



2023 Compliance Guidance Notes

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Section 5. Dog Training	
5.1	Programs keep <i>detailed</i> training records, progress reports, and/or logs on every dog in regard to socialization and training, including the environments the dog has been exposed to. Compliance demonstration may include dog training records/files, interviews with staff, volunteers, and owner trainers, and observation of training with staff and volunteers including the use of assistive devices used by the clients of the program
5.2	It is vital that volunteers who assist with dog care, fostering, and/or training are given appropriate quality advice and support by a person(s) with appropriate professional expertise and experience in puppy and dog development. The program, not the volunteers, must take responsibility for its dogs in the event of emergencies or any other exceptional circumstance. Compliance demonstration may include review of documentation given to volunteers and interviews with staff and volunteers.
5.3	Dogs must reliably execute basic obedience skills by responding to voice and/or hand signals. Dogs must respond to both basic obedience and task cues from a client consistently on the first request in all environments. The response to cues should not be too demanding on the client or the dog. It is acceptable for the client to reset the dog if the dog does not do the behavior on the first attempt, but a repeated request should not be routine. It is normal for a dog to be distracted by certain stimuli such as food or other animals, however, the dog must willingly return to its working task when directed. Assessors will be aware of the environment, and potential distractions, that the dog is working in. The function of the assistance dog is to mitigate the client's disability through a minimum of three assistive tasks. At least one task must be used by the client in public. It is the responsibility of the assistance dog program to determine the necessity of public access for the partnership based on the client's needs. Task(s) must be specific to the client. The presence of the dog as emotional or therapeutic support does not constitute a task and therefore does not count towards the three required tasks. Compliance demonstration may include interviews with staff and clients and observation of dogs working for staff and clients.

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5.4	To be safe, well-mannered, even tempered, and unobtrusive in public settings and where the client will need to go, dogs are: ☐ calm, quiet, and comfortable in public settings ☐ appropriate and unaffected by the presence of food or high value rewards ☐ ready to respond to task cues ☐ able to maintain appropriate focus and interaction with only its handler(s), recovering focus well after experiencing distractions ☐ appropriately behaved around dogs and other animals ☐ able to behave unobtrusively in all public situations ☐ accepting of handling during activities such as routine grooming, veterinary examinations, and when greeted by a stranger in public ☐ able to relieve/toilet on cue in an appropriate location Assessors will be knowledgeable about the ADI Public Access Test and can use all or part of the test for evaluating this standard. The ADI Public Access Test is part of ADI's recommended method of evaluating a program's team placements. The purpose of the Public Access Test is to ensure that placed dogs that have public access are stable, well-behaved, and unobtrusive to the public. It is to ensure 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 the skill/task test that should be given by the program. It is to be used in addition to those skill/task tests. ADI's Public Access Test is available upon request. Please contact info@assistedogsinternational.org. Compliance demonstration may include observation of the dogs in public or a location specific to a client being interviewed and interviews of staff and clients.
5.5	Dogs must be trained using LIMA (least invasive minimally aversive) based training methods applied by skilled staff and/or volunteers. It is the responsibility of the program to ensure volunteers are properly educated and trained in this training method and can apply these methods appropriately. The physical and emotional safety of each individual dog must be taken into account while being trained. The handler should aim to maximize positive reinforcement and minimize the use of positive punishment when teaching tasks or modifying behavior. Handlers should be able to read and understand the dog's body language and react appropriately. Any threat of, or type of, hitting, kicking, ear pinching, and/or strangulation of dogs as a method of training or interaction with the dog is not permitted at any point in the life of the dog. This includes training and handling by volunteers, staff, and/or clients at any point in the dog's life, including after placement with the client. Compliance demonstration may include observation of volunteers and staff training dogs, as well as interviews with volunteers and staff involved in dog training. Dog training records/logs may also be reviewed

