

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc.

Sidekick Service Dog Training Program

Program Standards Manual



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1.1 Organization Information

dba CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc.
Legal Incorporated Entity: 2816853 Alberta Inc.
Training Director: Niomi Smith

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. is a Red Deer, Alberta-based training organization founded in 2022 by Training Director Niomi Smith. A certified professional dog trainer since 2013 and an instructor working professionally in the field since 2005.

While the organization itself was established in 2022, it represents the continuation of Ms. Smith's longstanding work in canine education, including prior roles teaching under mentorship programs, delivering instruction through kennel club training environments, and operating earlier professional training services before launching her independent program under the CanineSidekicks name.

Ms. Smith has been training Service Dogs since 2018, with a focus on developing reliable, task-capable working teams prepared for real-world environments and Public Access expectations. Through CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc., she applies structured, ethical, and function-based training methods that prioritize Handler education, measurable Progression standards, and long-term working stability.

The organization supports teams preparing for companion assistance roles, Public Access readiness, and advanced working partnerships across a range of service applications.

1.2 Program Mission Statement

The CanineSidekicks Service Dog Training Program develops stable, reliable Service Dog Teams for disability mitigation through structured training programs, ethical training practices, and clear public-access readiness standards.

1.3 Program Scope

The CanineSidekicks Service Dog Training Program supports Service Dog Team development through the following components:

- Candidate Evaluation and readiness screening for Service Dog suitability;
- Support for owner-trained Service Dog Teams through structured training pathways;
- Public Access skills preparation and reliability development;
- Individualized task training development based on Handler needs;
- Handler coaching and education to support long-term team success;

- Team integration planning and transition support;
- Graduation readiness assessment and working-team Evaluation;
- Board-and-train services for client-owned dogs;
- Evaluation and selection of Service Dog prospect puppies based on temperament, health, and role suitability;
- Acquisition and foundation training of selected prospect puppies within a structured board-and-train development program prior to placement;
- Matching and placement of trained Prospect Dogs with approved Handlers; and
- Supervised transition support following placement to ensure successful Handler–dog integration.

1.3.1 Jurisdictional and Legal Variability

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. provides training, education, Evaluation, and program oversight based upon organizational standards intended to support safe, ethical, and functional Service Dog development. Service Dog laws, Public Access standards, disability definitions, Certification requirements, housing protections, transportation policies, and workplace accommodations may vary between provinces, states, municipalities, territories, countries, and individual organizations.

Participation in the program, completion of training stages, Graduation recognition, or receipt of organizational documentation does not independently establish legal access rights or exempt Handlers from compliance with applicable laws, policies, or regulatory requirements within their jurisdiction. Handlers remain solely responsible for understanding and complying with all applicable legal, behavioural, health, vaccination, licensing, transportation, housing, workplace, and Public Access requirements within the jurisdictions in which they reside, travel, train, or work.

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. does not guarantee that program terminology, training standards, or organizational recognition will be interpreted identically across all jurisdictions, agencies, businesses, landlords, transportation providers, employers, or public entities.

1.3.2 Scope of Training Role and Clinical Boundaries

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. provides Service Dog training, Handler education, behavioural coaching, task development guidance, Public Access preparation, program Evaluation, and training oversight intended to support the development of functional and ethically trained Service Dog Teams. Program services are educational and training-based in nature and are not intended to replace, supplement, or function as medical care, psychological treatment, psychiatric care, legal representation, crisis intervention services, social work services, occupational therapy,

physiotherapy, or other regulated professional services unless separately provided by a properly licensed professional acting within their independent professional capacity.

Participation in the program, trainer observations, behavioural assessments, task recommendations, or organizational documentation shall not be interpreted as medical diagnosis, psychological Evaluation, disability determination, fitness-for-work determination, legal Certification, or clinical approval for Public Access participation. CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. does not diagnose medical, psychiatric, developmental, or behavioural health conditions in Handlers or dogs and does not determine legal disability eligibility, accommodation entitlement, or eligibility for government assistance programs, insurance benefits, workplace accommodations, housing protections, or transportation access protections.

Handlers remain solely responsible for obtaining appropriate medical, psychological, veterinary, behavioural, and legal guidance from qualified licensed professionals where appropriate. Participation in the program does not replace the need for On-going healthcare, therapeutic support, veterinary care, or individualized professional consultation.

Training recommendations, behavioural guidance, and program participation decisions are based upon observed training performance, safety considerations, canine welfare considerations, Handler participation capacity, Public Access readiness, and organizational standards at the time of assessment. Program guidance may be modified, suspended, delayed, or discontinued where safety, welfare, ethical, behavioural, or program integrity concerns are identified.

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. reserves the right to decline participation, delay Progression, recommend alternative training pathways, require additional professional clearance, or suspend program involvement where circumstances fall outside the organization's training scope, safety standards, ethical framework, or operational capacity.

1.4 Training Philosophy

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. uses structured, individualized training designed to produce reliable working dogs capable of functioning safely and confidently in Public Environments. Training plans are tailored to each Handler-dog team and emphasize measurable progress, functional task performance, and long-term working stability.

The program is grounded in science-based learning theory and prioritizes the use of positive reinforcement-based teaching methods for behaviour acquisition, task development, and confidence building. CanineSidekicks is committed to applying humane, ethical training practices at all stages of Service Dog development, ensuring that dogs are trained in ways that support emotional resilience, clarity of communication, and sustained motivation for work.

Program priorities include:

- Behavioural stability across environments;
- Handler clarity and communication skills;
- Environmental neutrality and Public Access reliability;

- Functional task performance matched to Handler needs;
- Long-term working success and sustainability of trained behaviours; and
- Careful monitoring of welfare throughout all stages of training to identify dogs that **do not** demonstrate suitability for service work.*

*Dogs that **do not** demonstrate suitability for Service work are responsibly redirected to alternative training pathways where their individual strengths can be supported appropriately. This approach ensures that Service Dog Teams trained through CanineSidekicks meet high standards for safety, reliability, and humane development while maintaining public trust in working Service Dog partnership.

1.5 Training Director and Qualification Standards

All suitability Evaluations, Progression decisions, and Certification determinations within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog Program are conducted or supervised by a qualified Training Director or designated Evaluator operating within the scope of program authority.

Evaluators must demonstrate experience in behaviour assessment, Service Dog task training, Public Access reliability standards, and welfare-based Progression decision-making.

Where consultation input is required, recommendations from veterinary, behavioural, or clinical professionals may inform placement, Progression, or Certification decisions.

Only authorized Evaluators may approve Graduation eligibility and Certification status

1.6 Program Accessibility Statement

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. provides structured Service Dog training pathways designed to support individuals with disability-related needs through individualized instruction, Handler education, and staged skill development.

The program is designed to accommodate a range of learning styles, training environments, and Handler experience levels while maintaining consistent behavioural, welfare, and Certification standards across all participating teams.

Training Progression decisions are individualized to reflect Handler learning needs, environmental context, and task requirements without altering minimum Certification criteria. This approach ensures that all teams are evaluated according to consistent readiness expectations while still receiving instruction appropriate to their circumstances.

