 15  
– 30  
minutes.



There will be an evaluator and 3 or 4 volunteers in the room.



On several exercises the volunteers may be interacting with the team so the evaluator can observe.



Your dog must have four paws on the ground at all times. Jumping or putting paws on the volunteers or evaluator is not permitted. This is critical since you will be interacting with patients who may have IVs or lines attached to them.



# Evaluation Consists of Seventeen Exercises:

\* The following  
slides are a  
brief  
description of  
each exercise.

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**Accepting a Friendly Stranger:** The evaluator will walk up and greet you. The dog should stay beside you and not approach the evaluator. Verbal commands can be given for the dog to stay in place

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**Accepting Petting:** The team evaluator will ask to pet your dog. After running their hand down the dog's back, they will walk behind you.

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**Appearance and Grooming:** You should come to the evaluation as you would come for a visit at the hospital. Your dog's coat should be clean, and nails trimmed. \*Please bring a brush as the evaluator will run it down their back and pick up each front foot, one at a time to determine if your dog is okay with having their feet touched by stranger.

# Exercises Continued:

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**Out for a Walk:** You and your dog walk a short course that includes turns with stops along the way. Your dog should be on a loose leash near you.

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**Walk Through a Crowd:** You will be directed to walk on a loose leash while people cross paths with you. Your dog can show interest in others but must stay connected with the you. The exercise is repeated utilizing hospital equipment and loud noises.

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**Sit and Down on Cue:** The evaluator will ask you place the dog in a sit and down position using a normal voice or hand signals, only one command for each movement should be given.

# Exercises Continued:

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**Stay in Place:** Your evaluator will supply you with a 10-foot leash. You will be asked to place your dog in a stay and walk to the end of the leash. You will need to walk away with your back to the dog (your dog needs to hold the stay). You will pause and return to your dog when signaled by the evaluator.

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**Come When Called:** Using the 10- foot leash, you will cue your dog to stay and then walk to the end of the line. The evaluator will distract your dog by petting it. When asked, you will call your dog to you.

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**Reaction to a Neutral Dog:** It is important that your dog can remain calm when around another dog. As you and your dog are visiting with a volunteer, a neutral dog will enter the room. After the neutral dog visits with volunteers in the room, the teams will pass each other, handlers will verbally greet each other and then the neutral dog team will leave the room.

# Exercises Continued:

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**Overall Handling** – Three tests are done together. The evaluator will touch your dog all over, checking eyes, ears, teeth, picking up each leg and tail, and a belly rub.

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The evaluator will use forearms to pet your dog's back while speaking in a high or unusual voice.

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Finally, the evaluator will give your dog a hug that lasts for 15 seconds. This is to see that your dog is relaxed and will accept this type of interaction from a stranger.

# Exercises Continued:

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**Staggering, Gesturing Individual:** Someone wearing a robe or shawl will walk toward the team with an unsteady gait. The person stops staggering and then calls the team to approach. If your dog is comfortable, the person then pets the dog.

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**Angry Yelling:** Two people will argue with each other using loud voices.

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**Crowded and Petted by Several Volunteers:** Three volunteers will approach your dog individually. They will all pet your dog at the same time.

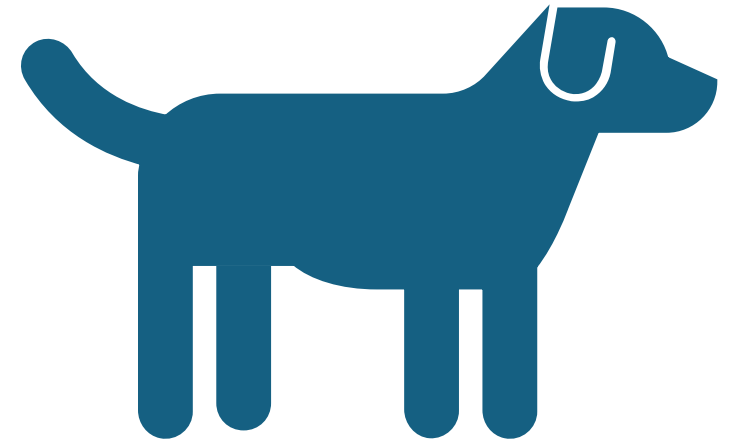
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**Leave it:** You and your dog will be directed to walk by a toy that has been placed on the floor. You can give multiple commands in a normal voice to "leave it".

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## Exercises Continued:

- **Offered a Treat:** The team evaluator will offer your dog a treat. If you decide to allow your dog to take the treat, they must do so gently, without any touch of teeth or lunging. Even if you decline, the treat will still be offered. You can give the command to not take the treat, and your dog must do as directed.



# Evaluation Result:

- If your dog passes the evaluation you, the handler, must also meet the hospital requirements to become a Volunteer.
- Not passing the evaluation does not indicate that your dog is bad, or not good with kids, it simply means you, as a team are not ready at this point. If you get a "Not Ready" score the evaluator will give you tips on what to work on and encourage you to attend the next scheduled evaluation. Questions are welcomed and encouraged.
- Thank you for your interest in the Doggie Brigade!
- Please call our office at 330-543-8424 if you have questions.