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5.6	Program volunteers, staff, and clients are not permitted to use the three listed training tool categories on any dog at any time for any reason. This includes owner or private-trainer teams working with a program. Shock collars (also known as remote training collars, e-collars, Ecollars, or electric collars) are defined as any collar that utilizes electrical shock and therefore includes those used for invisible fences. Prong collars include those made from any materials (metal, plastic, outer fabric lining, etc.). Programs must fully comply with this standard two years after its initial publication (January 1, 2026). For those certified teams placed prior to January 1, 2026, equipment prohibited by this standard may still be used. For example, a certified team placed on December 15, 2025 may still use a prong collar for the remainder of that certified team's working life. If that team dissolves and the client is given a new dog after January 1, 2026, the team may not use the prohibited equipment. If the dog is retrained for a new client and placed after January 1, 2026 with that new client, it may not be placed using any of the prohibited equipment. Compliance demonstration may include the assessor interviewing training staff, volunteers, and clients. Additionally, the assessor may observe training of program dogs and client teams. Lastly, assessors may review the training records of the dog and/or certified team, including certification date of the team.
5.7	Programs must provide evidence of the dog's training throughout its entire time spent with the program, up to and including team training. Programs must work with a dog, program dog or owner-trained team, for a minimum of 6 months. If a program acquires a dog from another ADI-accredited member program, the training time that the first program spent with the dog can count towards the new program's 6-month relationship period. Compliance demonstration may include review of dog records/files and interviews, with training staff/volunteers.
5.8	Programs must have a process that demonstrates how they select prospective assistance dogs. This process must include, but is not limited to, selection criteria for the dogs' temperament, health, aptitude for specific assistance tasks, and socially acceptable behavior. Compliance demonstration may include review of dog records/files and interviews with staff.
5.9	Programs must be able to document that at the time of certification as a team with a client, the dog is physically and mentally mature and reliable in its role. Dogs should be confident, relaxed, and consistently responsive in different locations. Programs should be able to demonstrate what type of assessment(s) they use throughout training to measure the dog's readiness and reliability for certification. Compliance demonstration may include interview with training staff/volunteers and clients, observation of dog training and client teams, as well as dog training logs/records, including assessment test(s).

General Guidelines on how assessors will observe training during an assessment.

1. The process of observing training needs to be flexible, with appropriate discretion given to the assessor based on their experience, the type of program being surveyed, and the program's training process.
2. Assessors will be knowledgeable about the ADI Standards for all types of assistance dogs and the expectations for the behavior of assistance dogs in public.
3. Assessors will be knowledgeable about the ADI Public Access Test and can use all or part of the test during the observation of the training process. The test is available in the member's only section of the ADI website or from ADI upon request.
4. Observation must occur with trainers across the range of dog type, services and training processes offered by the program.
5. Observation must occur with clients and puppy raisers/fosters, if used by a program. An assessor may ask to speak with additional clients or puppy raisers via telephone interviews if programs cannot set up face-to face opportunities with a reasonable number of clients or puppy raisers – to be determined by the assessor. Clients must be prepared to demonstrate tasks to the assessor.
6. Observation of training should occur at the program's facility (if they have one) or at whatever location is used to train the dogs. Observation must also occur in public, and this can be done at locations such as a local mall or shopping area that includes a restaurant.
7. Observing puppies in training can occur with individual raisers at the facility, during a puppy raiser class, or in a public setting. Observation of puppy raisers working with puppies must occur if the program uses this model.
8. Prior to the on-site survey, the assessor will provide the program with a basic plan and schedule for the Observation of Training so that the program can prepare staff and the other individuals who will be included.
9. Observation of Training will include evaluating the program's use of assistive devices such as wheelchairs, walkers, sound equipment, and the dog's equipment such as harnesses, leashes, and collars.
10. When observing training, it is understood that dogs are *not* expected to be "perfect," but that they are under control, responsive to the handler, and that they perform the obedience skill or task as directed by the handler. If distracted by stimulants such as other animals or food, the dog should willingly return to concentrating on its working task when directed. *The assessor will take into account the dog's level of training and experience at the time of the training.*
11. If refusals or other behavioral problems occur with the dog, motivational training, positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, and appropriate correction are

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	permissible. It is expected for trainers to be able to discuss each dog's progress in training, taking into account the LIMA principle. 12. If the dog shows inappropriate behavior or lack of skills, it is important that the trainer or program staff person can discuss options for the dog's further training, and possible plans for the dog, including how decisions are made about releasing dogs from the program.