Program participation may include remote coaching, in-person instruction where available, board-and-train development pathways for client-owned dogs, and prospect selection and placement services. Delivery format is determined based on team needs, dog suitability, and program structure.

Accommodation requests related to disability, communication needs, or learning format are considered within the scope of maintaining safe handling practices, dog welfare, and Public Access readiness expectations. Where adjustments can be made without compromising training integrity or working-dog standards, reasonable accommodations are supported as part of the program's commitment to accessible Service Dog education.

1.7 Foundational Definitions and Terminology

1.7.1 Service Dog: A dog individually trained to perform specific disability-mitigating tasks for a person with a disability and that demonstrates safe, stable, and reliable behaviour in public and working environments.

1.7.2 Service Dog in Training (SDiT): A dog actively participating in structured training and Progression toward Service Dog qualification but that has not yet met the program's full Graduation or Certification standards.

1.7.3 Handler: The individual with a disability who is partnered with, or preparing to partner with, a Service Dog for the purpose of disability mitigation and functional support.

1.7.4 Disability-Mitigating Task: A trained behaviour or response performed by a Service Dog that directly assists in reducing, interrupting, responding to, or mitigating the functional impact of a Handler's disability.

1.7.5 Task Set Requirement: The minimum number and variety of disability-mitigating tasks required for Progression toward Graduation eligibility within the program.

1.7.6 Task Reliability Standard: The expectation that a trained task is performed consistently, accurately, safely, and with functional effectiveness across applicable working environments.

1.7.7 Task Generalization Standard: The expectation that trained tasks can be performed reliably across multiple environments, settings, Handlers (when applicable), and levels of environmental distraction.

1.7.8 Public Access: The presence and conduct of a Service Dog or Service Dog in training within Public Environments where appropriate behaviour, safety, and Handler control are required.

1.7.9 Public Access Readiness: The demonstrated behavioural, environmental, and handling stability necessary for a dog to safely and appropriately participate in Public Access training or work.

1.7.10 Vesting Eligibility: The determination that a dog has demonstrated sufficient behavioural stability, training Progression, and handling reliability to appropriately wear program-approved Service Dog identification.

1.7.11 Training Progression Stages: The structured developmental phases used by the program to evaluate, guide, and document advancement toward Service Dog readiness and Graduation eligibility.

1.7.12 Handler Participation Expectations: The responsibilities and participation standards expected of Handlers throughout program involvement, including training consistency, communication, welfare monitoring, and policy compliance.

Program Personnel Definitions

1.7.13 Training Director: The individual responsible for overseeing program standards, training methodology, Progression decisions, welfare safeguards, policy implementation, and final authority regarding program participation and Graduation determinations.

1.7.14 Program Trainer: An individual authorized by the program to assist with training instruction, coaching, handling development, task Progression, behavioural support, or related educational activities under program standards and oversight.

1.7.15 Evaluator: An individual designated by the program to assess behavioural stability, Public Access readiness, task performance, Handler integration, Progression eligibility, or Graduation standards.

Program and Operational Standards

1.7.16 Certification: Formal organizational recognition issued by CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. indicating that a Service Dog Team successfully demonstrated the program's required training, behavioural, disability-mitigating task, Handler competency, and Public Access standards at the time of formal Evaluation.

1.7.17 Behavioural Neutrality: The ability of a dog to remain behaviourally stable, non-disruptive, and appropriately responsive within public, working, and environmental settings without inappropriate reactivity, solicitation, avoidance, or interference.

1.7.18 Welfare: The physical, emotional, behavioural, and psychological well-being of a dog or Handler as considered throughout training, handling, placement, and working participation within the program.

1.7.19 Working Team: The combined partnership of a Handler and Service Dog functioning together within training, Public Access, task work, or graduated service participation.

1.7.20 Public Environment: Any public, community, commercial, transportation, educational, medical, recreational, or workplace setting in which a Service Dog Team may reasonably be expected to function appropriately and safely.

1.7.21 Structured Training: Planned and intentionally guided training activities conducted according to program standards, Progression criteria, welfare safeguards, and documented learning objectives.

1.7.22 Program Participation Suspension: A temporary restriction, pause, or limitation placed on a team's participation in specific program activities due to safety, welfare, behavioural, Progression, compliance, or administrative concerns pending further review or reassessment.

1.7.23 Graduation: The formal determination that a Service Dog Team has successfully met the program's behavioural, task, Public Access, welfare, and Handler integration standards required for program completion.

1.8 Program Authority Statement

The CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog Training Program establishes and maintains its own structured training, Evaluation, and Graduation standards for Service Dog Team development. Program criteria are designed to support the preparation of stable, reliable Service Dog Teams capable of performing disability-mitigating tasks and working safely in Public Environments.

All suitability determinations, training Progression decisions, vesting eligibility approvals, and Graduation assessments are conducted by authorized program Evaluators operating within the scope of program-defined standards. These decisions reflect behavioural stability, task reliability, Handler competency, welfare considerations, and Public Access readiness expectations.

Certification issued by CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. confirms that a Handler-dog team has met internal program requirements for task performance, behavioural reliability, and working readiness. Program Certification represents achievement of CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. standards and does not constitute government-issued Certification or guarantee legal recognition outside applicable Service Dog access frameworks.

The program reserves the authority to determine readiness for advancement between training stages, continuation within the program pathway, and eligibility for Graduation to maintain safety, welfare, and public confidence in trained Service Dog Teams.

2.1 Ethics Statement

CaninesSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. is committed to maintaining high standards of physical and emotional welfare for all dogs participating in the Service Dog training program.

Training methods are grounded in science-based learning theory and emphasize the use of positive reinforcement to promote confidence, clarity, and long-term working reliability. Dogs are evaluated continuously throughout training for temperament, stress tolerance, environmental stability, and suitability for service work. Training expectations are adjusted as needed to support individual learning needs and to ensure that welfare remains a primary consideration at all stages of development.

Humane equipment standards are maintained throughout the program. Only tools that support safe communication and Handler control without reliance on discomfort or intimidation are permitted.

Service Dogs within the program are trained and handled in accordance with welfare-informed workload expectations that include structured rest periods, environmental recovery opportunities, and limits on sustained working duration.

Dogs that do not demonstrate suitability for service work are redirected to alternative training pathways appropriate to their abilities and long-term wellbeing.

2.1.1 Scope of Training Role and Clinical Boundaries

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. provides professional training guidance related to the development, Evaluation, and placement of Service Dogs.

The program does not diagnose medical, psychological, developmental, or neurological conditions and does not provide clinical assessment or treatment services. Where disability-related factors influence training design, task development, Handler participation readiness, or placement suitability, the program may consult appropriate qualified professionals to support safe and effective training planning. Professional consultation supports ethical decision-making within the training process but does not replace independent medical or mental health care.

Clients remain responsible for maintaining appropriate clinical support outside the scope of the Service Dog program.

2.2 Animal Welfare Policy

The CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program is committed to maintaining high standards of physical, emotional, and behavioural welfare for all dogs participating in Service Dog training and related program activities. Canine welfare is considered a primary factor in all training, Progression, placement, and Public Access decisions.

