

Welcome to the Working Dogs For Vets Trainers Apprenticeship Rules. To ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all our Members, please respect and follow the following rules, setting an example by leading the way:

1. Always RSVP For Classes. Staying in touch!
2. Do not be late for class. Time is limited, and tardy entrances cause distractions for the other handlers and dogs.
3. Please come prepared for class and arrive ready to enter. This includes taking your dog for a bathroom break before entering the premises.
4. Ensure your dog is well-groomed and clean. This means nails are done, and ensure the coat is clean, brushed, and free of fleas, debris, etc.
5. Do not feed your dog within four hours of coming to class. This will prevent the dog from having accidents and will also help if you plan to use treats as rewards or for training.
6. Clean up any mess made by your dog, including those made outside, without being asked.
7. Come with a good attitude and patience.
8. Do not come with expectations of socializing with friends during class unless instructed to do so by your Leader.
9. Take a break with your dog on the sideline if you or your dog is losing patience with each other. Finish the command until you both feel better, and then join back in.
10. Don't be reminded to pay attention to the instructor – this takes away from class time.
11. If you have an idea, please share it with the instructor in private. Class should always be fun and new, and your ideas may help the Leader to provide this. (Suggestions may be provided in a discussion after class.)
12. If you miss more than two classes without communication, you will be asked to reapply.

13. Do not bring a sick dog to class. Instead, leave your dog at home and come to class by yourself to learn from observation.
14. Please do not attend class if you are sick, but be sure to notify the instructor.
15. Be sure to practice at least 15 minutes 3 times a week in between classes. This is all it will take for most dogs and handlers to learn each week's lessons, yet still keep the dog's interest.
16. The handler is the primary caregiver of the dog. The handler should be the primary one who gives treats, feeds, waters, takes the dog out to potty, grooms, and takes the dog for walks, even at home.
17. The handler should be the only one doing the training. If specific manners are expected at home and others need to uphold those manners, be sure they are using the same one-word commands that the trainer does. For example, If the dog is jumping on guests, then a typical two-command response would be "No, leave it." However, if someone in the home is using "down," then that interferes with the "down" command used during training, which means actually to lie down.
18. Never end practice sessions on a bad note. If frustrations become too high, you should return to the previous step. When the dog performs it, praise the dog and stop until both you and your dog's patience have returned.
19. If the dog is forgetting the exercise, go back to the beginning and start over.

Remember: all dogs learn at a different speed, so don't get upset if yours seems slower.

Remember: all people learn at different speeds and in different ways. Don't get discouraged. If you don't understand something, have the leader try to explain it differently or have them borrow your dog and show you.

If possible, allow the dog to sleep in your room, either in a crate or next to your bed. This is great for bonding.

Make sure that you play with your dog after every training session.

Never give a command more than once. If the dog does not respond, proceed to the correction step. For example, if the dog does not sit when told to sit, you should pull up on the dog's collar and push down on its rump at the same time. This will cause the dog to sit, and then you should praise the dog.

Notes Regarding Veteran/dog Evaluations:

When meeting with a new potential member who has a dog and has completed the application.

1. Watch: let the veteran work with their dog and watch from a distance. They may have already received some training and possess relevant skills.
2. Proper equipment. The more training equipment you put on the dog, the more you will have to remove.
3. Corrections: If you notice that a veteran is doing something incorrectly. Provide them with the necessary information to help them complete the training successfully and effectively.
4. Questions: Each new team will likely have questions. Answer them to the best of your ability, honestly and truthfully. If you are unsure, let them know that you will find out the answer and get back to them.
5. Planning: Each team is different, and plans must be made to work out specifics and details.
6. When evaluating potential new teams, please note whether they are following directions and whether we can assist them. Ensure they arrive on time. If not, you may ask them to leave, and you may ask them to try again.

Trainer Apprentices must be representatives and carry identification from Working Dogs For Vets for assistance dogs that serve individuals with disabilities. Public access is granted for training and socialization purposes. Qualified trainers have the same public access, but are liable for the actions of the dog.

Hygiene and Appearance

Regular bathing, frequent hand washing, clean, neat hair, and the use of an antiperspirant or deodorant are required. For the same reasons, the use of strong, heavy scents and fragrances is not permitted.

Dress Code:

Unacceptable fabrics include spandex, gauze, metallic fabrics, sheer fabrics, and clinging knits. Patterns that contain large graphics, large company and non-company logos, and styles or patterns that suggest extremely casual attire are not permitted. Must wear closed-toed Shoes, and clothing (Appropriate to each setting)

Working Dogs For Vets will provide Trainer apprentices and Leadership members with Appropriate WDFV T-shirts.

Apprentice Trainers should remove sunglasses when engaging in extended interactions with veterans and dogs. Sunglasses should not be visible when not in use.

Use of electronic devices

Personal cellular phones and other digital assistants may not be used onstage during presentations. These items must be concealed from view and operated in silent mode if carried." On the other hand, WDFV-issued devices may be permitted for use while on the job.

