



**Canine Consultants**  
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## Public Access Training

# Public Skills Training

Public skills training for your Service Dog in Training (SDIT) and owner will provide training so your (SDIT) will have the socialized skills to be stable, well behaved and unobtrusive while interacting in public. This will open opportunities for you and your (SDIT) to comfortably utilize public places (cafés / restaurants, grocery stores, hotels, parks, campgrounds, beaches, hiking trails, green spaces, pedestrian trails, and shopping malls).

We will work with you and your dog on the following:

- Improving your dog's socialization and behavior skills in public settings
- Car Travel, Public Transportation experience
- Distractions in public (noise, people, food, and other dogs)
- Good manners when meeting and greeting people and dogs
- Desirable manners while in a restaurant and public building environment

A well-trained (SDIT) should be trained a minimum of 1 to 2 hours per day over 6 months - in other words a minimum of 180 to 360 hours. This means taking your (SDIT) most everywhere you go.

(SDIT'S) should always wear their harness/collar and service vest (vests can be ordered online). Little dogs should be picked up and held at first, so that they are not rushed by children and people wanting to pet them. Ask the person to allow the dog to sniff them first before petting. Store personnel can never ask you the nature of your disability or the training of the (SDIT), but they do have a right to question you if there is an issue of some kind.

Your dog should always be well groomed and up-to-date on shots. You are required to clean up after your service dog by law. It is helpful to train the dog to go on command if possible, that way the dog can relieve itself before entering public buildings.

Never force your (SDIT) into any situation or toward anything that frightens him. Be patient, always allow your service dog to accept the experience slowly, at his/her own pace. If your (SDIT) hesitates, stop for a while and allow him/her to look things over from a distance. Calmly praise and reassure him /her and wait for him/her to become curious enough to want to go nearer. Always progress at your dog's acceptance level.

Keep an eye on your (SDIT) and watch his/her reaction to something unfamiliar. He/she probably will look at it from several sides, try to get a good smell of it, and will come slowly closer until he/she is satisfied it will not hurt them. Then he/she will suddenly ignore it and act as though it never frightened them in the first place. Provide him/her with appropriate



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leadership by having a neutral, matter-of-fact attitude about things that frighten or make them uneasy.

Never reinforce frightened behavior. Allow your (SDIT) to learn about new sounds, objects or places at his/her own pace. This means that if your (SDIT) pulls back, whimpers, or shows any signs of fear, don't coddle or 'baby' him/her by petting them or telling them "It's okay". This could reassure him/her into thinking that it is all right to be afraid. Instead, if the distraction or situation overwhelms the dog pull back from the situation, quietly talk to him/her and settle him/her down. Then slowly re-approach, and let him/her become comfortable on his/her own. When he/she starts to explore this new situation, be sure to praise him/her.

Be aware of how people, especially children, treat your (SDIT). Never allow anyone to tease or play rough, this could make your (SDIT) distrustful or aggressive toward strangers.

### **Teach your (SDIT) to negotiate stairs calmly and safely**

A (SDIT) that is fearful or anxious on the stairs can be a real safety hazard. Start with closed stairways, encouraging him/her to negotiate one step to a landing or the ground. Praise all successes and add steps as he/she gains more confidence. Never force the dog to go up or down stairs. Keep the leash short to maintain control and do not let the dog charge up or down the stairs ahead of your pace. Once he/she is confident on closed stairs introduce them to open stairways.

### **Teach your (SDIT) to be relaxed on new surfaces**

Your goal is to teach your (SDIT) to walk on new or different surfaces in a relaxed and confident manner, maintaining a normal or slower pace. He should never stop, speed up, jump or veer off to avoid any surface. Surfaces he should experience are grates, manhole covers or any odd surface such as tile floors or gravel. When introducing new surfaces to your dog;

- Slow down when approaching the new surface.
- Hold your leash short, but loose, to maintain control.
- Be prepared to stop if your dog wants to investigate the new surface.
- Allow your (SDIT) the time to look, sniff, and investigate the new surface.
- Lowering his/her head and some sniffing is acceptable while walking onto a new surface.
- Do not rush your dog to walk on the new surface.
- He/she will be much more willing to walk on a different surface if you allow him a moment to investigate it.
- Verbally praise his investigation of the surface. This will give him/her an incentive to continue checking it out.
- Praise tentative steps onto the surface.