Training plans are individualized to support each dog's developmental needs, learning style, stress tolerance, physical capability, and long-term working sustainability.

The program prioritizes:

- Humane handling and training practices;
- Appropriate workload management and recovery opportunities;
- Safe and developmentally appropriate environmental exposure;
- On-going monitoring for signs of physical or psychological stress;
- Preservation of confidence, engagement, and emotional stability throughout training; and
- Ethical decision-making regarding Progression, placement, public participation, and long-term suitability for service work.

Dogs demonstrating indicators of chronic stress, behavioural deterioration, physical discomfort, reduced environmental resilience, or compromised working wellbeing may require modification of training expectations, temporary training pauses, reassessment, redirection to alternative pathways, retirement consideration, or Withdrawal from service work preparation where appropriate.

Training decisions are made with consideration for humane outcomes, long-term quality of life, public safety, and the ethical development of stable and sustainable working partnerships. No training objective, Certification goal, placement timeline, or Public Access expectation supersedes the welfare needs of the dog.

2.3 Public Safety Commitment

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. recognizes that Service Dogs operate in shared Public Environments and must meet high standards of behavioural reliability and Handler control.

Training Progression prioritizes:

- environmental neutrality;
- stable responses to distractions;
- appropriate public behaviour;
- safe Handler–dog teamwork; and
- reliable task performance in real-world settings.

Teams are evaluated for readiness prior to participation in advanced Public Access work and again prior to Graduation from the program.

Dogs that demonstrate behaviours inconsistent with safe Public Access expectations are reassessed and may be paused, redirected, or withdrawn from Service Dog training when necessary to protect both Handler safety and public confidence in working Service Dog Teams.

2.4 Accurate Representation of Service Dogs

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. is committed to the responsible and ethical representation of Service Dogs in training and graduated working teams. Handlers participating in the program are expected to represent their dogs accurately according to their stage of training and demonstrated skill level.

A Service Dog trained by CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. must demonstrate reliable performance of trained tasks that directly mitigate the Handler's disability in addition to meeting Public Access behavioural standards.

Dogs that have not met Public Access readiness standards are not represented as fully trained Service Dogs. Graduation readiness determinations are based on demonstrated behavioural stability, task reliability, and Handler competence rather than training duration alone. This approach supports transparency, protects public trust, and ensures that Service Dog Teams trained through CanineSidekicks meet appropriate expectations for working reliability and responsible access participation.

2.4.1 Representation of Dogs in Training

Dogs participating in the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog Program may be identified as Service Dogs in training only while actively participating in structured training Progression under program guidance and while meeting behavioural and welfare expectations appropriate to their stage of development.

Handlers are responsible for ensuring that dogs in training are represented accurately in all public settings, including:

- Verbal descriptions;
- Written communication;
- Social media content; and
- Use of identification equipment.

Dogs in training must not be represented as fully trained Service Dogs prior to meeting established program standards for behavioural reliability, task performance, Public Access readiness, and Graduation Evaluation requirements.

Use of training vests, patches, or other identification equipment does not indicate Certification, Graduation, or unrestricted Public Access authorization. Identification reflects training

participation status only and must not be used in a manner that misrepresents the dog's current level of training or qualification.

Handlers participating in owner-trained pathways remain subject to the same ethical representation expectations as teams participating in program-developed training pathways.

Participation in structured training alone does not independently establish Service Dog status.

Accurate representation supports:

- Canine welfare;
- Public safety;
- Ethical Public Access participation; and
- The integrity and credibility of the Service Dog program.

2.5 Conflict of Interest Policy

The CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program is committed to maintaining ethical, objective, and welfare-based decision-making throughout all stages of training, Evaluation, placement, and Certification.

Personal relationships, financial involvement, prior training history, emotional investment, or external influence must not override considerations relating to canine welfare, public safety, training suitability, or program standards.

Where a potential conflict of interest may affect objectivity, additional consultation, secondary review, reassessment, or alternative Evaluator involvement may be used to support fair and transparent decision-making.

2.6 Consultation Supported Placement Decisions

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. considers each applicant's ability to participate safely and consistently in Service Dog training and partnership responsibilities as part of the admission process.

Where disability-related factors may affect handling consistency, impulse control, behavioural predictability, supervision requirements, or environmental tolerance, consultation with Registered Psychologist Claire Malcolm may be used to support placement planning and program suitability decisions.

Consultation may also support decisions regarding:

- readiness for independent handling responsibilities;

- supervision requirements for child Handlers;
- environmental trigger considerations affecting training Progression;
- trauma-informed adaptations to training plans; or
- suitability for placement at different stages of the training process.

These considerations support the development of safe, effective dog–Handler partnerships and help protect the welfare of both Handlers and Service Dogs.

Consultation does not replace independent clinical assessment or treatment and is used solely to support training-related decision-making within the program.

When appropriate, caregiver participation may be required to support safe handling practices and maintain Service Dog welfare standards.

2.7 Safety-Based Training Authority

The Sidekick Service Dog Program prioritizes the safety of Handlers, dogs, and the public throughout all stages of training participation. Where behavioural concerns, welfare indicators, environmental instability, or public safety risks are identified, the Training Director may implement temporary or permanent adjustments to a team’s training Progression.

These adjustments may include:

- modification of training expectations;
- restriction of Public Access participation;
- regression to earlier training stages;
- temporary training pauses;
- reassessment of team readiness; or
- transition to alternative training pathways.

Intervention decisions are made to protect long-term team success, maintain humane training standards, and ensure that Service Dog development proceeds in a safe and sustainable manner.

The Training Director retains final authority regarding whether continued participation in Service Dog training remains appropriate following safety-related concerns.

2.8 Service Dog Retirement Standards

Service Dogs are retired from active working roles when continued service participation no longer supports physical health, behavioural stability, or psychological welfare.

Retirement decisions may occur due to age-related changes, medical limitations, behavioural regression, or reduced task reliability.

Handlers are supported in planning appropriate retirement transitions that prioritize long-term welfare.

Retired Service Dogs may remain companion animals where appropriate.

2.9 Humane Training Methods Policy

This policy establishes the humane training standards required of both the Training Director and Handlers participating in the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program. It ensures all training is conducted in a manner that protects canine welfare, supports learning clarity, and maintains ethical Service Dog development practices.

2.9.1 Training Director Responsibilities

The Training Director is responsible for ensuring that all program instruction, Evaluation, and Progression decisions reflect humane, welfare-centred training principles.

The Training Director agrees to:

- Use evidence-based training methods appropriate to the dog's developmental stage, temperament, and working role;
- Prioritize clarity, consistency, and fairness in skill acquisition;
- Avoid training strategies that create unnecessary fear, distress, or behavioural suppression;
- Monitor dogs for signs of physical or psychological stress during training Progression;
- Adjust training plans when welfare indicators suggest the need for modification;
- Provide Handlers with instruction that supports humane and effective skill development;
- Recommend pauses, regression steps, or Removal from training when welfare concerns arise;
- Ensure equipment recommendations are appropriate for the dog's safety and learning needs; and
- Maintain professional boundaries by distinguishing training guidance from medical or psychological advice.

