

## Therapy Dogs of Vermont Certification Packet

Thank you for your interest in becoming a certified Therapy Dogs of Vermont team! This packet contains all of the forms and information needed for the certification process. **Applicants are expected to review and understand this document prior to testing, as well as TDV's policies (Appendix A) and other educational and training material that will be provided throughout the certification process.** The certification process (included in Appendix B for reference) and all supporting documentation and requirements are described at [www.therapydogs.org](http://www.therapydogs.org) under the "Become a TDV Team" section; please review this section of our website as well.

Fees, and related policies:

<p><b>TESTING FEE.</b> <u>Non-refundable fee</u> for testing. Once you satisfy all certification requirements, this fee will be applied toward the first-year membership. Before you submit payment, please be sure that you understand the requirements for certification before you apply! Please email us if you have any questions about the process, how long it takes, and where you must travel to be tested and evaluated!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you cancel your appointment less than 48 hours prior to your test, do not appear at your test, or fail the test; your fee will NOT be refunded. If you still wish to be certified, you would need re-apply and pay the testing fee again.</li> <li>• If you choose not to be certified and want to withdraw your application, the fee is not refundable. (Please be sure that you understand the requirements for certification before you apply!). If you have any questions about the process, how long it takes, and where you must travel to be tested and evaluated, e-mail us.)</li> <li>• If you cancel your test three times or more, TDV reserves the right to delete your application (and the non-refundable test fee will be retained by TDV).</li> </ul>	\$45
<p><b>FIRST-YEAR MEMBERSHIP/CERTIFICATION.</b> Covers <u>up to</u> TWO household family members tested and evaluated at the same time with ONE dog. TDV will only test and evaluate two handlers at a time; in other words, the first year fees cover only two handlers. If a family wishes to certify more than two handlers in the household, additional handlers must apply for and be tested/evaluated separately and full fee applies.</p> <p>For more than one dog, the full testing and first-year membership fees apply.</p> <p>Membership fees provide supplemental insurance coverage while on TDV visitations and sponsored events, newsletters and member-exclusive communications, 1 TDV bandanna, 1 TDV dog tag, 1 TDV bumper sticker, photo identification/membership card, and ability to participate in any and all TDV sponsored events. Renewal of membership is yearly.</p>	\$80
<p><b>ANNUAL RENEWAL FEES APPLY IN ORDER TO KEEP CERTIFICATION CURRENT.</b> Please contact TDV at <a href="mailto:admin@therapydogs.org">admin@therapydogs.org</a> for information related to annual fees and paperwork requirements.</p>	

Rates effective 7/15/2014.

You must be tested and evaluated by an approved Therapy Dogs of Vermont Certification member. Classes, recommendations, other therapy dog or service dog certifications, etc. may not be used in lieu of the full Therapy Dogs of Vermont testing and certification process.

Please review *Appendix C. Guide to TDV Certification Standards* for information about certification standards, prohibited training equipment, and expectations for testing and evaluations.

## Application for Membership

*All fields are required. Please sign, date, and choose a bandanna color/size for your dog.*

**NAME(S):** \_\_\_\_\_

**MAILING ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE 1:** \_\_\_\_\_ (circle: home, work) **PHONE 2:** \_\_\_\_\_ (circle: home, work)

**PRIMARY E-MAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ALTERNATE E-MAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BUSINESS/OCCUPATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DOG'S NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Male** **Female**

**BREED/MIX:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I certify** that I have read and understand all of the policies and insurance coverage as set forth by Therapy Dogs of Vermont (TDV). I certify that I have not falsified anything about myself or my dog. I agree to abide by all policies while participating in TDV sponsored events and TDV visits. I further agree to abide by the policies and policies of any facility where I may be working my dog under the name of Therapy Dogs of Vermont. TDV may revoke my certification and membership at any time if policies are not followed or the dog poses any perceived threat.

**I certify** that I am applying for TDV membership solely so that I can volunteer with my dog to make therapy dog visits in the community. Certification may not be used to gain rights typically reserved for service dogs, such as access to non-dog friendly establishments, airlines, housing that restricts dogs, etc.

