

Visiting Therapy Dog Team Rules & Regulations

Congratulations on making the decision to enrich the lives of others through our Companion Paws Therapy Dog program. Please help us maintain our collective integrity and purpose of a Therapy Dog Team member by following our Rules & Regulations. It keeps your dog, you, and the lives that you will help to enrich, safe at all times during an official Therapy Dog visit. If you have any questions regarding our rules, please feel free to contact Liane Weber, CEO of The LifeLine Canada Foundation and founder of Companion Paws (Canada).

1. Written permission is required to use The LifeLine Canada Foundation/Companion Paws name, logo or slogan.
2. Companion Paws membership must be renewed annually for a renewal fee of \$95. Every year, you must submit a veterinarian's updated medical record and will be required to perform a temperament assessment.
3. Being a member of Companion Paws Therapy Dog program is a privilege, not a right, and may be denied, revoked or not renewed if you are in non-compliance of the Rules & Regulations. If such an event occurs, identification materials provided to you with your membership must be returned to The LifeLine Canada Foundation.
4. Therapy Dogs do not have public access rights as assistance dogs, and it is unethical to portray a Therapy Dog as an assistance dog.
5. Handlers must carry a current membership card, and dogs must wear the official Companion Paws Vest on visits and events. Members must have written proof of their dog's vaccines available on each visit, either carried with them, or in the car, available on request.
6. The minimum age requirement for a Companion Paws handler is 18 years. Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied at all times by a parent/guardian. Upon reaching the age of 18, the handler is required to contact Companion Paws to be evaluated without a parent/guardian present.
7. You must notify Companion Paws immediately if your dog has developed any disability since the initial testing or show signs of physical and/or mental distress during visits. You and your dog will need to be re-tested with one observation under the guidance of Companion Paws before continuing any further visits.
8. Any handler who has a change in medical condition, even if temporary, since initial testing, that may impede their ability to safely handle their dog, including but not limited to: stroke broken limb, weakened strength, change in disability, change in mental/emotional condition, etc. must notify Companion Paws immediately and may need to be re-tested/observed, and/or seek approval from Companion Paws before continuing any visits.
9. Dogs must have an annual physical examination, including fecal check, by a veterinarian and they must be current on all vaccines recommended by your veterinarian.
10. Participating dogs must be clean, well groomed, with trimmed/filed nails, clean teeth, free of internal and external parasites, and in good general health. If a topical flea and tick preventative is used, it must be applied a minimum of 3 days prior to any Therapy Dog visit. Maternity leave is required for pregnant female dogs from 30 days prior to whelping date to 60 days after whelping.
11. While participating in therapy visits, handlers must be clean, well groomed, and without influence of alcohol and/or drugs that would impair safety or judgment. Dogs must also be free of any drugs or substances that may affect performance. Dogs and handlers who have any fresh wounds, recent surgeries or other injuries, infections or any other conditions which may inhibit the ability to handle your dog safely may not attend Companion Paws visits until recovered and healed. You must be able to act quickly enough to remove yourself and your dog without assistance from a facility in an event of an emergency. All visited facilities must be informed of any medical conditions that would affect the team's ability to perform volunteer duties.
12. Please wear business casual attire and closed toed shoes to all Therapy Dog visits. Sturdy closed toed shoes are the best when volunteering.

