

AKC TRAINING

AKC Canine Good Citizen Training

We are proud to offer the AKC Canine Good Citizen Training and Evaluation Program. Please feel free to contact us about this additional training for your dog. The AKC Program is recognized by organizations that use dogs in service work. (see specific details below)

THERAPY DOGS

Several of this country's largest therapy dog organizations use the CGC Test as a partial screening tool for therapy dogs. In most cases, for therapy dog screening, the CGC Test is given with some additional testing. For example, in the test involving a crowd, therapy dog groups might require that someone in the crowd use health care equipment such as a walker, cane, or crutches. Additional paperwork is provided by and submitted to the therapy dog group. Some therapy dog groups also require that their evaluators be certified through the therapy dog organization.

Canine Good Citizen (CGC) is not an official AKC title like Ch. Or C.D. It is meant to reward dogs for having good manners, which enhances the public acceptance of dogs. CGC may be used for advertising or pedigrees, but the AKC does not add CGC to the dog's official registration papers. "CGC" is an award and not a title.

This service is great fun for dog and family alike. Imagine taking your dog to a Hospital or Assisted Living Home to visit. This is a very rewarding service to those in our community who can no longer have a dog for various reasons.

What will my dog learn? There are Ten Test Items

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 walks up to the dog and handler and greets the handler in a friendly manner, ignoring the dog. The test begins with the dog seated at the handler's side.

The Evaluator and handler shake hands and exchange pleasantries (e.g., "Hello, it's good to see you again," as they shake hands). In this test, the Evaluator does not interact with the dog.



- The dog must show no sign of resentment, aggression or shyness.
- The dog may not jump on or rush to the Evaluator to initiate contact. The dog may not lunge forward to greet the Evaluator.
- The dog should be under control throughout the exercise. If the handler must use excessive corrections (e.g., trying to hold the dog to prevent jumping) to control the dog, the dog should not pass the exercise.

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. With the dog sitting at the handler's side, (either side is permissible) to begin the test, the Evaluator approaches and asks, "May I pet your dog?" The Evaluator then pets the dog on the head and body. The handler may talk to his or her dog throughout the exercise.

After petting the dog, the Evaluator may circle the dog, or simply back away to begin the next test.

- The dog must show no signs of shyness or resentment.
- As the Evaluator begins to pet the dog, the dog may stand to receive petting.
- The dog may not struggle and pull away to avoid petting.
- The dog may move slightly forward to receive petting, but should not lunge at the Evaluator or rush or jump forward.
- The dog may appear to be happy about the contact with the Evaluator and may have some body movements.
- The dog should appear to be under control throughout the exercise.

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. This test also demonstrates the owner's care, concern and sense of responsibility.

The Evaluator inspects the dog to determine if it is clean and groomed. The dog must appear to be in healthy condition (i.e., proper weight, clean, healthy and alert). The handler should supply the comb or brush commonly used on the dog. The Evaluator softly combs or brushes the dog and, in a natural manner, lightly examines the ears and gently picks up each front foot.

- It is not necessary for the dog to hold a specific position during the examination, and the handler may talk to the dog, praise it and give encouragement throughout.
- The dog should not struggle (pull away with intensity) to avoid the brushing.



4. OUT FOR A WALK (WALKING ON A LOOSE LEASH)

This test demonstrates that the handler is in control of the dog. The dog may be on either side of the handler, whichever the handler prefers.

(NOTE: The left side position is required in all AKC obedience competitions).

The Evaluator may use a pre-planned course or may direct the handler by calling out instructions (e.g., “right turn”). Whichever format is used, there must be a right turn, left turn, and about turn, with at least one stop in between and one at the end. The handler may talk to the dog throughout the “walk” to encourage it and may give praise. The handler may also give the dog a command to sit at the stop, if desired.

- The dog’s position should leave no doubt that the dog is attentive to the handler and is responding to the handler’s movements and changes of direction.
- The dog need not be perfectly aligned with the handler and need not sit at the stops.
- The dog should not be constantly straining at the leash so that the leash is pulled tight. The Evaluator may instruct the handler to loosen (put more slack in) the leash. An occasional tight leash may be permitted.
- Excessive sniffing of the floor or ground, such that the dog will not walk along with the owner, should result in the dog not passing the test.
- If the dog is totally inattentive to the handler (e.g., does not change directions), it should not be passed.

