

Canine Good Citizen & Therapy Dog International

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Canine Good Citizen

The Canine Good Citizen (CGC) Program is a program by the American Kennel Club (AKC) which is designed to reward dogs who have good manners at home and in the community. A dog that has been through a basic obedience class or that has been trained at home should be able to pass the 10 item test. Dogs do not need to be AKC registered to test. Sometimes landlords are more willing to rent to prospective tenants with dogs if the dogs have passed a CGC test.

The 10 item CGC test include:

1. Accepting a friendly stranger: This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to approach it and speak to the handler in a natural, everyday situation. The Evaluator and handler shake hands and exchange pleasantries. The dog must show no sign of resentment or shyness and must not break position or try to go to the Evaluator.
2. Sitting politely for petting: This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to touch it while it is out with its handler. The dog should sit at the handler's side as the Evaluator approaches and begins to pet the dog on the head and body only. The dog may stand in place to accept petting. The dog must not show shyness or resentment.
3. Appearance and grooming: This practical test demonstrates that the dog will welcome being groomed and examined and will permit a stranger, such as a veterinarian, groomer, or friend of the owner, to do so. It also demonstrates the owner's care, concern, and sense of responsibility. The Evaluator inspects the dog, then combs or brushes the dog, and lightly examines the ears and each front foot.
4. Out for a walk (walking on a loose leash): This test demonstrates that the handler is in control of the dog. The dog can be on either side of the handler, whichever the handler prefers. There must be a left turn, a right turn, and an about turn, with at least one stop in between and another at the end. The dog need not be perfectly aligned with the handler and need not sit when the handler stops.
5. Walking through a crowd: This test demonstrates that the dog can move about politely in pedestrian traffic and is under control in public places. The dog and handler walk around and pass close to several people (at least three). The dog may show some interest in the stranger, without appearing overexuberant, shy or resentful. The handler may talk to the dog and encourage or praise the dog throughout the test. The dog should not be straining at the leash.
6. Sit and down on command/Staying in place: This test demonstrates that the dog has training, will respond to the handler's commands to sit and down, and will remain in the place commanded by the handler (sit or down position, whichever the handler prefers). The handler may take a reasonable amount of time and use more than one command to make the dog sit and then down. When instructed by the Evaluator, the handler tells the dog to stay and walks forward the length of a 20-foot line. The dog must remain in place but may change position.
7. Coming when called: This test demonstrates that the dog will come when called by the handler. The handler will walk 10 feet from the dog, turn to face the dog, and call the dog. The handler may use encouragement to get the dog to come. Handlers may choose to tell the dog to 'stay' or 'wait' or they may simply walk away, giving no instructions to the dog as the Evaluator provides mild distraction (e.g. petting).
8. Reaction to another dog: This test demonstrates that the dog can behave politely around other dogs. Two handlers and their dogs approach each other from a distance of about 10 yards, stop, shake hands, and exchange pleasantries, and continue on for about 5 yards. The dogs should show no more than a casual interest in each other.
9. Reactions to distractions: This test demonstrates that the dog is confident at all times when faced with common distracting situations such as the dropping of a large book or a jogger running in front of the dog. The dog may express a natural interest and curiosity and/or appear slightly startled but should not panic, try to run away, show aggressiveness, or bark.
10. Supervised separation: This test demonstrates that a dog can be left with a trusted person, if necessary, and will maintain its training and good manners. Evaluators are encouraged to say something like, "Would you like me to watch your dog?" and then take hold of the dog's leash. The owner will go out of sight for three minutes. The dog does not have to stay in position but should not continually bark, whine, or pace unnecessarily, or show anything stronger than mild agitation or nervousness.

More information can be found at the AKC web site, www.akc.org

Therapy Dog International

The Therapy Dog International (TDI) is a volunteer group organized to provide qualified handlers and their Therapy Dogs for visitations to institutions, facilities, and any other place where Therapy Dogs are needed. The goal is to provide comfort and companionship by sharing the dog with patients in hospitals, nursing homes, and other facilities where the Therapy Dog is needed. Dogs do not need to be AKC registered. The test includes the 10 item CGC test with an additional 4 items tested.

These include:

See the Canine Good Citizen section for items 1-10.

11. Reaction to medical equipment: The dog should be tested around medical equipment (such as a wheelchair, crutches, cane, walker, or other devices which would ordinarily be found in a facility) to judge the dog's reactions to these different devices.
12. Leave it: The handler with the dog on a loose leash walks past food on the ground (placed within a distance of three feet) and, upon command, the dog should ignore the food.
13. Acclimation to infirmities: This test demonstrates the dog's confidence when exposed to people walking with an uneven gait, shuffling, breathing heavily, coughing, wheezing, or other distractions which may be encountered in a facility.
14. Say hello: The TDI Certified Evaluator will test the willingness of each dog to visit a person and that the dog can be accessible for petting (i.e.; small dogs can be placed on a person's lap or can be held, medium and larger dogs can sit on a chair or stand close to the patient to be easily reached).

More information can be found on TDI's web site, www.tdi-dog.org