	Section 7. Facilities and Kennels
7.1	Programs must ensure that their facilities are accessible and that clients can access relevant parts of the facility/center. If programs provide off-site accommodation as part of the training process, it must be suitable for the disabilities the program is working with. Examples include: • Wheelchair accessible entrance • Sufficient wheelchair accessible toilets • Sufficient designated parking spaces for people with disabilities • Easy access to an accessible telephone or other communication equipment appropriate to the population served All facilities used by the program must be comfortable and clean. Compliance demonstration may include inspection of the program's facility/center as well as inspection of other off-site accommodations used as part of the training process.
7.2	Vehicles provided by the program must be safe and comfortable for both humans and dogs. Programs must have a policy which covers leaving dogs in parked vehicles and that policy must address what to do in cases of extreme hot and cold. Programs must consider all possible extreme weather conditions that could apply to their location. Other dog safety procedures, such as access to water, should also be considered. Compliance demonstration may include inspection of the vehicles programs use for the transport of dogs and/or clients as well as interviews with clients that use transportation supplied by the program.
7.3	Environmental enrichment (EE) programs use a variety of techniques which are designed to enhance the quality of life for dogs in kennel environments. Additional and/or temporary environmental stimuli are used to promote psychological and physiological wellbeing. The benefits of EE for dogs include: • reduced stress • decreases in stereotypic/abnormal behaviors • increased relaxation • improved cognitive abilities • reduced barking or vocalizations Environmental enrichment may include, but not limited to: • interactive toys (puzzle feeders, chew toys etc.) • play centres (tunnels, boxes, structures, etc.) • social interaction (dogs/human) outside of normal training and kennel activities (examples ASPCA's Read and Relax Program, interactive play – games of fetch, opportunities to play with other dogs) • introduction of new or different scents Compliance demonstration may include inspection of the program's kennel facilities, including its use of environmental enrichment and exercise areas. Additionally, staff may be interviewed.

7.4

If the program has kennel facilities and/or uses crates, it is critical that they meet the following key standards. This includes, but is not limited to:

- The size of kennel/crate is compatible with the size of dog. At a minimum, dogs should be able to fully stand and turn around in a crate and, where applicable, kennels/crates must comply with regional requirements such as kennel licenses and codes.
- Kennels and crates must be in good order and undergo a maintenance and cleaning schedule. Cleaning products must be safe for dogs.
- Kennels must comply with regional building codes/requirements and support animal health and welfare.
- Kennels/crates must allow dogs to look out onto the wider environment through at least one side of the kennel unless the kennel/crate is being used for a specific function that requires isolation, such as breeding or veterinary care.
- Unless there is a breeding or veterinary need, kennels/crates must not be covered for longer than 2 hours at a time.
- Kennels/crates must be frost-free, draft-free and provide a dry environment for the dogs with good ventilation and regular air flow.
- Kennels/crates must have access to daylight during daylight hours and have electric lighting available when needed.
- Where weather related extremes cannot be controlled within the dog's environment, programs must have policies in place to ensure the health and safety of the dogs. For example, the program must have a policy which states how long a dog is allowed to be outside during extreme heat, cold, or storms.
- Any beds/bedding provided must be safe, clean. If the space is large enough, dogs should have the choice whether to use beds/bedding or avoid it as they choose.

Compliance demonstration may include inspection of the program's kennel facilities and/or crate areas. Additionally, staff may be interviewed.

Proposed new Standard to be added to Section 1: Administration

Compliance Guidance Notes:

Programs must abide by all laws applicable to them. Assessors will ask for proof of local law if they question if any part of a program is in compliance.