Training decisions affecting Progression, placement readiness, or task suitability remain under the authority of the Training Director.

2.9.2 Handler Responsibilities

Handlers share responsibility for maintaining humane training practices throughout participation in the program.

Handlers are expected to:

- Follow training guidance provided by the Training Director;
- Use approved equipment in the manner instructed;
- Maintain consistency in reinforcement, routines, and expectations;
- Avoid punishment-based responses that interfere with learning clarity or task confidence;
- Monitor their dog for signs of fatigue, stress, avoidance, or behavioural change;
- Provide appropriate rest, enrichment, and recovery time outside of working sessions;
- Maintain the dog's physical condition through appropriate veterinary care and daily management;
- Report behavioural concerns, regression, or stress indicators promptly;
- Participate in training sessions prepared and engaged; and
- Support the dog's long-term working sustainability rather than prioritizing speed of advancement.

Handlers are responsible for ensuring their training practices align with program welfare standards both during and between scheduled sessions.

2.9.3 Equipment Use Expectations

Only equipment approved or recommended by the Training Director may be used during program participation.

Equipment must:

- support safe communication between Handler and dog;
- be appropriate to the dog's size, structure, and training stage;
- not interfere with task performance; and
- not create unnecessary discomfort or confusion.

The Training Director may restrict or discontinue equipment use if welfare concerns arise.

2.9.4 Welfare-First Decision Authority

If a training method, Progression step, or handling practice is determined to conflict with the dog's welfare, learning readiness, or long-term working suitability, the Training Director may modify or suspend training activities.

Program participation requires adherence to these welfare-based adjustments.

2.9.5 Commitment to Ethical Skill Development

Service Dog reliability depends on confidence, clarity, and voluntary engagement in trained tasks.

Humane training practices support:

- task durability across environments;
- Handler–dog communication stability;
- public safety reliability;
- long-term working soundness; and
- ethical partnership development.

All participants share responsibility for maintaining these standards throughout the training process.

2.10 Handler Welfare and Capacity Safeguarding Policy

The Sidekick Service Dog Program recognizes that successful Service Dog partnerships depend on the wellbeing, stability, and sustainable participation capacity of the Handler as well as the welfare of the dog. The program is committed to supporting Handlers in ways that promote safe, ethical, and realistic training expectations throughout all stages of participation. Participation in the program is voluntary and collaborative.

Handlers are not required to train beyond their physical, cognitive, emotional, or environmental capacity at any stage of the program. The Training Director maintains responsibility for monitoring whether training expectations remain appropriate for each Handler's circumstances and may adjust training pace, expectations, or participation requirements when necessary to protect team success and welfare outcomes.

The program recognizes that disability-related needs and life circumstances may fluctuate over time. Adjustments to timelines, Progression criteria, or participation structure may be made to support continued safe involvement where appropriate.

Handlers will not be pressured to:

- advance more quickly than is appropriate for their capacity;

- train beyond safe physical or psychological limits;
- maintain participation during periods of medical instability or significant life disruption;
or
- continue working a dog that is no longer appropriate for their needs or wellbeing.

Where participation demands temporarily exceed a Handler's capacity, the program may recommend:

- modified training expectations;
- temporary training pauses;
- transition to alternate training formats;
- reassignment of training priorities; or
- Withdrawal from specific program components.

These decisions are made collaboratively whenever possible and are guided by both Handler wellbeing and Service Dog welfare considerations.

The program also recognizes that strong Service Dog partnerships require informed decision-making.

Handlers will receive guidance regarding:

- realistic expectations of Service Dog performance;
- training workload requirements;
- Public Access readiness standards;
- long-term maintenance responsibilities; and
- potential risks associated with Service Dog use.

Participation in the program does not guarantee Graduation, placement, or Certification. Progression is based on demonstrated readiness, safety, and suitability for partnership.

Protection of Handler welfare is considered an essential component of ethical Service Dog training practice.

2.11 Ethical Use of Owner-Trained Service Dogs Policy

The Sidekick Service Dog Program supports the development of owner-trained Service Dog Teams within a structured framework that prioritizes animal welfare, Handler readiness, task reliability, and public safety. Participation in the program requires adherence to all program standards regardless of whether a dog is trained directly by the program or by the Handler under program guidance. Handlers participating with owner-trained Service Dogs agree to follow all applicable program policies governing training practices, equipment use, Public Access readiness, task development standards, and welfare expectations.

Participation in the owner-trained pathway does not independently establish Certification, Graduation status, or Service Dog qualifications. Participation reflects guided development under professional oversight and does not guarantee placement approval, Graduation, or Service Dog designation.

Handlers are responsible for ensuring that their dog:

- is physically and behaviourally suitable for service work;
- is trained using humane, welfare-centred methods consistent with program policy;
- demonstrates reliable disability-mitigating task performance;
- maintains safe and appropriate public behaviour; and
- progresses through training stages in accordance with program expectations.

Dogs may not be represented as Service Dogs in Public Access environments unless they meet the behavioural and training standards required for their current training stage.

The Training Director retains authority to determine whether an owner-trained dog:

- is suitable to continue service training;
- requires additional skill development prior to advancement;
- should pause Progression;
- should transition to an alternate working role; or
- should be withdrawn from service training consideration.

Handlers agree not to present their dog as a fully trained Service Dog before program readiness criteria have been met and confirmed. Where concerns arise regarding welfare, behavioural stability, task reliability, or Handler–dog compatibility, the program may recommend

modifications to the training plan, reassignment of training priorities, temporary Suspension of Public Access work, or discontinuation of service training participation.

Owner-trained Service Dog Teams remain subject to the same ethical, safety, and training standards as program-developed teams throughout all stages of participation.

Participation in the owner-trained pathway reflects a collaborative training process rather than independent qualification for Service Dog status.

3.1 Service Dog Suitability Requirements

Dogs entering the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog training program must demonstrate foundational behavioural stability, environmental neutrality, and learning readiness consistent with the expectations of Public Access working dogs. Suitability is evaluated prior to admission and monitored continuously throughout training.

Minimum suitability requirements include:

- stable, non-aggressive behaviour toward people and other animals;
- ability to recover appropriately from environmental stressors;
- absence of persistent fear responses that interfere with training progress;
- demonstrated Handler engagement and responsiveness;
- capacity to work in a variety of public and controlled environments;
- physical soundness appropriate for anticipated working tasks;
- motivation for reinforcement-based learning;
- ability to remain under Handler control in novel environments;
- behavioural patterns compatible with safe Public Access participation; and
- absence of reliance on corrective or restrictive equipment to maintain behavioural stability

Dogs requiring corrective or restrictive equipment to maintain stability or safety in Public Environments are not eligible for participation in the Service Dog training pathway until sufficient behavioural independence has been demonstrated.

Suitability determinations are based on observed behaviour, training history, temperament assessment, and projected working role compatibility, rather than breed, age alone, or prior training investment.

Admission decisions may also consider the dog's long-term capacity to perform disability-mitigating tasks safely, reliably, and without undue physical or psychological strain. Dogs that do not meet suitability criteria may be redirected to alternative training pathways that better support their individual strengths and long-term welfare.

