



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.

Your tester and/or evaluator will work with you to set up appointments for testing and evaluations—and give you directions and any special instructions. Please note that the last page of this packet contains a checklist for the vaccination paperwork we need from you. Please attach your veterinarian’s records to this packet; paperwork must clearly show that vaccinations are current.

Photo Identification: TDV will also provide you with a photo identification card for your dog. This card will offer proof of current membership and will be dated with an annual sticker on the back. In order to create this card for you, your tester may take a digital photo of your dog at the end of the certification process; however, this requirement must be met even if your tester does not take the photos for you; in other words, we require that you supply a digital photo (head shot) of your dog to your tester before we can process your completed application for membership. This photo should be completed prior to the final evaluation. The initial photo ID is free with membership; replacement IDs will be issued upon request for currently certified dogs at a charge of \$10.00 each.

Your tester and/or evaluator will advise you on how to handle the paperwork. Some testers will send in your paperwork to TDV for processing once you have completed all requirements—others will give you the paperwork back to send to TDV. Should you need to send in your own paperwork at the end of certification, you will mail this entire packet (completely filled out, with vaccination paperwork attached), and a check for the proper amount (see table below) to:

Therapy Dogs of Vermont
P.O. Box 1271
Williston, VT 05495-1271

QUESTIONS?
E-mail us at
admin@therapydogs.org

Testing Fee <i>Non-refundable fee for testing. Once candidate satisfies certification requirements, this fee will be applied toward the first year membership.</i>	\$20
Full membership per dog (first year) <i>Covers household family members tested and evaluated at the same time.</i>	\$45
2nd handler in a different household <i>\$10 rate applies if 2nd handler is tested and evaluated at the same time as primary handler; full membership rate applies if the second handler is tested and evaluated at a different time.</i>	\$10
Annual renewal per member <i>This is base renewal, there are charges for additional handlers and dogs. Multiple dog discount: \$25 covers the renewal for the first dog, each additional dog is \$5 each for renewal)</i>	\$25
Convert from previous title to full membership <i>(If a team has earned a TDV title and then wishes to become a full member, the team must apply for full membership within 6 months of being tested for the title; full membership will be granted after candidate satisfies membership requirements including evaluation visits and payment of the \$30 fee; TDV reserves the right to re-test any candidate.)</i>	\$30
Guest Membership (one year of newsletters) <i>(minimum \$15 to receive one year of newsletters.) Or, support TDV with a donation. Donations allow us to provide therapy dog visits to the growing number of people and facilities we serve.</i>	\$15

(rates effective 9/1/06)

You must be tested and evaluated by an approved TDV tester/evaluator.



Please read these policies prior to testing and evaluations.

POLICIES RELATED TO HANDLERS AND MEMBERSHIP

(These apply to certification phase and to all therapy dog visits once the team is certified)

Membership

- TDV dogs are insured via Sportsman's Insurance while 1) The handler is on volunteer duty at a location previously reported to TDV by the handler thus becoming a TDV sponsored event. —or—2) The handler is on paid working status duty at a location previously reported to TDV by the handler, a TDV sponsored event, and where the dog is bringing comfort to others in the same facility without any financial compensation being rendered.
- Members may not use TDV's logo on communications or publications of any kind without express permission from TDV. TDV's full policy regarding communications is in "Communications Policy and Guidelines" (see website)
- Handlers must be 14 years of age or older. Facilities may have different age requirements.
- All dogs must be currently listed with Therapy Dogs of Vermont, wear a TDV identification tag and bandanna, and have a photo identification card bearing the current year. Dogs must have been tested and evaluated by an individual who is registered as a TDV tester who certified that the requirements of the organization were met. To get a list of certified TDV tester/evaluators, please E-mail admin@therapydogs.org.
- Annual Renewals: Members receive an annual membership renewal form each January, requiring most recent copies of the dog's rabies record and membership dues. 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, you may be required to be re-tested and re-evaluated before membership is re-established. Late renewals may be charged the same rate as first-time full memberships.
- 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.
- A certified therapy dog can be removed from active service for just cause by a vote of the TDV officers based on reports from TDV T/Es, facilities, officers, etc.

Safety During Visits

- Handlers must have control over their dogs at all times.
- Handlers must ensure patient safety and cause no injuries—be careful of IV poles, tubes, medical equipment, walkers, etc.; be aware of patient's injuries so dog will not cause additional harm (for example, some patients may have wounds or injury under a sheet and some may have brittle bones and skin).
- 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.
- Handlers are responsible for understanding the facility's regulations and following them.
- Generally, patients who are critically ill (ICU patients) or immunocompromised (AIDS, cancer) 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.
- Always wash hands before and after a visit. The individual rooms of many facilities are equipped with antiseptic sprays or wipes which are used by the staff. They are for your use also. 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 nurse.

Please read these policies prior to testing and evaluations.

