

## DEFINITIONS

### What is a Task?

A task is a certain desired behavior or set of behaviors the dog is trained to habitually perform in response to a command or a particular situation such as the onset of a seizure, which cues the dog to perform a task. The task must be related to your disabling condition, helping you in some way.

### What is meant by “individually trained”?

A dog has been “individually trained” to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a disabled individual when the dog is deliberately taught to exhibit the desired behavior or sequence of behaviors by rewarding the dog for the right response(s) and communicating, if only through silence, when the dog has made the wrong response in a particular situation. A task is learned when the dog reliably exhibits the desired behavior whenever needed to assist his/her partner on command or cue. An example of work that is individually trained would be that performed by a guide dog, who takes directional commands, goes around obstacles in the team’s path, halts to indicate a curb or some other change in elevation and refuses the “Forward” command in specific situations that would result in injury, such as an automobile entering the team’s path. Examples of individually trained tasks include retrieving a phone, providing deep pressure therapy during a panic attack or providing balance support on a staircase to prevent a fall.

### What is NOT an individually trained task?

Spontaneous behavior a dog occasionally exhibits such as licking someone's face or barking does not qualify as a "trained task" under ADA even if it accidentally or coincidentally has a beneficial result. While everyone enjoys the emotional, social and safety benefits that a dog's presence can provide, those benefits do not constitute trained tasks that would transform a disabled person's pet into a legitimate Service Dog under ADA.

### Why are individually trained Tasks so important?

Trained tasks that mitigate the effects of a disabling condition are the legal basis for granting access rights to disabled handlers under the Americans With Disabilities Act. An assistance dog with this special training is viewed as assistive technology / medical equipment, not as a pet. Businesses have the right to ask a disabled person, "What Tasks does your service animal perform?" This question can be asked if there is any doubt about the dog’s legal status and whether to impose their restrictive pet policies. An acceptable answer might be, "my service dog is trained to get help for me in a medical crisis by \_\_\_\_\_." (Fill in the blank as to the specific task) You do not have to reveal your disability in formulating your reply.

Businesses also have the right to exclude any animal, including a service animal, who threatens the health or safety of other people through aggressive or unruly behavior. An assistance dog can also be evicted for disruptive behavior that interferes with a business providing goods or services. The DOJ used the example of a dog barking in a movie theater.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Public Access Test is to ensure that dogs who have public access are stable, well-behaved, and unobtrusive to the public. It ensures that the client has control over the dog and the team is not a public hazard. This test is NOT intended as a substitute for skill/task test that should be given by the program. It is to be used in addition to those skill/task tests. It is expected that the test will be adhered to as closely as possible. If modifications are necessary, they should be noted with the test.

**DISMISSAL:** 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.

**BOTTOM LINE:** 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 at all times.

**TESTING EQUIPMENT:** All testing shall be done with equipment appropriate to the needs and abilities of the team. All dogs shall be on-lead at all times except in the vehicle at which time it is optional. This test takes 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. The only things an evaluator needs are a clip board, an assistant, another dog, a plate with food, and access to a shopping cart.

**COMMANDS:** Commands may be given to the dog in either hand signals or verbal signals or both.

1. **CONTROLLED UNLOAD OUT OF VEHICLE:** After a suitable place has been found, the individual will unload the dog and any necessary equipment (wheelchair, walker, crutches, etc.) out of the vehicle. The dog must wait until released before coming out of the vehicle. Once outside, it must wait quietly unless otherwise instructed by the Individual. The dog may not run around, be off lead, or ignore commands given by the individual. Once the team is out of the vehicle and settled, the assistant should walk past with another dog. they should walk within six (6) feet of the team. The Assistance Dog must remain calm and under control, not pulling or trying to get to the other dog. The emphasis on this is that the Assistance Dog remain unobtrusive and is unloaded in the safest manner possible for everyone.

2. **APPROACHING THE BUILDING:** After unloading, the team must maneuver through the parking lot to approach the building. The dog must stay in a relative heel position and may not forge ahead or lag behind. The dog must not display a fear of cars or traffic noises and must display a relaxed attitude. When the individual stops for any reason, the dog must stop also.

3. **CONTROLLED ENTRY THROUGH A DOORWAY:** Once at the doors of the building, the individual may enter however he/she chooses to negotiate the entry safely. Upon entering the building; however, the dog may not wander off or solicit attention from the public. The dog should wait quietly until the team is fully inside then should calmly walk beside the individual. The dog must not pull or strain against the lead or try to push its way past the individual but must wait patiently while entry is completed.