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- Avoid rewarding fear or anxiety by soothing; instead, be neutral and calm.
- Do not drag your (SDIT) onto or across the surface.
- Never allow your dog to jump around the new surface.
- Patiently give him/her time to advance.
- Praise him/her as they walk across the surface.
- As the (SDIT) becomes more comfortable with the surface, control rushing or sniffing.
- Don't forget to PRAISE all success!

## Teach your (SDIT) to be confident around traffic

As in all types of socialization, exposure to traffic should be done slowly and systematically. A hurried, premature exposure to heavy traffic can develop insecure reactions in your dog that could affect his/her ability to be a successful.

The following guidelines will help you teach your (SDIT) to be confident around traffic:

- Select traffic exposure sites that have a natural "escape route" away from traffic, so you can remove your dog from the traffic if he/she is becoming worried or uneasy.
- Closely watch your dog when you are beginning his exposure to traffic. Move away from the traffic if you observe your dog showing any signs of worry
- If your dog is inadvertently exposed to a traffic situation that has made him/her uncomfortable, talk to your dog in a confident tone of voice to distract him as you slowly move away. Be careful not to console or soothe him.
- Do not start off exposing your dog to heavy traffic.
- Start by selecting a low-traffic street in a residential area.
- Progress to streets with higher traffic levels only after your dog is totally comfortable at the first level.
- All progressions to faster, heavier traffic should be done slowly.
- Try to expose your dog at a distance far enough from the traffic to maintain his/her confidence.
- Exposures to heavy traffic may need to start as far away as 40 yards for some dogs while others it can be five yards to 20 yards.
- Begin by sitting on a bench with the dog sitting next to you. Position him/her so they are facing the street. Allowing the dog to just be still and observe the traffic will develop his/her confidence that the traffic will not harm them.
- Next, have him/her sit next to you facing the street while you are standing on the sidewalk closer to the traffic.
- Progress to walking around the sidewalk only after your dog is comfortable watching or ignoring the traffic when you and he/she have been sitting or standing still.
- It is advisable to work toward oncoming traffic when you first start, placing yourself between the traffic and the dog.



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### **Teach your (SDIT) Door and Vehicle Etiquette**

An (SDIT) that bolts out of doors or vehicles will likely be lost, injured or even killed. For their safety, they need to learn early to refrain from proceeding through doorways or leaving vehicles without your permission. Techniques that will help you to teach your dog not to bolt out of doors or vehicles:

- Always make your dog sit and wait until he/she is released with an OK command before allowing it to go out a door or vehicle.
- When your dog is in a vehicle, make he/she remain seated (if not in a crate or on a tie-down) until you release him/her with an OK command.
- Practice sit and down stays at open exiting doorways to a building and inside your vehicle with the door open.
- Make sure that your vehicle practice is away from traffic so you and the dog will not be in danger of being hit by cars while practicing.
- Set up sessions to specifically work on not bolting out of doors.
- Make sure you have a leash on him/her so you can use effective leash and collar corrections.
- Prop the door open and give the dog a WAIT command and correct if him/she tries to go outside without your permission.
- When he/she is good at the open door and does not move, have someone walk as a distraction by the open door.

### **Teach your (SDIT) to be confident around unusual people, noises, odors and objects**

Your goal is to have the dog accept unusual sights, smells, objects and people without becoming distracted, frightened or out of control. Since (SDIT) go everywhere with their partners, they are regularly exposed to unusual people, noises, odors and objects (homeless people, firecrackers, meat markets, upside down tricycle on the sidewalk, etc.). It is very important that your (SDIT) learn to handle unusual encounters with calm acceptance.