**I certify**, to the best of my actual and constructive knowledge, that the dog I am presenting to TDV for certification has not been involved in an aggressive incident which has caused physical harm to a human or another dog(s); that the dog has never been used for dog-to-dog fighting, trained to attack humans, or has engaged in any other activity that would pose a threat to humans or other dogs; and that the dog is not probable source of danger.

**SIGNATURE of Handler:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Parent/Guardian, if applicable:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Choose Bandanna Size:**  Large  Small

## PROOF OF VACCINATION AND HEALTH CHECKLIST

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***All items must be checked off below, and the form dated and signed; by checking the boxes and signing the forms, you certify all requirements. Please attach a rabies certificate or clear proof of rabies (showing vaccination expiration date) from your veterinarian.***

Government and hospital regulatory organizations require increasing diligence from health care facilities regarding patient care. For therapy dog programs, this means ensuring dogs are up to date with the rabies vaccination, clean, and in good health. Some healthcare facilities may require additional dog health records or vaccinations to satisfy individual program requirements.

TDV requires new members to produce proof that their canine candidate has been properly immunized for rabies before being tested. That proof must also accompany the membership application to be kept on file with TDV. Additionally, members may be asked send updated vaccination paperwork each year during membership renewal.

Please check off the items below and sign/date. Attach proof of current rabies vaccination, clearly showing the date the vaccination expires.

- Rabies certificate is attached.
- During the evaluation phase and as a TDV member, I will not take my dog on visits if he/she is not feeling well or has any symptoms of illness. I will ensure my dog is clean and free from parasites when making visits.
- I certify that my dog is not on a raw meat diet.
- Once I become a member, I agree to maintain my dog's rabies vaccination and will be prepared to produce it at any time on TDV's request.
- I certify that my dog is not a hybrid, or wild canine cross (i.e., wolf hybrid, coyote hybrid, etc.).
- I certify that should my dog experience any changes in behavior (fear, aggression, etc.) or health conditions (blindness, loss of hearing, pain, etc.) that I will consult TDV and, if necessary, retire my dog from therapy dog work.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Release of Claims for Accidental Injury

**Please fill in your name, city of residence, and state of residence. Sign in the presence of a certification team member at the test.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name), City of \_\_\_\_\_, State of \_\_\_\_\_, hereby certify I am aware of all the inherent dangers of handling dogs (mine and others) and of the basic safety rules for activities connected therewith. I understand that it is not the purpose of Therapy Dogs of Vermont to teach safety rules, obedience or handling of dogs and I'm familiar with Therapy Dog of Vermont Policies for handlers and dogs. I understand and guarantee that while I am participating in my three (3) visits prior to membership, I am responsible for any incident that might occur, and absolve and agree to hold harmless Therapy Dogs of Vermont from any liability.

I also understand and agree that neither Therapy Dogs of Vermont or its officers, directors, members or agents may be held liable in any way for any occurrence in connection with said activities which may result in injury, death or damages to myself, family, or my dog. In consideration of being a member of this organization I hereby personally assume all risks which may befall me while I am engaged in this activity whether foreseen or unforeseen and further hold harmless the above mentioned entities and persons from any claim by me, or my family or any other party arising out of my participation in this activity.

I further state that I am of lawful age and legally competent to sign this affirmation and release, which I understand. I have fully informed myself of the contents of this affirmation and release by reading it before I signed it. I assume my own responsibility of physical fitness and capability to perform under the normal requirements of this activity.

I understand that TDV 3rd party liability insurance applies only when a currently registered therapy dog is participating in a TDV sponsored non-profit activity. I have read and agree to abide by TDV Policies during testing, during evaluations, and while volunteering.

Additionally, I will indemnify/hold harmless Therapy Dogs of Vermont from any incident that occurs regarding this dog after testing.

In Witness whereof, I have executed this affirmation and release on:

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

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

**Witness (TDV Certification Team Member)**

**Prospective Member/Releaser:**

Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

*Parent or Guardian (if applicable)*

Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

## Certification Record: Therapy Dogs of Vermont

PO Box 1271  
Williston, VT 05495  
[www.therapydogs.org](http://www.therapydogs.org)  
admin@therapydogs.org

*This record verifies that the below-named dog and handler team have successfully completed the test and evaluations and have met all criteria for therapy dog certification with Therapy Dogs of Vermont. Certification is maintained through an annual renewal process.*

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

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

Breed: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional handler, if applicable (handlers must be age 14 or older and tested and evaluated with the dog):

