

American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen Test & Procedures

All info on this page comes directly from the AKC Canine Good Citizen Program C2003

"Evaluators agree to abide by the following:

- 1. All items of the CGC test must be given and dogs must pass all 10 items to pass the test.*
- 2. The test protocol as described in the Evaluator Guide should be followed. Evaluators should not make the test easier by eliminating test items, nor should they require the participant to perform at a higher level than the test requires in order to pass. For example, an evaluator should not, in the name of "having high standards" require during testing that the dogs complete exercises off-lead in order to pass the CGC test. However, instructors may choose to give the test at any starting point.*

CGC Test Procedures

The purpose of the Canine Good Citizen Program is to ensure that our favorite companion, the dog, can be a respected member of the community. To receive the CGC certificate, dogs take the 10 item Canine Good Citizen Test. Items on the test include:

Test Item 1: Accepting a friendly stranger

This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to approach it and speak to the handler in a natural, everyday situation. The evaluator walks up to the dog and handler and greets the handler in a friendly manner, ignoring the dog.

The evaluator and handler shake hands and exchange pleasantries. The dog must show no sign of resentment or shyness, and must not break position or try to go to the evaluator.

Test Item 2: Sitting politely for petting

This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to touch it while it is out with its handler. With the dog sitting at the handler's side, to begin the exercise, the evaluator pets the dog on the head and body. The handler may talk to his or her dog throughout the exercise. The dog may stand in place as it is petted. The dog must not show shyness or resentment.

Test Item 3: Appearance and grooming

This practical test demonstrates that the dog will welcome being groomed and examined and will permit someone, such as a veterinarian, groomer or friend of the owner, to do so. It also demonstrates the owner's care, concern and sense of responsibility.

The evaluator inspects the dog to determine if it is clean and groomed. The dog must appear to be in healthy condition (i.e., proper weight, clean, healthy and alert). The handler should supply the comb or brush commonly used on the dog. The evaluator then softly combs or brushes the dog, and in a natural manner, lightly examines the ears and gently picks up each front foot.

It is not necessary for the dog to hold a specific position during the examination, and the handler may talk to the dog, praise it and give encouragement throughout.

Test Item 4: Out for a walk (walking on a loose lead)

This test demonstrates that the handler is in control of the dog. The dog may be on either side of the

handler. The dog's position should leave no doubt that the dog is attentive to the handler and is responding to the handler's movements and changes of direction. The dog need not be perfectly aligned with the handler and need not sit when the handler stops.

The evaluator may use a pre-plotted course or may direct the handler/dog team by issuing instructions or commands. In either case, there should be a right turn, left turn, and an about turn with at least one stop in between and another at the end. The handler may talk to the dog along the way, praise the dog, or give commands in a normal tone of voice. The handler may sit the dog at the halts if desired.

Test Item 5: Walking through a crowd

This test demonstrates that the dog can move about politely in pedestrian traffic and is under control in public places. The dog and handler walk around and pass close to several people (at least three). The dog may show some interest in the strangers but should continue to walk with the handler, without evidence of over-exuberance, shyness or resentment. The handler may talk to the dog and encourage or praise the dog throughout the test. The dog should not jump on people in the crowd or strain on the leash.

Test Item 6: Sit and down on command - staying in place

This test demonstrates that the dog has training, will respond to the handler's commands to sit and down and will remain in the place commanded by the handler (sit or down position, whichever the handler prefers).

Prior to this test, the dog's leash is replaced with a line 20 feet long. The handler may take a reasonable amount of time and use more than one command to get the dog to sit and then down. The evaluator must determine if the dog has responded to the handler's commands. The handler may not force the dog into position but may touch the dog to offer gentle guidance.

When instructed by the evaluator, the handler tells the dog to stay and walks forward the length of the line, turns and returns to the dog at a natural pace. The dog must remain in the place in which it was left (it may change position) until the evaluator instructs the handler to release the dog. The dog may be released from the front or the side.

Test Item 7: Coming when called

This test demonstrates that the dog will come when called by the handler. The handler will walk 10 feet from the dog, turn to face the dog, and call the dog. The handler may use encouragement to get the dog to come. Handlers may choose to tell dogs to "stay" or "wait" or they may simply walk away, giving no instructions to the dog.

Test Item 8: Reaction to another dog

This test demonstrates that the dog can behave politely around other dogs. Two handlers and their dogs approach each other from a distance of 20 to 30 feet, stop, shake hands and exchange pleasantries, and continue on for about 10 feet. The dogs should show no more than casual interest in each other. Neither dog should go to the other dog or its handler.

Test Item 9: Reaction to distraction

This test demonstrates that the dog is confident at all times when faced with common distracting situations. The evaluator will select and present two distractions. Examples of distractions include dropping a chair, rolling a crate dolly past the dog, having a jogger run in front of the dog, or dropping a crutch or cane.