3.2 Dog Suitability Evaluation Checklist

All dogs applying to the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog training program are assessed using a structured suitability Evaluation prior to admission. This Evaluation supports consistent decision-making regarding readiness for Service Dog training and identifies areas requiring development prior to Progression.

The suitability Evaluation considers the following domains:

Temperament and Stability

- Demonstrates neutral or appropriate responses to unfamiliar people
- Shows no evidence of aggression toward people or animals
- Recovers appropriately following exposure to novel stimuli
- Maintains composure in moderately stimulating environments Environmental Confidence
- Tolerates common public-access environments
- Recovers from unexpected noises or movement without prolonged stress response
- Demonstrates ability to navigate unfamiliar locations with Handler support

Handler Engagement

- Shows interest in working with the Handler
- Responds to reinforcement-based training
- Demonstrates developing focus in the presence of distractions

Behavioural Regulation

- Able to settle appropriately when required
- Demonstrates manageable arousal levels during activity
- Maintains control around people, animals, and environmental stimuli

Learning Readiness

- Accepts reinforcement-based instruction

- Demonstrates problem-solving ability appropriate to developmental stage
- Shows willingness to participate in structured training tasks

Physical Suitability

- Demonstrates sound movement appropriate for expected working role
- Has no known medical limitations incompatible with service work expectations
- Meets general health standards appropriate for participation in training

Stress Recovery Capacity

- Demonstrates timely recovery following startle responses
- Resumes engagement with Handler after environmental disruption
- Does not display persistent avoidance following novel exposure

Social Neutrality

- Demonstrates appropriate neutrality around unfamiliar dogs
- Does not display persistent fixation, avoidance, or overexcitement
- Maintains Handler engagement in the presence of other animals

Suitability Evaluations are used to determine admission readiness and to guide individualized training plans. Dogs that do not meet suitability criteria may be deferred, redirected to preparatory training, or recommended for alternative training pathways.

Evaluation outcomes reflect observed behaviour at the time of assessment and may be re-evaluated as training experience and environmental exposure increase.

3.3 Temperament and Environmental Stability.

Requirement Dogs entering the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog training program must demonstrate temperament characteristics consistent with the long-term behavioural demands of Public Access service work.

Temperament suitability refers to stable behavioural patterns that support safe participation in complex environments and cannot be reliably created through training alone. These characteristics are evaluated during admission screening and monitored throughout training Progression.

Temperament and environmental stability expectations include:

- consistent neutrality toward unfamiliar people without avoidance, defensive behaviour, or overexcitement;
- appropriate responses to unfamiliar dogs and animals in both controlled and Public Environments;
- absence of aggressive behaviour or persistent threat signalling;
- recovery from startle responses within a reasonable timeframe;
- tolerance of novel surfaces, sounds, movement, and spatial changes;
- ability to remain behaviourally stable in moderately stimulating Public Environments;
- absence of persistent environmental avoidance behaviours;
- resilience during transitions between environments;
- capacity to maintain engagement with the Handler following distraction or disruption; and
- behavioural flexibility when routines or expectations change.

Dogs demonstrating chronic fear responses, environmental instability, reactivity patterns, or stress responses incompatible with sustained Public Access participation may be determined unsuitable for Service Dog training.

Temperament suitability determinations are based on observed behaviour across multiple environments where possible and consider developmental stage, exposure history, and projected working role expectations. Dogs requiring substantial environmental management to remain stable in unfamiliar settings may be deferred pending additional preparatory training prior to admission.

Temperament and environmental stability are considered foundational requirements for safe Service Dog participation and are evaluated independently from task-learning ability or obedience training progress.

3.4 Veterinary Suitability Requirement

Dogs entering the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog training program must demonstrate physical health and structural soundness consistent with the functional demands of Service Dog work. Veterinary suitability screening supports safe participation in training and helps ensure that service-related tasks can be performed without risk of pain, injury, or long-term strain.

Prior to admission, dogs may be required to undergo veterinary Evaluation confirming general health status and suitability for participation in structured Service Dog training.

Veterinary suitability considerations include:

- absence of medical conditions that would interfere with training participation or task performance;
- orthopaedic soundness appropriate for anticipated working activities;
- freedom from chronic pain conditions affecting behaviour, mobility, or endurance;
- appropriate vision and hearing for safe environmental navigation;
- physical capacity to tolerate public-access environments;
- vaccination status consistent with public-access participation expectations;
- absence of untreated infectious or communicable disease;
- body condition compatible with safe working activity; and
- reproductive status considerations where relevant to behaviour, health, or training stability.

Where task expectations involve mobility assistance, interruption behaviours, grounding support, retrieval work, or sustained positioning tasks, additional Evaluation may be required to confirm structural suitability for those roles.

Veterinary documentation may be requested to support admission decisions when medical history, behavioural presentation, or projected working role indicates the need for additional confirmation of physical readiness.

Dogs identified as temporarily unsuitable due to treatable or developing medical concerns may be deferred pending veterinary clearance. Dogs whose medical condition is likely to compromise long-term welfare, safety, or working reliability may be determined unsuitable for participation in the Service Dog training pathway.

Veterinary suitability may be re-evaluated periodically throughout a dog's participation in the program to ensure continued readiness for training and working expectations. Updated veterinary documentation may be requested as part of Recertification, task Progression approval, behavioural reassessment, or Graduation readiness review where appropriate. Veterinary suitability determinations are made in support of humane training practices and long-term partnership sustainability.

3.5 Equipment Dependency and Training Suitability Considerations

Dogs participating in the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog training program must demonstrate behavioural reliability that does not depend upon corrective or restrictive equipment for safe handling or public-access participation.

Training equipment may be used within the program to support communication, safety, management, and skill development during the learning process. However, equipment must not be used to compensate for unresolved behavioural instability or insufficient behavioural readiness for service work.

Temporary use of management equipment during skill acquisition does not affect eligibility, provided the dog can demonstrate behavioural stability without dependence on such equipment in public-access environments. Dogs are not eligible for admission to the Service Dog training pathway if corrective or restrictive equipment is required to maintain behavioural control in public settings.

The need for continual equipment-based behavioural management indicates that foundational behavioural readiness for service work has not yet been achieved.

Where equipment dependency is identified, dogs may participate in preparatory or foundational training intended to strengthen behavioural stability, Handler communication, and environmental neutrality prior to re-Evaluation for program entry.

This requirement supports the development of confident, reliable Service Dogs capable of maintaining safe, stable, and socially appropriate behaviour across environments without On-going dependence upon equipment-based behavioural control.

3.6 Handler Eligibility Expectations

Handlers applying to the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog training program must demonstrate readiness to participate in a structured training process and maintain responsibilities consistent with the development of a safe and reliable working Service Dog Team.

The program is designed to support collaborative training partnerships in which both Handler and dog progress together toward functional independence and public-access reliability.