\_\_\_\_\_

### TESTING

Date tested:

Tester (print):

Tester Signature:

Hub:  Williston  Upper Valley  Manchester  Northeast Kingdom  St. Johnsbury

### EVALUATIONS

Dates of evaluations (at least 3 dates must be clearly indicated)

Evaluator (print):

Evaluator Signature:

Hub:  Williston  Upper Valley  Manchester  Northeast Kingdom  St. Johnsbury

Facility Evaluated in:

## APPENDIX A. Policies Governing Member Activities & Therapy Dog Visits

*(These apply to the certification phase and to all therapy dog visits once the team is certified) The terms “handler” and “member” within this document refer to the person who has undergone certification with the dog and who will be making visits. “Program” and “facility” refer to where the therapy dog team makes visits.*

### MEMBERSHIP/CERTIFICATION

- Dogs must have been tested and evaluated by TDV in order to achieve certified status; to keep this status current, membership must be renewed each year.
- Annual renewals: Members receive an annual membership renewal form requiring the dog's rabies record (if due) and membership fees. Each year that you renew your membership, you will receive an updated sticker to attach to your dog's photo ID. If you do not renew by the established deadlines, you may be required to be re-tested and re-evaluated (at the rate of a first-time membership) before membership is re-established.
- All dogs engaging in visits must have a current membership with Therapy Dogs of Vermont (by renewing with TDV each year and having a sticker indicating the current year on the back of the dog's badge), wear the TDV identification tag, bandanna, and dog's photo identification card.
- A dog may wear the logo or identification of only one organization at a time. The wearing of more than one will void TDV insurance liability.
- Members must notify TDV (preferably email [Admin@Therapydogs.org](mailto:Admin@Therapydogs.org)) before bringing their certified therapy dog to any facility to be covered by insurance. This information is kept in our database.
- TDV (volunteer) members are covered for incidents caused by their dogs to others, with their individual homeowner's insurance as first payer for bodily injury/property damage then covered for any negligence for up to \$1,000,000, however all activities must be organized by TDV.
- Members may not use TDV's logo on communications or publications of any kind without express TDV permission. TDV's full policy regarding communications: “Communications Policy/Guidelines” (TDV website).
- Handlers must be 14 years of age or older. Facilities may have different age requirements.
- All certified teams are expected to become active volunteers (i.e., TDV does not certify dogs solely for community/school projects, short-term community service requirements, rental housing agreements, travel requirements, etc.).
- TDV may revoke certification/membership at any time if policies are not followed or the dog poses a perceived threat.
- Members must not use affiliation with TDV or certification status for any financial or professional gain.
- Certification may not be used to gain rights typically reserved for service dogs, such as access to non-dog friendly establishments, airlines, housing that restricts dogs, etc.

### SAFETY AND PROPER CONDUCT DURING VISITS

- Handlers must have control over their dogs at all times and dogs must be closely supervised. Dogs must be on the required leash at all times and be handled by the certified handler.
- The handler's primary purpose must be the volunteer visit (i.e., if the dog is accompanying the handler to the handler's place of business or to visit family/friends in a facility, this may not be considered as a TDV visit unless the dog is on leash and with the handler at all times).
- Never enter Intensive Care or a room that has an isolation sign on the door without the permission of the staff. Each facility marks such rooms in a different way—get to know how your facility does so. Generally, patients who are critically ill (ICU patients) or immunocompromised (AIDS, cancer, etc.) should not be visited.

Use caution in patients just out of surgery. Consult with the facility on what types of patients may or may not be able to receive visits.