- Handlers should avoid wearing perfumes/colognes. Patients can be very sensitive to smell and some may have serious allergies.
- Be mindful that some people are afraid of, or allergic to, dogs. Keep your dog close so that you do not surprise such people in hallways or rooms.
- Always ask the patient's permission before you visit with them or bring the dog into his or her room. 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 are 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. (Caution, children and cautious adults may pull a hand away in the last moment, and the dog may snap unintentionally to get the treat). Also, 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. Never let your dog lick any wound. Licking a patient's face should be avoided.
- The use of spraying collars (such as citronella) or electric collars, spray bottles or spraying devices of any kind, and clickers and other such noise-making devices are prohibited as these pose safety concerns (spraying a patient accidentally, creating wet spots on floors or facility property, infection and allergy issues, etc.) and/or cause disturbance to others in the facility (noise).
- 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.

Other

- All rules of the facility being visited must be followed.
- 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. Please 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.
- Keep these in tips mind during visits: Go with the patient's needs in mind and be there to listen; Asking if a patient has pets is a good way to start a conversation; Encourage patients, family and visitors to pat your dog; Take the opportunity to educate interested observers about the value of Therapy Dogs to the emotional health of patients; If it is necessary to move a bed table, walker, phone etc. for your dog to be patted, always put the items back to the original place.
- Although a handler may have TDV multiple certified dogs, every dog on duty must have its own handler.
- 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.

Please read these policies prior to testing and evaluations.

POLICIES RELATED TO DOGS

(These apply to certification phase and to all therapy dog visits once the team is certified)

- 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.
- A Therapy Dog must be at least one year old.
- The dog must have been owned by the handler for at least 6 months (i.e., if a dog has been adopted)
- 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 or talk with your veterinarian.
- Dogs must not be on a raw meat diet.
- 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" and chain leashes (or ones that are partial chain link) are not acceptable.
- 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. The residue could be transferred to a patient while petting.
- 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 cans).
- 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.

THERAPY DOGS OF VERMONT: RELEASE OF CLAIMS FOR ACCIDENTAL INJURY

I, _____, 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.

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

Date: _____

Date: _____

Witness:

Prospective Member/Releaser:

Signature

Signature

Parent or Guardian (if applicable)

Signature



THERAPY DOGS OF VERMONT—CERTIFICATION TEST

Applicant Name: _____ Dog's Name/Breed: _____

Additional handlers? *(all handlers must be over the age of 14 and tested and evaluated with the dog).*

1. _____ 2. _____

I. INITIAL MEETING	Yes	No	Needs Work	N/A
Was the handler in control of the dog?				
Was the handler clean and well groomed?				
Was the dog clean and well groomed?				
Was any sign of protection/aggression displayed when tester greeted the handler (shake hands, pat on the arm, and step close to handler)?				
Was any sign of protection/aggression displayed in the presence of an odd stranger?*				
Did the handler come prepared for the test per the guidelines (clean dog, required paperwork, short leash, etc.)?				
Comments:				
			Pass: _____	Fail: _____

II. OBEDIENCE	Yes	No	Needs Work	N/A
Is the dog able to walk on a loose lead going at slow, fast, and normal paces?				
Able to turn around as well as walk left and right?				
Was the dog able to stop at the handler's side and wait patiently?				
Was the dog able to perform sits, downs, sit stays and down stays (on leash)?				
Was the dog able to leave/pass by a desired object or food treat at the handler's command?				
Was the dog able to remain at handler's side with a distraction, <i>(i.e., ball bounced nearby; person running from front)</i>				
Is the handler aware of the dog's reactions and needs? Acts proactively?				
Comments:				
			Pass: _____	Fail: _____

III. HANDLING THE DOG	Yes	No	Needs Work	N/A
Able to remain calm after a loud noise?				
Dog comfortably allowed tester to pet their head?				
Dog was comfortable with tester petting their body?				
Tester could hold dog's tail?				
Tester could hold each of dog's paws?				
Dog allowed the tester to scratch the throat under the chin?				
Tester could gently pet and stroke dog's ears?				
Tester could lean over the dog?				
Dog was comfortable a hand on its back?				
Dog was comfortable with the tester lifting its lips several times?				
Dog was comfortable with gentle pressure on the collar?				
Was dog comfortable with rapid, direct approach and sustained, direct eye contact?				
Was dog comfortable with exuberant/clumsy patting? Erratic noises/behavior/approach?				
Was dog comfortable with being hugged for several minutes?				
Was dog comfortable being bumped into?				
**Was dog able to take a treat gently (in presence of other dogs)?				
Was dog comfortable with being petted by several people at once in a crowd?				
<p><i>**Unless dog is aggressive, not being gentle with a treat is not cause for failure – but handler should be aware that dog may not be given treats by people.</i></p> <p><i>NOTE: A dog that spooks at any of the above may not be cause for failure – depends on severity, how quickly the dog recovers, and how the handler manages and supports the dog. However, a fear-aggression response is grounds for failure</i></p>				
Comments:				
			Pass: _____	Fail: _____

