



K9 Connection Policies & Procedures

1. Handler is responsible for dog's actions at all times.
2. Handler will consider the safety of other people at all times.
3. Handler will abide by all policies, procedures, and precautions required by each facility visited.
4. Handler will dress neatly and appropriately for all visits, and wear a nametag, current Pet Partners® therapy dog ID, and any facility badge required and/or furnished by that facility.
5. All dogs must be properly groomed. Skin and coat must be clean and properly brushed. Ears, mouth, and eyes must be clean and nails should be appropriately trimmed. Dogs must be healthy, parasite-free, and up to date on all vaccinations.
6. Female dogs in estrus will not be permitted to train or volunteer during that time.
7. All dogs shall wear Pet Partners® approved equipment for visits:
 - a. Martingale
 - b. Flat buckle or Quick Snap
 - c. Easy-Walk Harness or others approved by Pet Partners®
8. All dogs must be accompanied by handler and on a leash no longer than 6 feet, made of leather, cotton or nylon.
9. The handler should adhere to the specific schedule designated by each facility. The patients look forward to the dogs, and you must be committed to the program. If you are unable to make your scheduled visit, contact your site coordinator as early as possible.

Note: For those whose schedules are not so flexible, there may be alternate times at some facilities as arranged by the site coordinator. There may be some facilities you may visit with a group on weekends, or possibly a facility you may visit as you wish with approval from the site coordinator.

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10. Always introduce yourself to the staff and keep in mind that not everyone is comfortable around dogs; some are fearful, some may have allergies, and some just don't care for dogs. If you experience a negative reaction, don't take it personally. Excuse yourself and remove your dog immediately from that person's space.
11. Conversations between handlers, doctors, staff, and patients are confidential. Our patients' privacy is of the utmost importance. A patient's identity, medical condition, or treatment is not to be discussed outside the facility.
12. Be professional, friendly, and as flexible as possible with the patient and staff requests. Remain calm if a situation makes you or your dog uncomfortable, and remove yourself immediately from the situation, if necessary.
13. It is your responsibility to see that his/her dog is handled in an appropriate, safe, and gentle manner. Not all facilities and environments are the same. Every situation and every person is different. Remember, we all have good days and bad days; it is your responsibility to ask every time if they would like a visit; even if it is someone you have met before.
14. Therapy dogs are not service dogs and are not entitled to the same rights as service dogs who would be assisting the disabled.
15. Remember at all times your dog and its actions as well as your behavior, actions, and attitude represent all therapy and service animals in the eyes of the public.
16. If your dog is having a bad day, appears stressed or tired, or if it has any health issues, (hot spots, sore muscles, itching or any other symptoms) that prevent it from being at its best, please contact your facility site coordinator to cancel the visit. The same is true if you are not feeling your best.
17. If at any time during a visit a dog shows signs of discomfort, anxiety or aggression towards any human or animal, the handler and dog must leave immediately. The incident must be reported immediately to the appropriate site coordinator. Each situation must be reviewed and resolved by the site coordinator before the dog can return to the facility. This type of behavior is not acceptable and the dog may be requested to leave the program.
18. Do not allow your dog to jump up on someone. If someone asks them to jump up, explain that they are trained or required not to do jump on people.
19. Allowing your dog on a bed is fine, with staff approval, depending on the size of the dog and the request of the patient/resident. Please be sure that it does not create a negative situation for the professional care providers.

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K9 Connection Policies & Procedures (Concluded)

20. Be alert when allowing your dog to have a treat; if you did not provide the treat you may want to inspect or question the source prior to allowing your dog to ingest it.
21. Handler will clean up after his/her dog and dispose of waste properly.
22. Handler will not tie the dog to equipment or furniture while visiting.
23. In case of accident or unusual occurrence, handlers shall immediately:
 - Secure the animal so that you can manage the situation
 - Get help for the injured person
 - Notify the facility contact, facility personnel, or K9 Connection Site Coordinator.
 - End the visit
 - Complete any necessary documentation required by the facility
 - Notify the K9 Connection site coordinator, immediately
 - Notify a Pet Partners® representative, immediately
 - Notify the national registry the handler is associated with Pet Partners®
 - With the help of the K9 Connection site coordinator, evaluate the situation for ways to prevent a future occurrence.
24. Please discuss with your K9 Connection site coordinator any problems or challenges that you experience while you are volunteering. We cannot improve a situation or resolve a problem if we are not informed.
25. The handler will continue their dog's education and reinforce and enhance obedience cues and therapy skills throughout its therapy career.
26. If at any time the dog can no longer volunteer due to age, illness, disability, or behavior issues, the dog will stop volunteering and the handler will notify the appropriate site coordinator(s) and a K9 Connection Membership Committee member.
27. Please remember that K9 Connection requires you to volunteer a minimum of ten visits per year. Additionally, you are encouraged to attend General Membership meetings, special events, and to stay current with our official website:
www.k9connectionwmbg.org