- Handlers are responsible for understanding the facility's regulations and following them.
- Always exercise careful hygiene and infection control practices. The individual rooms of many facilities are equipped with antiseptic sprays or wipes which are used by the staff. This prevents bringing germs into a facility (and passing them from patient to patient) and for the volunteer carrying germs out.
- Never give food or beverage to patients, even if they ask. Likewise, never move or reposition a patient or their medical equipment. Find a staff member.
- Handlers should avoid wearing perfumes/colognes. Patients can be very sensitive to smell and some may have serious allergies.
- Always ask the patient's permission before you visit with them or bring the dog into his or her room. Be mindful that some people are afraid of, or allergic to, dogs.
- During a visit, make sure the door is open at all times during your visit. Some facilities may have their own procedures for making visits, such as providing a list of acceptable patients.
- Do not interfere with normal or emergency activity of the facility. Should medical staff need to work with a patient, excuse yourself politely and quickly. Likewise, avoid making a visit if medical staff is working with a patient.
- Whether or not to let your dog accept treats when visiting is a personal choice. However, please be VERY aware of how gentle your dog is when doing so. If your dog has ANY chance of catching a finger with his teeth or grabbing at the food in earnest, consider taking the treat from the patient to give to the dog yourself. Feeding a dog treats may be prohibited by some facilities for infection control and hygiene reasons.
- Be prepared with proper material to quickly clean up after your dog if it vomits, urinates or defecates within the facility or the grounds.
- Dogs should never get on a bed, lap etc. unless invited by the patient and permitted by the facility, and if the handler can assure the patient's safety and comfort while doing so.
- Never let your dog lick any wound. Licking a patient's face should be avoided.
- When making visits, please turn off the cell phones! It's a distraction to being able to work with your dog safely and it's a common courtesy to the people we visit.
- Footwear: Enclosed shoes are mandatory (no flip flops, open-toed shoes, shoes that expose major parts of the foot, etc.). This is for the protection of the handler (as needles, blood and feces may be present on the floors of facilities).

## **OTHER**

- Handlers must check in with staff or supervision of each facility or hospital unit they visit. Ask if there is any patient/resident you cannot visit.
- Patient confidentiality must be respected at all times. Do not mention to anyone that you saw a patient in the hospital, do not share any personal or health information you may learn while visiting a facility, and do not take photos of patients. Facilities may have their own confidentiality policies —please check with them for further requirements.
- Persons not tested and evaluated with the dog may NOT handle the dog on any therapy dog visits; the dog must only be handled by the person who was tested and evaluated with it.
- Only tested and evaluated dogs may make visits; other dogs the handler may own/be associated with may not be substituted for making visits by wearing the certified dog's identification.

- Visits to private residences: Due to liability and personal safety concerns, TDV prohibits therapy dog visits to private residences. For example, TDV is not able to accommodate private, in-home visits requested by an individual or an agency/facility. Some exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- In order to honor and respect the diversity, values, and belief systems of the people we visit, TDV teams must not initiate/engage in conversations which could become potentially controversial subjects involving politics, religion, moral, or spiritual beliefs while on therapy dog duty and while representing TDV.

## **POLICIES RELATED TO DOGS**

- Minimum requirements for certification: dog must be at least one year of age, owned by (and living with) the handler for at least 6 months, not on a raw meat diet, and not a hybrid of any kind.
- TDV does not discriminate against specific breeds of dogs. However, TDV's experience and expertise in the assessment, certification, and handling of therapy animals is focused on and restricted to domestic canines—thus, TDV does not certify other species such as cats, horses, ferrets, and wild canine hybrid crosses.
- Dogs must be current with the rabies vaccination. If your pet has any signs of infection or illness, do not make visits. (This includes diarrhea but also if your dog is not acting like his/her normal self, sleeping more, reluctance to undertake normal behaviors, has a runny nose, or crusting or weeping eyes). Should you have any questions regarding your dog's ability to participate in visits, please E-mail [admin@therapydogs.org](mailto:admin@therapydogs.org) or talk with your veterinarian.
- Female dogs must not be “in season” when doing Therapy Dog work.
- Dogs must be on a leash (4' or less) unless participating in exercises that necessitate being off lead (such as obedience demonstrations), at which time they must be closely supervised. Please note that “flexi leads”, retractable leashes, and chain leashes (or ones that are partial chain link) are not acceptable.
- Although a handler may have TDV more than one certified dogs, each dog on duty must have one handler.
- Dogs must be clean, well-groomed and free of fleas; toenails should be short and not ragged or sharp.
- Dogs must not be treated with oily flea treatment (e.g. Top Spot etc.) within one week of a visit.
- Keep your dog's nose off the floor and be aware of what your dog may ingest or step on (there may be items such as needles, pills, rubber gloves, tissues, bodily fluids, or other waste products on the floor or in garbage).
- Therapy dog teams working together should greet outside the facility before going in for visits.
- Observe the needs of your dog. If dog appears hot, tired or otherwise uninterested, end the visit and revisit another time. Any dog has the potential for becoming aggressive or exhibiting aggressive behaviors if stressed, ill, injured, or fearful. The handler is the dog's protector—and must be aware of the dog's reactions at all times. The handler's job is to ensure a safe and happy experience for both dog and patient. Handlers must observe the dog's reactions and intervene before it gets to that.
- I certify that should my dog experience any changes in behavior (fear, aggression, etc.) or health conditions (blindness, loss of hearing, pain, etc.) that I will consult TDV and, if necessary, retire my dog from therapy dog work.
- For safety reasons, we do not permit the use of the following pieces of equipment (during the certification process and when dogs are volunteering as TDV therapy dog teams): spraying collars (such as citronella), electric/shock collars, vibrating collars, spray bottles or spraying devices of any kind, clickers and other noise-making devices; prong/pinch collars of any type, choke chains or nylon choke collars, and head halters of any type. Any collar or item that goes around a dog's neck should have a quick-release buckle or function. TDV reserves the right to prohibit any piece of training equipment should it be deemed unsafe or not conducive to the image and/or work of TDV.