IV. DOG TO DOG INTERACTION (not necessary for dogs to meet face to face)	Yes	No	Needs Work	N/A
Did the handler demonstrate having control over the situation?				
Did the dog bark or lunge at another dog?				
Was the dog's interest appropriate with another dog?				
Was any sign of aggression displayed?				
Comments:				
			Pass: _____	Fail: _____

V. DOG TO HUMAN INTERACTION	YES	NO	Needs Work	N/A
Did the handler demonstrate having control over the situation?				
Did the dog bark or jump at any person?				
Was the dog's interest appropriate with another person?				
Was any sign or aggression displayed?				
Was there any sign of excessive licking or lunging or barking?				
Comments:				
			Pass: _____	Fail: _____

VI. VISITATION EVALUATION	YES	NO	Needs Work	N/A
Did the handler demonstrate having control over the situation?				
If initially excited, did dog calm down and respond to handler?				
Did dog bark or jump on anyone?				
Did the dog appropriately interact with other dogs?				
Was the dog willing to participate in the visit?				
At any point, did the dog become unresponsive?				
Was the handler enthusiastic and friendly during the visit?				
Did the handler demonstrate a knowledge of the guidelines and adhere to them during the visits?				
Did the handler come prepared for the evaluation—complete with clean dog, and short leash?				
NOTE: The evaluations must be completed within 6 months of the test				
Comments:				
			Pass: _____	Fail: _____

Date of Test: _____ Location/Facility: _____

Tester's Signature: _____

Date of Evaluations: _____ Location/Facility: _____

Evaluator's Signature: _____

Explanation of TDV Test Standards by Section

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. 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 constantly may signal a problem—a dog will not work unless offered a bribe.* Likewise, a handler who administers constant or unfair correction may also signal a relationship/training level not ready/suitable for therapy dog work. Among other things, we consider:

- **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?
- **Handler aware of the dog's reactions and needs**—for example, if dog is nervous or overwhelmed by a large group of children, does the handler support the dog (or remove it from the situation)?
- **The too much or too little guidance.** Too many treats? Too many corrections? Too little praise?

I. INITIAL MEETING

- Being able to control your dog under normal as well as unexpected circumstances is critical. Teams will often encounter unexpected situations/noises/human behaviors.
- Both handler and dog must be well groomed and dressed appropriately as if they were on an actual volunteer visit. This demonstrates the professionalism of the team.

II. OBEDIENCE

- This part of the test shows that the dog has some good manners and training. The dog must readily respond to handler's commands. Force should not be used.
- It is expected that you are able to correct your dog for poor behavior. Corrections are expected to be gentle and constructive, not punitive. Therapy work can be stressful for your dog. It is expected that you will reward your dog, from time-to-time, as appropriate for good behavior, as is consistent with good team behavior.

III. HANDLING THE DOG

- Handling the dog builds on obedience by evaluating how the dog responds to unexpected noises and behaviors such as clumsy petting, and being touched on paws, tail, collar, etc by a friendly stranger. Handler must have sufficient control to help guide dog gently through unexpected events and behaviors when volunteering.

IV. DOG-TO-DOG INTERACTION

- 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.
- This part of the test demonstrates that your dog can behave politely around an approaching dog. Also, it shows that the handler can anticipate his/her dog's response to other dogs and respond proactively.

V. DOG TO HUMAN INTERACTION

- This part of the test looks at whether the dog has suitable social skills for interacting with other humans and demonstrates that dog can greet strangers appropriately.

VI. VISITATION EVALUATION

- The evaluation looks at how the team performs together in an actual volunteer visitation. It is critical here, that handler is in control of the dog and the dog is comfortable moving with the handler. 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 use of spraying collars (such as citronella) or electric collars, spray bottles or spraying devices of any kind, and clickers and other such noise-making devices are prohibited per the visitation guidelines (see above) and are not allowed during the testing. Testers may also prohibit the use of any food treats (or toys used as reward) during the test as the purpose of the test is to determine if the dog can be controlled by the handler if no special incentives are offered.

THERAPY DOGS OF VERMONT: APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

NAME(S): _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

HOME PHONE: (____) _____

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 these 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.

SIGNATURE of Handler: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian, if applicable: _____

This completed application must be accompanied by a completed test, liability waiver, proof of current vaccinations, appropriate fee, and digital photo of the dog to be certified (for photo identification). Membership fees provide insurance coverage while on TDV visitations and sponsored events, 4 newsletters per year, 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.

- **Choose Bandanna Color:** RED BLUE GREEN PURPLE

Make sure that a digital head shot of your dog is provided before the final evaluation.

www.therapydogs.org

admin@therapydogs.org

THErapy DOGS OF VERMONT: PROOF OF VACCINATION AND HEALTH CHECKLIST

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, all members will be asked send updated vaccination paperwork each year during membership renewal. This is a requirement for initial and continuing membership.

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

- Rabies certificate 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.**
- My dog is not on a raw meat diet.**

Please note that by TDV asking for this PAPERWORK each year with renewals does not mean you need to VACCINATE for rabies each year, as the immunization may still be good.

DATE: _____ Signature: _____