Handler eligibility expectations include the following areas:

Commitment to Training Participation

- willingness to participate consistently in scheduled instruction and guided practice
- ability to follow individualized training recommendations
- engagement in On-going skill development between training sessions Humane Handling Practices
- commitment to reinforcement-based training methods

- use of approved equipment in accordance with program standards
- maintenance of training approaches consistent with CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program policies

Communication and Program Participation

- timely communication regarding changes in Handler needs, dog behaviour, or health status
- willingness to participate in Evaluations and progress reviews
- openness to feedback supporting team development and readiness Progression

Public Access Responsibility

- understanding that Service Dog Teams represent working partnerships in shared Public Environments
- commitment to maintaining safe and appropriate public behaviour standards
- agreement to represent the dog accurately according to its training status

Team Sustainability

- ability to support the dog's daily care, exercise, and welfare needs
- commitment to maintaining training consistency following placement or advancement
- participation in training planning where applicable for Prospect Dogs trained through the program

Task Use Readiness

- willingness to participate in the development and maintenance of disability-mitigating tasks appropriate to individual needs
- understanding that task reliability is required for Progression toward working status within the program

On-going Program Participation Requirements

- willingness to participate in scheduled Evaluations, progress reviews, and Recertification requirements where applicable
- agreement to follow program policies supporting safe, ethical, and sustainable Service Dog partnerships

Eligibility decisions are based on the Handler's readiness to participate in a structured training partnership and to support the long-term success, safety, and welfare of the Service Dog Team.

When readiness criteria are not yet met, preparatory coaching or alternative training pathways may be recommended prior to program entry.

3.7 Clinical Consultation and Participation Readiness Support

The CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog training program supports participation by individuals whose disability-related needs may benefit from structured Service Dog training. Clinical consultation may be incorporated where appropriate to support safe, effective, and individualized participation planning.

Clinical consultation is not required for all applicants. However, consultation may be recommended when additional information would assist in determining participation readiness, task suitability, supervision requirements, or long-term partnership sustainability.

Consultation-supported readiness considerations may include:

- identification of functional support needs appropriate for Service Dog assistance;
- confirmation that proposed disability-mitigating tasks are suitable for the Handler's circumstances;
- Evaluation of factors affecting safe public-access participation;
- clarification of developmental, neurological, medical, or behavioural considerations relevant to training Progression;
- identification of supervision requirements for child Handlers or individuals requiring supported participation; and
- planning appropriate training expectations and Progression timelines.

The program does not diagnose disability or provide clinical assessment services.

Where consultation is recommended, applicants may be asked to provide documentation or guidance from an appropriate qualified professional familiar with their functional support needs. Clinical consultation supports individualized training planning and placement suitability decisions but does not independently determine eligibility outside the behavioural, welfare, and safety criteria established elsewhere in program policy. Where consultation indicates that additional preparation would support successful participation, applicants may be offered preparatory coaching, caregiver-supported participation planning, or alternative entry pathways prior to admission to the Service Dog training stream.

Participation readiness determinations are made collaboratively and are guided by Handler safety, dog welfare, and long-term partnership sustainability.

3.8 Program Entry Pathways

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. offers multiple structured entry pathways into the Sidekick Service Dog Program to accommodate varying Handler experience levels, dog readiness, and training histories. All pathways lead toward the same training standards, behavioural expectations, and Graduation criteria.

Admission through any pathway is contingent upon successful completion of program screening and acceptance under Section 3 Admission Standards.

3.8.1 Candidate Dog Evaluation Pathway

Applicants with an existing dog may enter the program through a formal Candidate Dog Evaluation process.

This pathway includes:

- temperament screening;
- behavioural suitability assessment;
- environmental stability review;
- Handler–dog interaction Evaluation; and
- Public Access readiness screening (when applicable).

Acceptance into the program through this pathway does not guarantee suitability for service work until the dog successfully progresses through required training stages.

Dogs demonstrating unsafe behaviour, instability, or insufficient recovery capacity under stress will not be admitted.

3.8.2 Prospect Dog Development Pathway

Applicants without a suitable Service Dog candidate may enter the program with a Prospect Dog.

Prospect Dogs may be:

- selected independently by the Handler with program guidance, or
- identified through collaborative screening with the Training Director.

Prospect Dogs enter the Preparatory Training Stage and must successfully demonstrate:

- stable temperament development;
- Handler engagement capacity;
- environmental confidence;
- trainability; and
- appropriate recovery from stress.

Progression beyond preparatory training depends on demonstrated suitability over time rather than age alone.

3.8.3 Behavioural Rehabilitation Entry Pathway

Dogs requiring behavioural stabilization prior to service-task training may enter through a structured rehabilitation pathway.

This pathway is appropriate for dogs showing:

- anxiety-related instability;
- environmental sensitivity;
- reactivity;
- incomplete social exposure history; or
- inconsistent Handler engagement patterns

Rehabilitation participation does not guarantee Progression into advanced service training stages. Advancement occurs only when behavioural stability meets Public Access safety expectations.

This pathway reflects CanineSidekicks' specialization in complex behavioural development while maintaining public safety standards.

3.8.4 Handler Development Entry Pathway

Applicants may enter the program through a Handler-focused readiness pathway when additional support is required prior to working with a Service Dog candidate.

This pathway may include:

- training literacy development;
- reinforcement timing skills;
- handling mechanics;
- regulation strategies during training sessions;
- confidence building in structured environments; or
- participation readiness planning.

Handler development participation supports long-term training success but does not replace suitability requirements for Service Dog partnership.

3.8.5 Transfer Team Entry Pathway

Handler–dog teams previously enrolled in another Service Dog program, or independently training prior to application, may request entry through the transfer team pathway.

Transfer teams must complete:

- behavioural reassessment;
- task reliability review;
- Public Access Evaluation;
- equipment compliance review; and
- training history documentation where available.

Placement within the training Progression framework will be determined based on demonstrated skill level rather than prior program status. Acceptance through this pathway ensures consistency with CanineSidekicks training standards and program integrity requirements.

3.8.6 Program-Bred Dog Developmental Pathways

Dogs bred and raised within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program may enter the Stage Progression Framework at developmentally appropriate checkpoints rather than beginning at Stage 1.

Early socialization, structured environmental exposure, temperament monitoring, and foundational learning experiences completed through the program’s puppy development process may satisfy components of early-stage eligibility requirements prior to formal Handler

placement. Placement-stage entry level is determined by the Training Director based on behavioural readiness, environmental stability, temperament suitability, and alignment with the intended Handler's functional needs.

Advancement within the Stage Progression Framework remains competency-based. Program-bred dogs are not advanced automatically based on age, prior exposure, or participation in early development programming.

All program-bred dogs must demonstrate the same Public Access reliability, task reliability, team integration, and Graduation readiness standards required of externally sourced dogs prior to completion of the Service Dog training pathway.

3.8.7 Program Entry Does Not Guarantee Graduation

Entry into the CanineSidekicks Service Dog Program confirms acceptance into structured training but does not guarantee Certification, vesting eligibility, or Graduation.

Progression depends on:

- behavioural stability;
- task reliability;
- Handler participation consistency;
- public safety readiness; and
- welfare compliance across training stages.

Teams advance only when standards outlined in the Training Stage Progression Framework are met.