## APPENDIX B. Testing and Certification Process

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The entire process of TDV certification involves three basic steps (please note that your tester and/or evaluator may also provide you with additional instructions for each phase of the certification).

### — STEP 1 – Register for a test (\*see our test refund policy below)

- Review the [Minimum Requirements](#)
- Complete the registration with a first and second choice of your test date, location, and payment.

### — STEP 2 – Prepare for Your Test

- Download, read, and fill out the forms in the [Certification Packet](#)
- Review the testing guidelines and all policies within the packet to ensure that you understand all requirements.
- Prepare for your test by reading [Test Preparation](#).
- Bring these items to the test:
  - Certification Packet
  - Proof of rabies vaccination

Your tester will communicate any additional information needed for the test and/or directions to the testing location by email in advance of the test date.

### — STEP 3 – Prepare for your Evaluations

Before your first evaluation, please carefully review these three documents (click the links to download the documents):

- TDV's policies and requirements (these were in the Certification Packet you brought to the test).
- Our [Guide to Working with your Therapy Dog](#) for important concepts you will need to know and that will be discussed at your first evaluation.
- [Preparing for your First Evaluation](#) for what to expect at your first evaluation and what to bring (such as the mandatory four-foot leash!).

To view this page on the web, and access documents and links, go to:

<http://therapydogs.org/become-a-team/therapy-dog-test-certification/>

Additional information in this section of our website includes:

- What is a Therapy Dog?
- Why Become a TDV Team?
- Will my Dog Qualify?
- Membership Rates & Fees
- TDV Test Schedule of test sessions across Vermont

## Appendix C. Guide to TDV Certification Standards

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### **WORKING RELATIONSHIP AND UNDERSTANDING THE DOG**

Even though training and educating a dog is an ongoing process, TDV expects teams to have a solid foundation in obedience and a positive working relationship when they come to us. We expect a dog and handler with an established partnership—involving training, socialization, trust, and respect. When we are evaluating this teamwork and training, we are looking for a balance—moderation in approach and attitude of working together. For example, a handler who uses treats (or other incentives such as toys) constantly may signal a problem (please note that treats and toys are not permitted at the test or evaluations)—a dog who will not work unless offered a bribe. Likewise, a handler who administers frequent or unfair correction may also signal a relationship/training level not ready/suitable for therapy dog work. For example, we look for:

- Mutual respect—a dog and handler that for the most part understand each other and a handler who understands the dog and can communicate what is expected to the dog?
- The too much or too little guidance. Too many treats? Too many corrections? Too little praise?
- Does the handler have complete, consistent, and willing control of the dog at all times, and is the handler aware of where the dog is and what it is doing at all times? Does the handler need to physically manipulate the dog (pushing down on the hindquarters to sit, keeping a tight leash to keep the dog in control, etc.)?