The dog may express natural interest and curiosity and/or may appear slightly startled but should not panic, try to run away, show aggressiveness, or bark. The handler may talk to the dog and encourage or praise it throughout the exercise.

Test Item 10: Supervised separation

This test demonstrates that a dog can be left with a trusted person, if necessary, and will maintain training and good manners. Evaluators are encouraged to say something like, "Would you like me to watch your dog?" and then take hold of the dog's leash. The owner will go out of sight for three minutes. The dog does not have to stay in position but should not continually bark, whine, or pace unnecessarily, or show anything stronger than mild agitation or nervousness.

Equipment

All tests must be performed on leash. Dogs should wear well-fitting buckle or slip collars made of leather, fabric, or chain. Special training collars such as pinch collars, head halters, etc. are not permitted in the CGC test. We recognize that special training collars may be very useful tools for beginning dog trainers, however, we feel that dogs are ready to take the CGC test at the point at which they are transitioned to regular collars. (*Rachel note: Choke collars must be on dead ring*)

The evaluator supplies a 20-foot lead for the test. The owner/handler should bring written proof of rabies vaccines and the dog's brush or comb to the test.

Encouragement

Owners/handlers may use praise and encouragement throughout the test. The owner may pet the dog between exercises. Food and treats are not permitted during testing, nor is the use of toys, squeaky toys, etc. to get the dog to do something. We recognize that food and toys may provide valuable reinforcement or encouragement during the training process but these items should not be used during the test.

Failures - Dismissals

Any dog that eliminates during testing must be marked failed. The only exception to this rule is that elimination is allowable in test Item 10, but only when test Item 10 is held outdoors.

Any dog that growls, snaps, bites, attacks, or attempts to attack a person or another dog is not a good citizen and must be dismissed from the test.

Getting Ready

Train Your Dog

Training makes dogs happy. By nature, dogs prefer a society with rules, where everybody knows his place. When you teach dogs the rules of your family, they feel secure knowing exactly what they are and aren't allowed to do. Dogs will test you from time to time, to see if anything has changed. That's one reason it's so important to keep the same rules and the same schedules every day.

You Are the Trainer

You set the stage for the successful training of your dog. Your most important tool is "positive reinforcement" getting the dog to do what you want with praise and reward. The other two critical tools are patience and firmness (never harshness). You must be confident while training, and you must be consistent. Your goal is to get the dog to respond to your request, delivered once, in a cheerful, business-like voice. It's up to you to set a positive, happy tone for training.

What to Expect from Your Dog

The amount of patience and firmness you will need often depends on the breed of dog. Investigate the breed you want before you get him. Breeders, veterinarians, trainers and owners can tell you what it's like to train different breeds. Some breeds learn quickly; others require more time. Some breeds need a stronger hand; others require only gentle correcting.

With all breeds, being too hard on a dog will only teach him to fear you and others. He can become overly fearful or overly aggressive. On the other hand, if you're not confident in your authority, the dog may try to take over. Tell your dog what to do, but respect him for who he is. Enroll in an obedience class for advice and support in the training process.

Praise and Correction

Praise when right. Correct when wrong. It's as simple as that. A correction is the word "no," delivered in a firm voice. Always follow a correction with praise as soon as the mistake has been cleared up.

Make a habit of pointing out your dog's good behavior to himhe wants to please you, so he'll remember to do it again. When he does something wrong, correct him, show him the right thing to do, then praise him. For example: Puppies must chew, but when they chew on your shoe or hand, correct them; then give them a chew toy and praise.

Don't hold a grudge when the dog misbehaves. He will forget his mistake in a few minutes. If you stay angry he'll just wonder why you aren't friends anymore.

Training Tips

- Keep training sessions shortabout 10 minutes once or twice a day.
- Keep training positive and fun. Stop if you feel bored or frustrated, and try again later.
- Play with your dog after training.
- Use the dog's name with movement exercises.
- If using a training collar, tighten with short, quick pulls only, not a long steady pullthat can hurt the dog.
- Give commands once, with kindness and firmness. Do not plead or yell.
- Praise after every completed command. This is what the dog is working for. You cannot praise too much."

SAR K-9 Teams must be a Federal Registered Non-Profit Organization formed under their State Non-Profit Guidelines. Police & Military K-9 Teams must be full time or retired. Members are current memebtrs of the Working Dog Foundation

Print, fill out and mail to:

Working Dog Foundation
Attention: John Usher
PO Box 515
Portsmouth, NH 03802-515

Name of Handler: _____

Name of Dog: _____

Breed of Dog: _____

Which Certification? _____

Date of Test: _____ Fee: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Name of Department: _____

Phone #: _____ E-mail: _____

Office use only:

Date Received _____

Payment Received Y____ N____

Check, Money
Order, Voucher # _____

Notes: _____