3.9 Program Participation Models

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. offers multiple participation models within the Service Dog Program to support teams with differing training needs, geographic access, and developmental readiness. Participation models describe how instruction is delivered and do not change program standards, Progression requirements, or Graduation criteria.

Selection of a participation model is based on Candidate Dog stability, Handler readiness, environmental access, and training stage requirements as outlined in the Training Stage Progression Framework (Section 7). Participation format may be adjusted at any time to support safety, welfare, or training outcomes.

3.9.1 Coached Owner-Trainer Model

The coached owner-trainer model is the primary participation structure within the Service Dog Program. Handlers serve as the dog's primary trainer while working under structured instructional guidance and staged Progression expectations.

Teams are responsible for maintaining regular training practice between instructional sessions. Advancement through training stages requires demonstration of reliability consistent with program standards regardless of participation format.

3.9.2 Hybrid Training Support Model

Some teams may participate through a hybrid structure combining Handler-led training with targeted instructor-directed sessions and/or Board and Train. Hybrid participation may be recommended when additional instructional support improves training clarity, strengthens skill acquisition, or supports safe Progression through program stages.

3.9.3 Board-and-Train Integration Model

Board-and-train participation may be incorporated at any stage of the Service Dog Program when instructor-led training supports behavioural stabilization, skill development, or Progression readiness.

Board-and-train placements are structured, time-limited, and goal-oriented and do not replace Handler participation requirements within the program. Handlers remain responsible for maintaining trained skills following instructor-led training periods.

3.9.4 Behavioural Rehabilitation Support Model

Dogs requiring additional behavioural stabilization prior to advancement into higher training stages may participate within a structured rehabilitation support model. Placement within this model supports development of environmental stability, engagement capacity, and recovery skills necessary for safe participation in Public Access training environments.

Participation in behavioural rehabilitation does not guarantee advancement to later training stages.

3.9.5 Remote Participation Eligibility

Remote participation may be available during selected early training stages when training goals can be safely supported through distance coaching methods. Eligibility for remote participation is determined at the discretion of the Training Director and depends on training stage

requirements, Handler consistency, Candidate Dog stability, and public safety considerations as outlined in the Training Stage Progression Framework (Section 7).

Later training stages require in-person instruction and Evaluation to ensure reliability in Public Access environments.

Approval for remote participation may be modified or withdrawn at any time if training progress, safety considerations, or welfare standards require increased instructor involvement.

3.9.6 Participation Model Selection and Adjustment

Participation models are selected based on:

- Handler experience;
- Candidate Dog readiness;
- behavioural stability;
- environmental access needs;
- geographic considerations; and
- stage-specific training requirements.

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. may recommend changes to a team's participation model at any point during training when doing so supports learning outcomes, welfare standards, or public safety expectations. Changes to participation format do not affect program standards or Graduation eligibility requirements.

3.10 Age Requirements

Dogs entering the Sidekick Service Dog Program must demonstrate developmental readiness appropriate to the training stage in which they are participating. Age expectations support behavioural stability, learning capacity, physical welfare, and safe Progression toward Public Access reliability. Chronological age alone does not determine suitability for Service Dog work.

Placement decisions are based on temperament, health, environmental stability, and demonstrated training readiness.

3.10.1 Minimum Age for Program Entry

Dogs may enter the Service Dog Program prior to full maturity when participating in preparatory or foundation training stages.

Younger dogs entering the program must demonstrate:

- stable early temperament development;
- appropriate social engagement;
- environmental curiosity without persistent avoidance;
- absence of sustained fear responses; and
- the ability to recover appropriately from novel experiences.

Early-stage participation focuses on developmental foundations rather than Public Access reliability expectations.

3.10.2 Age Expectations for Public Access Training Progression

Advancement into structured Public Access training requires sufficient behavioural maturity to support safe participation in increasingly complex environments.

Progression decisions are based on:

- emotional regulation;
- Handler engagement;
- environmental confidence;
- impulse control; and
- recovery following distraction or stress.

Chronological age does not independently determine readiness for advancement between training stages.

3.10.3 Minimum Age for Graduation Eligibility

Dogs are eligible for Graduation assessment only after reaching a level of behavioural and physical maturity consistent with sustained working reliability in Public Environments.

In alignment with Alberta Service Dog Qualification Assessment eligibility standards, dogs must be at least 18 months of age before Graduation readiness assessment may occur.

Meeting the minimum age requirement does not guarantee Graduation eligibility.

Teams must also demonstrate:

- reliable Public Access behaviour;
- consistent task performance;
- environmental stability across settings;
- Handler–dog working partnership reliability; and
- readiness for independent representation as a Service Dog Team.

Graduation decisions are based on demonstrated competency across the Training Stage Progression Framework (Section 7).

3.10.4 Upper Age Considerations for Program Entry and Graduation

Older dogs may be considered for program entry or continuation when they demonstrate appropriate health, behavioural stability, and working suitability.

Admission and Graduation decisions for mature dogs consider:

- expected working lifespan;
- physical conditioning;
- task sustainability;
- training history; and
- welfare considerations.

In alignment with Alberta qualification eligibility expectations, dogs approaching 9 years of age may be evaluated individually to determine whether Graduation assessment remains appropriate.

3.10.5 Individualized Age Placement Decisions

The Training Director may approve individualized placement decisions when a dog demonstrates readiness outside typical developmental timelines.

Age-related placement decisions are based on:

- behavioural stability;
- environmental resilience;

- Handler capability;
- physical readiness for work; and
- public safety considerations.

Program placement and advancement remain contingent on demonstrated suitability rather than chronological age alone.

3.11 Admission Decisions and Acceptance Limitations

Admission to the Sidekick Service Dog Program is determined through a structured suitability review process. Meeting minimum eligibility criteria does not guarantee acceptance into the program.

Admission decisions are based on the Training Director's Evaluation of:

- Candidate Dog temperament and behavioural stability;
- environmental readiness;
- Handler participation capacity;
- public safety considerations;
- welfare considerations for the dog;
- training history, where applicable; and
- availability of appropriate instructional support within the program.

The program reserves the right to defer, modify, or decline admission when participation is not expected to support safe, ethical, or effective Service Dog development.

3.11.1 Conditional Admission

In some cases, teams may be admitted on a conditional basis when additional developmental preparation is required prior to Progression into standard training stages.

Conditional admission may include:

- participation in preparatory training stages;
- behavioural stabilization support
- Handler skill development;

- environmental exposure development; or
- reassessment prior to advancement.

Conditional admission does not guarantee Progression beyond early training stages.

3.11.2 Deferral of Admission

Admission may be deferred when a team demonstrates potential suitability but requires additional development before entering structured training.

Deferral decisions may be based on:

- developmental maturity of the Candidate Dog;
- temporary health considerations;
- environmental stability concerns;
- Handler readiness factors; or
- incomplete training history documentation

Deferred applicants may reapply or be reconsidered following completion of recommended preparation steps.

3.11.3 Refusal of Admission

Admission may be declined when participation would not support safe or appropriate Service Dog development.