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You can teach your dog how to cope calmly with these types of encounters by following these guidelines:

- If your dog is afraid or reacts to a distraction, calmly walk away from the distraction until he reaches his "comfort zone" (the distance where he feels comfortable with an unusual distraction occurrence) and then stop and sit your dog and praise.
- Give the dog time to listen and observe the situation from their "comfort zone" and praise the dog for not reacting or being afraid.
- NEVER force a fearful dog closer to something that he/she is afraid of or anxious about.
- Try to approach the distraction again if he/she is hesitant, try approaching from a different direction or going back to their "comfort zone".
- Allow the dog additional time to listen and observe the situation and decide when he/she is ready to move closer.
- Be a good example for your dog by having a calm, positive attitude toward the distraction.
- During noises, speak with happy tones, showing your dog that there is nothing to be concerned about (do not coddle" or reinforce anxiety "it's okay).
- If the dog is afraid of an object, if you can reach out and touch it and talk to the object in a positive tone of voice. This will spark your dog's curiosity to investigate the object. Use confident, happy words to distract the pup from worrying about a sound or odor
- NEVER RUSH A HESITANT dog. It's better for the dog to have CONFIDENCE at a distance than FEAR close to the object.
- Praise all success.

## Teach your (SDIT) to trust people

Your goal is that your dog is fully comfortable around a variety of people - both friends and stranger's - and trusts that human beings are his friends. Trust will develop on a day-to-day basis as the dog learns that you and your family members are consistent, fair and gentle with him as you handle and train him. Another way that the dog will learn to trust people is through pleasant encounters with the strangers that he meets on a regular basis as you socialize him. Strangers can have a significant influence on his/her attitude toward people.

Thus it is particularly important that the dog be given repeated opportunities to have pleasant, consistent and structured experiences with them.

You can start to teach your small dog or dogs younger than 4 month's how to trust people by following these guidelines:



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- Form a small tight circle of friends on the floor. Then pass your dog from hand to hand around the circle. Make sure the dog is held securely by everyone in the circle so the dog will not become frightened or feel insecure about falling or being dropped.
- As each individual receives the dog, he or she should calmly, quietly and sweetly handle the dog making sure that both their voice and hands are calm, quiet and loving.
- Dogs that behave in a fearful or anxious manner (shivering or extremely tight in their muscles) should only be passed to one other person the first time and then should gradually be handled by more people as they become more comfortable.
- It is particularly important when handling bold, active dog that they not be handed to the next person until the first person has successfully been able to quiet them.
- The dog should be handled no more than three times in each session.

The next set of guidelines to follow for people trust building is:

- Hand your dog's leash to another person who first speaks sweetly and gently to the dog as he gently pets it. It will help if the person crouches down beside dog while talking to and petting the dog.
- After "sweet talking" and petting the dog, the other handler should then start to walk away with it and leave your sight.
- If your dog is reluctant to go with the other handler the first time, pick your dog up and hand it to the other handler.
- The handler should then carry your dog out of your sight. After the other handler cannot see you anymore, he should stand and quietly talk in sweet tones to the dog while holding it gently.
- After a couple of moments, the other handler should return to you, stopping two to three feet away from you.
- Then, he should set the dog on the ground and encourage it to walk back to you. It is very important that the other handler keeps the leash loose and that he or she refrain from correcting the dog in any way during this step.
- This exercise should be repeated with the person until the dog will at least walk all the way back from the spot where the other handler has chosen to stand and sweet talk the dog. It's important that you proceed in small, steadily increasing increments of distance.
- If your dog is comfortable walking away with another handler, the handler should refrain from correcting the dog on this first trip out away from you.
- If the your dog walks willingly out of sight, the handler should crouch down once he cannot see you and sweetly talk to and pet the dog for a moment before returning the dog to you.