Handler awareness of the dog's reactions and needs is critical to conducting safe and happy visits for everyone. Handlers are expected to have an acute awareness of their dog's reactions at all times during visits, understanding how to identify stress, fear, anxiety, and aggression so that they can appropriately intervene (end the visit, change the situation to make the dog more comfortable, etc.) before incident or compromising the dog. Dogs are a different species with different perception and communication than humans. A dog can't say, "Oh my, that large breathing pump under the bed scares me, Mom" or "this person is patting me too roughly and it hurts"—a dog under stress or in a new situation may behave differently than expected. A dog who is not feeling well, aging, or is injured may also act differently. Your dog may not want to visit for a number of reasons, and it may tire more easily than at home. Any dog can show signs of withdrawal and even aggression/fear if pushed beyond its comfort level (dogs must never be forced into any situation). You, as the handler, need to observe the dog's reactions and intervene before it gets to that. Thus, handlers are expected to have a general knowledge of how dogs exhibit stress, fear, anxiety, aggression, be aware of their own dog's signals, and be ready to intervene appropriately.

### **EXPLANATION OF STANDARDS BY TEST SECTION (the test follows in the next appendix)**

#### ***I. ARRIVAL and CHECK-IN***

- Being able to control the dog under normal as well as unexpected circumstances is critical. Teams will often encounter unexpected situations/noises/human behaviors. Dogs must be in complete control when entering the testing facility.
- Both handler and dog must be well groomed and dressed appropriately as if they were on an actual volunteer visit. This demonstrates professionalism. They must also come prepared with the required paperwork, and on-time for the test.

#### ***II. OBEDIENCE, MANNERS, and HANDLING***

- This part of the test shows that the dog has some good manners and solid training. The dog must readily respond to handler's commands—without force (this includes pushing or pulling the dog's body into place) and without bribery (food/toys).
- It is expected that a handler is able to keep the dog under control at all times. If the dog is corrected or redirected, this should be fair, gentle, and constructive. Handler and dog should work as a team and praise should be offered when the dog is performing as requested.

- The handler should be aware at all times where the dog is and what it is doing (for example, not letting it stray too close to another dog, get away from them, or jump on anyone).

### *III. BEHAVIOR and REACTION TO PEOPLE/DISTRACTIONS*

- During this phase, the dog will be exposed to a range of experiences, such as umbrellas, walkers and crutches, noisemakers, the approach of an oddly dressed stranger, etc. The certification team will also interact with the dog to assess if the dog is accepting of touch and interaction and if the dog is SOCIAL with new people.
- The dog will be assessed based on its reaction to experiences presented at the test as well as interactions with the certification team. A dog must not be fearful, shy, aggressive, and if stressed, must recover quickly. The dog must outwardly show that it WANTS to interact with the certification team members, not merely tolerate the interaction.

### *IV. DOG-TO-DOG BEHAVIOR*

- Since teams often work together, it is important that all therapy dogs who are working together are focused on their therapy task, and not interested in inappropriate interactions with fellow team member dogs.
- Can the dog greet other dogs briefly on leash, and also work in close proximity to each other without either excitement or aggression/fear?
- Does the handler anticipate his/her dog's response to other dogs and respond proactively?

### *V. DOG-TO-HUMAN INTERACTION*

- This part of the test continues to assess whether the dog has suitable social skills and temperament for interacting with people. Testers examine body language, manners, sociability, and temperament.
- Is it important that dogs are engaged and social during interactions with the certification team and people they visit.
- Dogs must also not jump on anyone, or paw at anyone. Dogs should also not engage in other behaviors that may not be suitable for the visitation environment (such as excessive sniffing, licking, etc.)

### *VI. VISITATION EVALUATIONS*

- The evaluation examines how the team performs together in an actual visitation. It is critical that the handler is in control of the dog at all times and the team continue to meet all of the requirements described above. Dog and handler's response are both being evaluated here. Is dog responsive to strangers in a friendly, positive way? Is handler friendly, enthusiastic, and in control of dog's actions at all times? The handler is also being assessed for ability to: manage the dog; interact appropriately and professionally with patients, staff, etc.; and understand and follow all policies.

For safety reasons, we do not permit the use of the following pieces of equipment (during the certification process and when dogs are volunteering as TDV therapy dog teams): spraying collars (such as citronella), electric/shock collars, vibrating collars, spray bottles or spraying devices of any kind, clickers and other noise-making devices; prong/pinch collars of any type, choke chains or nylon choke collars, and head halters of any type. Any collar or item that goes around a dog's neck should have a quick-release buckle or function. TDV reserves the right to prohibit any piece of training equipment should it be deemed unsafe or not conducive to the image and/or work of TDV.