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 (at least three) people. The Evaluator can be counted as one of the three people in the crowd. Children may act as members of the crowd, however, when children participate in the test, they must be instructed on their role and be supervised by an adult. Some of the members of the crowd may be standing still; however, some crowd members should be moving about. This test simulates settings such as busy sidewalks or walking through a crowd at a dog show or public event.

If the CGC is being given for therapy dog certification (which is not an AKC activity), most national therapy dog groups require that at least one person in the crowd use some health-care equipment such as walkers, canes, wheelchairs, etc. There may be one dog in the crowd, but the dog must be on-leash, well mannered, and not attempt to initiate contact with dogs that are being tested.

- In this test, the dog may show some interest in the strangers but should continue to walk with the handler, without evidence of over exuberance, shyness or resentment.
- The dog may show mild interest in members of the crowd. The dog may sniff a person in the crowd briefly but must move on promptly.
- The dog may not jump on people in the crowd or attempt to go to them.
- The dog should not be straining at the leash.
- The dog should not be trying to hide behind the handler.

6. SIT AND DOWN ON COMMAND/STAYING IN PLACE

This test demonstrates that the dog has training and will respond to the handler's commands to sit and down, and will remain in the place commanded by the handler. The dog needs to 1) sit on command 2) and down on command 3) then, stay in a sit or down.

For the Stay in Place test, the handler may choose to leave the dog in a sit or down position. Prior to this test, the dog's leash is removed and replaced with a 20-ft. line (or a 15-ft. line attached to the dog's leash). The handler may take a reasonable amount of time and use more than one command to make the dog sit and then down. The Evaluator must determine if the dog has responded to the handler's commands. The handler may not use excessive force to put the dog into either position, but may touch the dog to offer gentle guidance.

When instructed by the Evaluator, the handler tells the dog to stay and walks to the end of the 20-ft. line, turns and returns immediately to the dog at a normal pace, at which time the Evaluator instructs the handler to release the dog. The dog must remain in the place it was left (it may change position such as stand up) until the Evaluator instructs the handler to release the dog. The dog may be released from the front or side.

- The 20-ft. line is used for safety. If the CGC test is indoors in a secure area, the Evaluator may choose to have the dog drag the leash or work off-lead in this exercise. Any time the test is given in an outdoor area, the Evaluator should keep in mind that the safety of the dog is critical.
- There are no breed specific exceptions for sitting.
- Pulling the dog's front legs out from a sit position (so that the dog automatically drops into a down) is beyond gentle guidance and the dog should not be passed.
- The dog is left for the stay in a sit or down. As the handler returns, if the dog simply stands but does not leave the place it was left, the dog passes the test. Dogs who start walking forward to the handler should not pass.
- Dogs who do not sit or down after a reasonable period of time need more training and should not be passed.
- Do not have handlers go to the end of the line and call the dog; they should return to the dog.

7. COMING WHEN CALLED

This test demonstrates that the dog will come when called by the handler. With the dog still on the 20-ft. line from Item 6, the handler will walk 10 feet from the dog, turn to face the dog, and will call the dog. The handler may use body language and encouragement when calling the dog. Handlers may tell the dog to "stay" or "wait" (or another similar command) or they may simply walk away.

The dog may be left in the sit, down, or standing position. If a dog attempts to follow the handler, the Evaluator may distract the dog (e.g., petting) until the handler is 10 feet away. This exercise does not test "stay"; this exercise tests whether or not the dog will come when called. The test is complete when the dog comes to the handler and the handler attaches the dog's own leash.

- Dogs who attempt to follow the handler should not be failed. The Evaluator should distract the dog. The test begins when the handler calls the dog.
- The handler can bend down to call the dog, pat his or her legs, and make encouraging sounds.

- Handlers may call the dog more than once (two or three attempts) but if many, repeated prompts are required, the dog should not be passed.
- Dogs should not be passed if handlers have used the long line to “reel in” the dog. Dogs should come on their own when called. The Evaluator who sees that a handler is starting to reel the dog in may stop the exercise, give instructions to the handler, and start over.

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 15 feet, stop, shake hands and exchange pleasantries, and continue on.