You can't show up under the influence.

Trainers must not report to or remain at work, or otherwise perform work for Working Dogs For Vets, while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of drugs is prohibited at Working Dogs For Vets, including Working Dogs For Vets property, in any Company-owned, leased, or rented vehicle, or while engaged in Working Dogs For Vets business. Violators will be subject to disciplinary action, which may be termination."

Apprentice Trainers must disclose any drug-related convictions based on events occurring in connection with Working Dogs For Vets or convictions of any type, no matter where the events occur, if the crime bears a relationship to the trainer's job duties (such as a DUI by an employee whose duties involve driving; financial impropriety by anyone who handles financial transactions; or a crime involving harm to children, or animal by a member whose duties involve interaction with members)."

Smoking marijuana or other illegal substances is not permitted at any time. For the comfort of all Guests, Working Dogs For Vets' indoor areas are smoke-free. The smoking of tobacco, e-cigarettes, or other products that produce a vapor or smoke is allowed only in designated smoking areas.

Children should be supervised. Guests under the age of 14 must be accompanied by a guest aged 14 or older to enter Working Dogs For Vets. Children under age seven must be accompanied by a person aged 14 years or older.

Give people a chance to apply what they have learned.

Whatever format you choose, be careful not to put people on the spot. Begin by showing what you want people to do while narrating what you are doing. Then give people a different scenario and ask them to brainstorm as a group how it might be tackled. If applicable, demonstrate their suggestions and then ask everyone to share their thoughts on how the proposed solution worked.

If you ask people to carry out a task or role-play, don't make them do it in front of the whole group. Avoid anything that smacks of performance or testing; this is training. Instead, break people into groups or pairs, or assign individual tasks that individuals can self-assess by comparing their answers against an answer sheet. (Any performance-like role-playing should always be on a volunteer basis only.)

In our difficult-customer training example, this step may involve a scripted role-play between you and another manager or a confident, pre-recruited team member. The role-play would be followed by a discussion in which you ask the group to analyze what you did and why it worked.

Then, in a second role-play, things should go less smoothly. Your counterpart would now throw complications at you. Stop at various points during the role-play and ask your leaders for specific advice on how to handle the situation. Again, ask for input on what works and why, as well as alternative approaches that might be considered.

Finally, you could have your members role-play a new situation in pairs, letting them stop at various points to discuss how to handle things. (If a trainer wants to role-play in front of everyone, take on the role of a member yourself. That way, you can ensure the experience is practical, not painful, for your members. Allow him or her to pause the action at any point and get suggestions from the whole group.)

Make It Count

Training is too often carried out in a vacuum, unrelated to everyday routines and problems. Tie training topics to daily protocols, systems, etc., and follow up to make sure procedures are applied. Use daily or weekly checklists to make this easier.

Say you do a training on proper leash protocol. Provide a form that guides people step by step through the protocol while they are using a leash. Alternatively, if your leadership training focuses on proper task performance, consider providing checklists for individuals to follow.

Remember to reinforce the behavior you want to see. Make a point of complimenting people when you see them applying what they have learned during a training session.

Finally, tie your leadership and trainers' training into performance reviews. When you go through the trouble and expense of providing training on a subject, you are entitled to hold people accountable for what they have learned. And yet, most reviews bear no relation to day-to-day tasks, instead centering on vague, generic standards for training and proper attitude. When your training descriptions, member training, and performance reviews are in sync, you are much more likely to have a smooth-running class where everybody knows their role and plays it competently.

Just as our team's Service Dogs Recertify yearly, so do our Apprentice dog trainers.

Testing Apprentice Trainers 0-4 Score yearly recertifications

- 4: Exhibits complete mastery.
- 3: Highly competent with some additional room for learning.
- 2: Basic skills and competencies in place.
- 1: Does not meet basic requirements.

4: Consistently reads over subtle body language and reacts early with appropriate measures to keep veterans and dogs out of conflict. Did you successfully help a veteran/dog team complete the course? After successfully helping three teams to accomplish this, you may be certified as a Working Dogs For Vets Service Dog Trainer.

3: Recognizes most body language and tensions, and responds in time to defuse tensions and avoid conflicts in most cases.

2: Able to read obvious body language signals and respond in time to avoid conflict in those cases.

1: Does not recognize enough body language to respond to avoid conflict proactively, or may realize body language but does not respond proactively.

If you receive a #1 score, Working Dogs For Vets will follow up with a specific plan to help you accomplish this improvement.

For example, is there a Trainer's training we would like the person to attend, is there a particular DVD to watch, or a book to read?

Alternatively, WDFV may pair him or her with a colleague who possesses these skills.

From here on out, the review process is made up of assessing goal success, revisiting your score position in question, and setting the next quarter's goals. This way, Everyone Wins.

A new WDFV review process that includes collaborative goal setting and the trainer's involvement is much less aversive and uncomfortable for both parties. It creates a greater sense of responsibility for one's own job performance. And it allows effective management and leadership.