The use of any food treats (or toys used as reward) is prohibited during the test/evaluations as the purpose is to determine if the dog can be controlled by the handler if no special incentives are offered.

### ***TDV Training Philosophy and Acceptable Equipment***

TDV recommends and supports positive-based training approaches and the humane training of dogs.

The dog/handler relationship is key to TDV's activities. TDV-certified dogs work in close proximity to a wide range of people. The settings and policies of the organizations we serve may differ, but in every situation the handler's ability to guide, calm, and control his or her dog is of paramount importance. Our training and team evaluation policies are designed to ensure the safety of the dogs, handlers, and patients and to enhance the therapeutic success of TDV visits.

Dog-handler teams come to us with established training protocols and philosophies—each with their own communication style and working relationship. TDV expects that teams have a solid foundation in obedience and a positive working relationship involving training, socialization, trust, and respect. Handlers are expected to understand his or her dog's behavior (including stress signals, reactions to the visitation experience, etc.) From this foundation, TDV works with each team to ensure a safe and positive visitation experience.

Our work is carried out exclusively by volunteers who come to us with well-established relationships with their animals. There are many different training methods and tools, and the choice of which to use is one only the handler can make. Before being approved to work with TDV, each dog/handler team must be evaluated to ensure humane and effective handling.

For safety reasons, we do not permit the use of the following pieces of equipment (during the certification process and when dogs are volunteering as TDV therapy dog teams): spraying collars (such as citronella), electric/shock collars, vibrating collars, spray bottles or spraying devices of any kind, clickers and other noise-making devices; prong/pinch collars of any type, choke chains or nylon choke collars, and head halters of any type. Any collar or item that goes around a dog's neck must have a quick-release buckle or function. TDV reserves the right to prohibit any piece of training equipment should it be deemed unsafe or not conducive to the image and/or work of TDV.

Each TDV team is carefully evaluated. Teams coming for testing and evaluating must be in complete control and meet all standards of behavior—regardless of training method or equipment used. When we are evaluating teamwork and training, we are seeking a balance in approach and attitude. We look for:

- Mutual respect—a dog and handler that understand each other.
- Handlers who can communicate what is expected to their dog.
- Handlers who are aware of the dog's reactions and needs.
- Handlers who will support the dog, or remove it from a difficult situation—for instance if the dog becomes nervous or overwhelmed by a large crowd of children.
- Appropriate guidance by the handler, including sensitivity and moderation in training.

## APPENDIX D. TDV Certification Testing and Evaluations

Handler Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dog's Name/Breed: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional handler (all handlers must be over the age of 14 and tested and evaluated with the dog):

\_\_\_\_\_

<b>I. ARRIVAL and CHECK-IN</b>	Yes	No	Needs Work	N/A
Was the handler in control of the dog upon entering the test location? (i.e., dog pulling handler, barking or whining at other dogs, jumping on people, etc.)				
Was the handler professional and presentable?				
Was the dog clean and well-groomed?				
Did the handler arrive on-time and with required paperwork?				
Notes:				
			Pass: _____	Fail: _____

<b>II. OBEDIENCE, MANNERS, and HANDLING</b>	Yes	No	Needs Work	N/A
Is the dog able to walk close to the handler's side on a loose leash going at slow, fast, and normal paces and performing changes of direction?				
Was the dog able to wait patiently at the handler's side?				
Was the dog able to sit, do a brief sit-stay, and down on command (without physical manipulation)?				
Was the dog able to leave/pass by a desired object or food treat on command?				
Was there any issue with too much sniffing, pawing, excessive licking, head butting, or any other behavior inappropriate for making visits? (please describe)				
Was there any issue with barking, whining, or other vocalization?				
Was the dog able to remain at handler's side and in control with a distraction? (i.e., ball bounced nearby, person running by, etc.)				
Does the team give the overall impression of control and professionalism?				
Does the handler have awareness of the dog's behavior and position in all situations (for example, not letting the dog get close to other dogs, keeping the dog close to them, etc.)				
Is the dog responsive to handler? Does handler have full and <u>willing</u> control of the dog?				
Notes:				
			Pass: _____	Fail: _____