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- On succeeding trips with other people, mild corrections may be administered if needed for mouthing, pulling or "garbage mouth" behaviors.
- Corrections should stop if the dog shows any indication that it is becoming anxious about going with the other handler.
- If your dog tries to mouth and pull on the leash a lot, then, when the other handler walks away with him/her the handler should administer gentle but firm leash corrections for mouthing, pulling on the leash or "garbage mouth" behaviors.
- Even if your dog is a bolder, active dog, it's still important for the other handler to be very sweet and praise a lot if they have to correct your dog. They should particularly concentrate on sweet, gentle, slow interactions with the dog when they step out of your sight to interact with the dog.
- It's important for you to stand still in the same spot as the dog is taken away and for you to be standing quietly in the same spot when the other handler returns with your dog.

Remember in training no command is effective unless followed by praise for successful compliance. Praise is one of the most essential ingredients in the recipe of producing a trusting and trusted companion. Praise generously and consistently.



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## Weekly Progress Report

Dog's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Handler: \_\_\_\_\_

Place the appropriate letter in Sunday through Saturday box

**E** - Excited    **C** - Calm    **U** - Uneasy    **F** - Frightened    **B** - Barks

PLACES	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
Grocery store							
Restaurant (Indoor)							
Restaurant (outdoor)							
Restaurant (Fast food)							
Department Store							
Doctors Office							
Drug Store							
Pet Store							
Park							
Shopping Mall (Indoor)							
Shopping Mall (Outdoor)							
Home Depot / Lowes							
School Yard with Children							
Friend's Home							
Sporting Event							
Warehouse Store (Costco)							
Vet Office							
Office Environment							
Amusement Park							
Library							
Playhouse/Theatre							
Church/Synagogue							
Boat/Ferry							
Other							



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Dog's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Handler: \_\_\_\_\_

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<b>PEOPLE</b>	<b>SUN</b>	<b>MON</b>	<b>TUES</b>	<b>WED</b>	<b>THUR</b>	<b>FRI</b>	<b>SAT</b>
Babies							
Toddlers							
Young Adults /Teens							
Middle Age Adults							
Elderly Adults							
Disabled People							
Loud Kids /Adults							
Big Looming People							
People in Uniform							
People in Costume							
People in Hats							
People with Glasses							
People with Beards							
People with Helmets							
People with Gloves							
People with Umbrellas							
People in wheel chairs							
People with crutches/walkers							
Other							



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## Weekly Progress Report

Dogs Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Handlers: \_\_\_\_\_

Place the appropriate letter in Sunday through Saturday box

**E** - Excited      **C** - Calm      **U** - Uneasy      **F** - Frightened      **B** - Barks

THINGS	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
Elevator							
Stairs (closed)							
Stairs (open)							
Vacuum							
Ceiling Fans							
Bikes							
Skateboard							
Skates							
Flags or Tarp Blowing							
Machinery noises							
Grates							
Household Appliances							
Lawn Equipment							
Shopping Cart							
Slippery Floors							
Electronic opening doors							
Turnstile-type doorways							
Mirrors							
Glass doors							
Low volume traffic street							
High volume traffic street							
Loud truck/bus noises							
Fire/police sirens							



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Dog's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Handler: \_\_\_\_\_

Place the appropriate letter in Sunday through Saturday box

**E** - Excited    **C** - Calm    **U** - Uneasy    **F** - Frightened    **B** - Barks

<b>ANIMALS</b>	<b>SUN</b>	<b>MON</b>	<b>TUES</b>	<b>WED</b>	<b>THUR</b>	<b>FRI</b>	<b>SAT</b>
Friendly Dogs (small / Large)							
Friendly Cats / Kittens							
Birds							
Fish Tank with Fish							
Large animal (Cows, Horses)							
Small Animals (Squirrels, ect)							
Other							