- The dog should show no more than a casual interest in the distraction dog. If the dog attempts to go to or jump on the distraction dog, it should not pass the test.
- The dog may move slightly toward the other dog/handler, then stop. The dog must stay back from the other dog/handler.
- The dog can stretch its neck and sniff without moving forward to the other dog/handler.
- When the handlers stop to shake hands, the dog does not have to sit. It can remain standing beside the handler. If the dog remains standing, it should not cross over in front of the handler to go to the other dog.
- The conversation between the handlers can be brief, “Hi, good to see you again. Give me a call sometime.”
- As the handler leaves, if the dog turns around and begins pulling as if to follow the other dog/handler, the dog should not pass the test.

9. REACTION TO DISTRACTIONS

This test demonstrates that the dog is confident at all times when faced with common distracting situations. The Evaluator will select two distracters from among the following:

(Since some dogs are sensitive to sound and others to visual distractions, it is preferable to choose one sound and one visual distraction.)

- A person using crutches, a wheelchair, or a walker (5 ft. away).
 - A sudden opening or closing of a door.
 - Dropping a pan, folded chair, etc. no closer than 5 ft. from the dog.
 - A jogger running in front of the dog.
 - A person pushing a cart or crate dolly passing no closer than 5 ft. away.
 - A person on a bike no closer than 10 ft. away.
- A note about distractions: Distractions such as gunshot, the rapid opening of an umbrella close to the dog, walking on a metal grid, etc. are temperament test items that are typically seen on formal temperament tests. The CGC Test should not be confused with temperament testing. While instructors may use a variety of distractions (e.g., a person in scuba gear) in training classes, in the CGC test, distractions should be items that are common occurrences in the community.
- The dog may show casual interest and may appear slightly startled. The dog may jump slightly but should not panic and pull at the leash to get away.
 - The dog may attempt to walk forward slightly to investigate the distracter.
 - Dogs who become so frightened that they urinate (or defecate) should not pass.
 - Dogs who growl or lunge at the distracter should not pass.

- An isolated (one) bark is acceptable. Dogs who continue to bark at the distracter should not pass.
- Handlers may talk to dogs and give encouragement and praise throughout the test. Dogs may be given instructions by the handler (“Sit...good boy..watch me...”)
- Several national therapy dog groups use the CGC as a part of their therapy dog evaluations. These groups specify which distracters should be used. Evaluators who conduct the test for therapy dog groups will have this information.
- The distraction cannot simply be noise in the background (dogs barking, cars). Distraction stimuli should be consistent for each dog.

10. SUPERVISED SEPARATION

This test demonstrates that a dog can be left in the presence of a trusted person and will maintain its training and good manners. Evaluators are encouraged to say something like, “Would you like for me to watch your dog?” An Evaluator will hold the leash of the dog while the owner goes out of sight for 3 minutes. In the early days of the CGC Program, evaluators were asked to not talk to the dog so that the testing of this skill could be standardized across evaluators.

We realize that most owners would not leave their dogs with someone who did not talk to the dog. Evaluators may talk to and pet the dog but should refrain from giving the dog excessive attention, playing with the dog, etc.

- The dog does not have to stay in position.
- If the dog continually barks, whines, or howls, it should not be passed.
- The dog should not pace unnecessarily, should not show signs of agitation.
- A dog that simply walks back and forth and looks for the handler is passed. There should be no signs of extreme stress, including panting, breathing hard, etc.
- If a dog begins to look very upset or distressed (barking, whining, panting, pacing, pulling), the test should be terminated. The CGC test is an activity that should be fun. We do not want dogs or handlers to have a bad experience with the CGC. If a dog is extremely distressed, training is needed and should not be done during testing. This one incident of giving in to the dog’s insecure behavior is not enough to cause any lasting effect. The owner should be told nicely that separation is an issue for the dog and that some training would help the dog feel more secure.
- If the Evaluator for Item 10 is sitting in a chair and a small dog tries to climb into the Evaluator’s lap, the Evaluator should stand up.
- If a dog pulls on its leash (trying to get away) it should not be passed.
- Any dog that urinates or defecates during testing should not be passed. The exception to this is in Test 10 when the test is outdoors, or between exercises (e.g., the dog urinates on a bush while being walked to the next test station). Dogs should not stop to relieve themselves while they are working with the handler in the exercises.

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