4. **HEELING THROUGH THE BUILDING:** Once inside the building, the individual and the dog must walk through the area in a controlled manner. The dog should always be within touching distance where applicable or no greater than a foot away from the individual. The dog should not solicit public attention or strain against the lead (except in cases where the dog may be pulling the individual's wheelchair). The dog must readily adjust to speed changes, turn corners promptly, and travel through a crowded area without interacting with the public. In tight quarters, the dog must be able to get out of the way of obstacles and not destroy merchandise by knocking it over or by playing with it.

5. **ESCALATOR:** Dog steps on and off without being stressed and holds a heel or a side.

6. **ELEVATOR:** Dog stays in a Block position without bothering the public.

7. **SIX FOOT RECALL ON LEAD:** A large, open area should be found for the six foot recall. Once found, the individual will perform a six foot recall with the dog remaining on lead. The individual will sit the dog, leave it, travel six feet, then turn and call the dog to him/her. The dog should respond promptly and not stop to solicit attention from the public or ignore the command. The dog should come close enough to the individual to be readily touched. For Guide Dogs, they must actually touch the person to indicate location. The recall should be smooth and deliberate without the dog trudging to the individual or taking any detours along the way.

8. **SITS ON COMMAND:** The team will be asked to demonstrate the Individual's ability to have the dog sit three different times. The dog must respond promptly each time with no more than two commands. There should not be any extraordinary gestures on the part of the people approaching the dog. Normal, reasonable behavior on the part of the people is expected. The first sit will be next to a plate of food placed upon the ground. The dog must not attempt to eat or sniff the food. The individual may correct the dog verbally or physically away from the food, but then the dog must maintain a sit while ignoring the food. The dog should not be taunted or teased with the food. This situation should be made as realistic as possible. The second sit will be executed, and the assistant with a shopping cart will approach within three feet of the dog and continue on past. The dog should maintain the sit and not show any fear of the shopping cart. If the dog starts to move, the individual may correct the dog to maintain the sit. The last sit will be a sit with a stay as a person walks up behind the team, talks to the person and then pets the dog. The dog must hold position. The dog may not break the stay to solicit attention. The individual may repeat the stay command along with reasonable physical corrections.

9. **DOWNES ON COMMAND:** The down exercises will be performed in the same sequence as the sits with the same basic stipulations. The first down will be at a table where food will be dropped on the floor. The dog should not break the down to go for the food or sniff at the food. The individual may give verbal and physical corrections to maintain the down. There should not be any extraordinary gestures on the part of the people approaching the dog. Normal, reasonable behavior from the people is expected. The second down will be executed, and then an adult and child should approach the dog. The dog should maintain the down and not solicit attention. If the child pets the dog, the dog must behave appropriately and not break the stay. The individual may give verbal and physical corrections if the dog begins to break the stay.

10. **NOISE DISTRACTION:** The team will be heeling along and the tester will drop a clipboard to the ground behind the team. The dog may acknowledge the noise, but may not in any way show aggression or fear. A normal startle reaction is fine--the dog may jump and or turn--but the dog should quickly recover and continue along on the heel. The dog should not become aggressive, begin shaking, etc.

11. **RESTAURANT:** The team and tester should enter a restaurant and be seated at a table. The dog should go under the table or, if size prevents that, stay close by the individual. The dog must sit or lie down and may move a bit for comfort during the meal, but should not be up and down a lot or need a lot of correction or reminding. This would be a logical place to do the food drop during a down. (See #7)

12. **OFF LEAD:** Sometime during the test, where appropriate, the person will be instructed to drop the leash while moving so it is apparent to the dog. The individual must show the ability to maintain control of the dog and get the leash back in its appropriate position. This exercise will vary greatly depending on the person's disabilities. The main concern is that the dog be aware that the leash is dropped and that the person is able to maintain control of the dog and get the leash back into proper position.

13. **CONTROLLED UNIT:** The team will leave the building in a similar manner to entering, with safety and control being of prime importance. The team will proceed across the parking lot and back to the vehicle. The dog must be in appropriate heel position and not display any fear of vehicle or traffic sounds.

14. **CONTROLLED LOAD into VEHICLE:** The individual will load the dog into the vehicle, with either entering first. The dog must not wander around the parking lot but must wait patiently for instructions. Emphasis is on safety and control.