III. BEHAVIOR and REACTION TO PEOPLE/DISTRACTIONS	Yes	No	Needs Work	N/A
<b>Is dog able to remain calm, non-aggressive, and in-control upon encountering the following:</b>				
Loud, sudden, and/or strange noises?				
Around various objects (wheelchair, crutches, umbrella, moving objects, etc.)?				
An oddly dressed and behaving stranger? (Please note protective behavior)				
A person approaching the handler (shaking a hand, patting the handler on the arm, or standing close to the handler)? (Please note protective behavior)				
<b>Could the certification team:</b>				
Touch dog all over the head and face?				
Touch all over the dog's body?				
Hold the tail?				
Hold each of the paws?				
Scratch the throat under the chin?				
Gently pet and stroke the ears?				
Lean over the dog?				
Place a hand on dog's back and stroke hand down the back several times?				
Lift the lips several times?				
Hold and put gentle pressure on the collar/leash?				
Approach the dog in different ways--rapidly directly, from behind? Bump into the dog lightly?				
Make direct eye contact for several minutes?				
Pat and touch the dog exuberantly, noisily, and clumsily?				
Hug the dog?				
Pat the dog at the same time with another person?				
Crowd around the dog and stand near the handler (as if in an elevator)				
Did the handler seem aware of the dog's body language, stress level, and reactions to the testing situations and testing team?				
Did the dog exhibit sociability? Does the dog WANT to engage with the certification team and enjoy the touch and attention? (or is the dog merely tolerating the interactions?)				
Notes: (Tester: please describe body language observed if any of the items above were checked "no" or "needs work")				
			Pass: _____	Fail: _____



IV. DOG- TO- DOG BEHAVIOR (Dogs should be assessed for ability to work in close proximity to other dogs at the test and not meet face-to-face.)				
	Yes	No	Needs Work	N/A
Did the handler demonstrate having control over the dog in the presence of other dogs?				
Did the dog bark or lunge at another dog? (even if non-aggressive)?				
Was the dog able to work calmly in the presence of other dogs?				
Were any other signs of aggression/inappropriate interest displayed?				
Notes:				
			Pass: _____	Fail: _____

V. DOG-TO-HUMAN INTERACTION, <i>Continued</i>	YES	NO	Needs Work	N/A
	Did the handler demonstrate having control over greeting people—in wheelchairs, standing, on crutches, etc.?			
Was dog able to take a treat gently? <sup>3</sup>				
Did the dog jump on or paw at anyone?				
Was the dog willing to engage in interaction with people?				
Were there any signs of aggression displayed?				
Were there any signs of stress or shyness?				
Notes: (tester: please describe body language observed if any of the items below were checked “no” or “needs work”)				

VI. VISITATION EVALUATIONS (three visits must be completed within 6 months of the test date)	YES	NO	Needs Work	N/A
	<b>Observing the HANDLER:</b>			
Did the handler come with the required 4-foot leash?				
Did the handler keep the dog close and in control during the entire visitation and in all situations? (including working around the other teams)				
Was the handler enthusiastic, professional, and friendly during the visit?				
Did the handler demonstrate a thorough understanding of the guidelines and adhere to them during the visits?				
Was handler aware of dog’s needs, body language, stress, reactions, etc.?				



<b>VI. VISITATION EVALUATIONS</b> (three visits must be completed within 6 months of the test date)	YES	NO	Needs Work	N/A
Was the handler able to exercise good judgment and awareness to surroundings when on the visits and working in the facility?				
<b>Observing the DOG:</b>				
If initially excited, did dog calm down and respond to handler?				
Was the dog willing to participate in the visits? Was the dog engaged and social, not merely tolerating visits?				
Was the dog clean and well-groomed?				
Did dog bark, whine, or create noise to the point of being disruptive?				
Did the dog show any signs of stress? Fear? Aggression? (please describe concerns below)				
Was the dog able to work in close proximity to other dogs calmly?				
Were the dogs able to greet BRIEFLY, ON LEASH before the visits without aggression, fear, or excitability?				
Notes:				
			Pass: _____	Fail: _____

Date of Test: \_\_\_\_\_ Location/Facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Tester's Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Evaluations: \_\_\_\_\_ Location/Facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator's Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_



**THERAPY DOGS**

of Vermont



Unleash a Smile