13. While participating on a Therapy Dog visit, your attention should be on your dog for their safety at all times, as well as for the welfare of those you are visiting. Be alert to your surroundings at all times.
14. Barking and negative behavior is to be treated very seriously and a handler must remove their dog from the situation and location immediately at the moment negative behavior is shown.
15. You are not allowed to leave your dog unattended with staff, patients or visitors. Your dog must be kept on a 6 ft. or shorter leash, and must be held by you, and may not be hooked or attached to anything else.
16. Your dog must be kept at least 4 ft. from other dogs and animals at all times while representing Companion Paws on a visit or event. The visit or event begins as soon as you reach the facility property, including the parking lot. If members choose to take group photos with dogs posed closer than 4 ft. together, they will be done at the member's own risk and the facility must be notified that Companion Paws insurance is not in effect.
17. If conditions exist your dog may be taken off leash when performing tricks, demonstrations, or posing for photos. If assisting with therapy such as retrieving, only one dog may be off leash at a time.
18. Approved collars are: leather, nylon, or fabric collar with a metal buckle or plastic quick-snap closure or harness. Leashes must be 6 ft. or shorter in length, type of leash must be to be appropriate for the size of your dog. Collars should fit snug enough to avoid your dog slipping/backing out of it. Body harnesses with clips, Velcro, fabric webbing, or leather with metal buckles are acceptable as well.
19. The following equipment is not acceptable to be used during Therapy Dog visits: clickers, retractable leashes, elastic/bungee style leashes, chain leashes, pinch/prong collars, spiked collars and/or electronic collars.
20. A stroller may be used if it is made specifically for dogs. The dog must be secured with an approved collar and leash held by the handler inside the stroller.
21. Liability considerations require any special situations (exceptions) to be submitted in writing to The LifeLine Canada Foundation Companion Paws program. All exceptions require a cover letter from the handler, explaining the reason for the exception. If requesting special equipment, a picture is required of your dog with the equipment (dog carrier, cart, etc.)
22. Therapy Dog Teams must strictly adhere to all rules and regulations unique to each facility. If the facility rules are unclear, ask a staff member or activities director to explain them. Members will not provide chemical substances or apply them to their dog unless authorized by the facility. Substances include, but are not limited to, hand sanitizers, hand wipes, or lotions. Do not give food, water, or assistance to a patient or resident, even if asked. Notify a staff member if help is needed.
23. You must know and strictly adhere to the facility policy concerning dogs on any furniture including, but not limited to, chairs, couches, wheelchairs, bed, physical therapy beds/pads and should use clean linens on the patient's/resident's lap or bed either provided by the facility or personal pads brought along by the handler. Therapy Dogs are not allowed onto any occupied bed, chair, or wheelchair unless the practice is allowed by the facility and the resident/patient has given permission. Only with this permission may you lift your dog onto and remove it from the occupied bed, chair or locked wheelchair without injury to the resident/patient. You must also control your dog's head while in this position. If the facility policy allows and permission from the patient/guardian is given, Companion Paws allows dogs weighing less than 10 pounds to be placed in laps and dogs weighing less than 50 pounds to be placed onto occupied beds. When space allows, dogs of any size may be lifted and safely placed by the handler onto occupied furniture such as a couch or love seat. Dogs weighing more than 50 pounds may never be placed onto occupied beds. For safety reasons, Companion Paws will only allow one dog at a time on any occupied furniture as described above. Be cautious with patients who might have existing or recent injuries or surgery, with regard to placement of the dog, so as not to cause an injury with the dog's paws or body weight. Always ask if the person has a sore spot or if there is an area that you should avoid when placing the dog. Remember to watch for tubes, lines, and other medical equipment.
24. Dogs may not precede handlers down the halls, around corners, at doorways or stairways. Stand back while waiting for an elevator door to open. When the door opens, wait to assure safe exit of passengers. If the elevator is occupied, you must

ask permission to enter with the dog.

25. You must not make or receive phone calls, texts or social medial alerts while handling your Therapy Dog inside a facility. Pagers cell phones and tablets must be set on silent or vibrate during visits. If the use of a phone becomes necessary, you must excuse yourself temporarily and complete the call outside of the facility.
26. Observe all rules of privacy and confidentiality as required by PIPEDA. Never discuss a patient’s health or personal issues with the patient or anyone else. Photos may not be taken without prior written consent of the subject/guardian and a representative of the facility.
27. If an incident or injury to an employee, resident, patient or visitor in the facility occurs while representing Companion Paws, follow the directions below:
 - a. If the incident is a suspected bite, end the visit immediately, and notify a staff member at the facility. Do not provide medical assistance to the victim of the suspected bite.
 - b. Immediately contact the facility supervisor on duty
 - c. Document the incident on all required forms for the facility
 - d. Immediately contact Companion Paws and report the incident. If a registered Therapy Dog is suspected of a dog bite either to another dog or person, the dog cannot participate in any Therapy Dog work until the incident has been fully investigated by Companion Paws.
 - e. Companion Paws has the right to refuse/revoke Therapy Dog Registration to a team if we suspect any behavioral changes in your dog.
28. In order to keep your membership in good standing, you must complete the following:
 - a. Renew your membership each year
 - b. Have documented at least 1 visit per calendar quarter
 - c. Be temperament assessed every year (The annual renewal membership fee also covers the cost of the annual temperament assessment)
29. There is only one Registered Therapy dog per handler on a visit.
30. Be on time for each scheduled visit. If you must cancel, notify the facility as soon as possible.
31. Make sure that your dog has had sufficient exercise and has relieved itself prior to entering a facility for a visit. If your dog shows signs of stress, remove the dog from the visit immediately.

I have read and understand Companion Paws Therapy Dog Program Rules & Regulations.

Therapy Dog Name: _____

Handler Name: _____

Handler Signature: _____

Date: _____