Reasons for refusal may include:

- behavioural instability incompatible with Public Access expectations;
- unmanaged aggression or unsafe reactivity;
- welfare concerns affecting the Candidate Dog;
- inability to safely participate in structured training environments; or
- mismatch between program structure and team needs.

Admission refusal does not prevent future application if circumstances change and suitability improves.

3.11.4 Program Capacity and Instructional Limitations

Admission decisions may also reflect program capacity and the availability of appropriate instructional support.

The program may limit enrollment when:

- instructional resources are fully allocated;
- specialized support needs exceed available program structure; or
- participation format requirements cannot be safely accommodated.

Program capacity considerations help ensure training quality, safety, and appropriate supervision across all participating teams.

3.11.5 Training Director Authority

Final admission decisions are made by the Training Director. Admission determinations are based on professional Evaluation of suitability, safety, and training readiness and are made in alignment with program standards and welfare responsibilities.

Admission decisions are not based solely on checklist completion and may include individualized placement recommendations where appropriate.

3.11.6 Reapplication Following Refusal or Deferral

Applicants who are refused admission or deferred from participation in the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog training program may be eligible to reapply at a later date following demonstrated improvement in the areas that affected the original admission decision.

Reapplication eligibility is determined on a case-by-case basis and may require updated behavioural Evaluations, veterinary documentation, training history, handling assessments, or other supporting information relevant to the concerns previously identified. Submission of a new application does not guarantee admission or reassessment approval.

Where appropriate, applicants may be provided with recommendations for preparatory training, behavioural development, Handler education, environmental exposure, welfare stabilization, or other remedial steps intended to support future readiness for Service Dog training participation. Dogs or Handlers previously refused or deferred due to temporary, manageable, or developmental concerns may be reconsidered once sufficient progress has been demonstrated. However, applications involving significant safety concerns, severe behavioural instability, welfare risks, fraudulent representation, or circumstances fundamentally incompatible with

Service Dog work may be deemed ineligible for future reconsideration at the discretion of the program.

All reapplication and reconsideration decisions remain subject to the professional judgment, safety standards, welfare considerations, and program authority of CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc.

4.1 Service Dog Equipment Policy

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. requires the use of humane, welfare-focused training equipment throughout all stages of Service Dog development. Equipment is selected to support clear communication, Handler safety, and long-term confidence and working reliability of the dog.

Approved training equipment within the program includes flat collars, slip leads when used as management and communication tools under instructor guidance, martingale collars, and head halters when appropriate for individual teams.

Equipment selection may vary depending on the dog's training stage, environmental readiness, behavioural stability, and working objectives. These tools are selected based on the needs of the individual dog and Handler and are introduced with proper instruction to ensure safe and effective use.

Handlers participating in the program receive instruction on appropriate equipment selection and handling techniques to ensure consistency with humane training standards and to promote the development of confident, stable, and reliable working Service Dogs.

Training within the CanineSidekicks Service Dog Program is grounded in science-based learning principles and positive reinforcement methods. Equipment is never used to suppress behaviour through discomfort or intimidation, but instead to support clarity, guidance, and safe Public Access training.

The use of aversive training equipment, including prong collars, electric collars, choke chains used for correction, or other coercive tools, is not permitted within the Service Dog training program.

All equipment must be properly fitted, maintained in good condition, and presented in a manner consistent with professional Service Dog training standards during program activities and Public Access training.

The Training Director retains authority to approve, modify, or restrict equipment use at any stage of training to ensure safety, welfare, and program consistency.

Equipment selection within the program reflects the expectation that Service Dogs demonstrate reliable behaviour, task performance, and Public Access readiness through training rather than reliance on mechanical control or management tools.

4.1.1 Individualized Equipment Selection

Equipment selection within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program is individualized based on the dog's structure, temperament, working role, training stage, and Handler needs.

The Training Director or designated program facilitator may recommend adjustments to equipment at any stage of training to support safety, communication clarity, movement efficiency, and long-term working sustainability.

4.2 Permitted Working Equipment

Handlers participating in the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog Program may use only approved equipment when a dog is identified as working or in training for service work. Permitted equipment must support safe handling, clear communication, unrestricted movement, and the dog's long-term physical welfare.

All working equipment must be properly fitted, appropriate to the dog's structure and training level, and approved for Service Dog use within the program by the Training Director or a designated program facilitator.

4.2.1 Flat Collars

A properly fitted flat buckle collar is permitted for working and training purposes.

The collar must:

- Fit securely without restricting breathing;
- Allow approximately two fingers' space between collar and neck;
- Be free from aversive features such as prongs or spikes; and
- Be appropriate for the dog's size, coat type, and working role.

Flat collars may be used independently or in combination with a working leash.

4.2.2 Martingale Collars

Martingale collars are permitted when additional security is required to prevent dogs from backing out of equipment.

Martingale collars must:

- Be properly adjusted to prevent excessive tightening;
- Not be used as a corrective device; and
- Be fitted to allow safe and comfortable movement.

4.2.3 Slip Leads

Slip leads are permitted as a handling tool when used appropriately and with proper training technique.

Slip leads must:

- Be positioned correctly on the neck;
- Be used in a manner that supports clear communication without sustained pressure; and
- Not be used as a corrective or punitive device.

Handlers may be required to demonstrate appropriate slip lead use if requested by Training Director or the designated program facilitator.

4.2.4 Multi-Point Harnesses

Non-restrictive multi-point harnesses are permitted when they allow full, natural shoulder movement and do not place sustained pressure on joints or soft tissue structures.

Approved harnesses must:

- Allow unrestricted gait and range of motion;
- Avoid pressure across the front of the shoulders;
- Fit securely without shifting or chafing; and
- Support safe working posture.

Front-attach harnesses that interfere with natural movement or apply sustained joint pressure are not permitted for Service Dog work within the program.

4.2.5 Service Dog Identification

Service Dogs in training and certified working dogs must wear visible identification in public working environments unless otherwise authorized by the Training Director or designated program facilitator.

Identification may include:

- Service Dog vest;
- Cape;

- Harness patches; and/or
- Program-approved identification tags.

Identification must remain clean, legible, and appropriately fitted at all times.

4.2.5.1 Service Dog identification

Service Dog identification must remain visible and appropriately presented during Public Access training unless otherwise authorized by the Training Director or designated program facilitator. Identification should support clear communication to the public while maintaining the safety and comfort of both dog and Handler.

4.2.6 Mobility Support Harnesses (When Applicable)

Mobility support harnesses must be professionally fitted or approved for correct positioning prior to working use.

Mobility support harnesses are permitted only for dogs that have:

- Passed structural suitability screening;
- Reached physical maturity;
- Completed appropriate conditioning; and
- Received program approval for mobility task work.

Unauthorized use of mobility equipment is not permitted.

4.2.7 Leashes and Handling Attachments

Handlers may use standard working leashes appropriate to the dog's training level and working environment. Leash selection should reflect the dog's level of training reliability and the demands of the working environment.

Permitted leash types include:

- Fixed-length leashes;
- Adjustable-length leashes;
- Hands-free waist leashes (when appropriate); or
- Traffic leads for close-control environments.

Retractable leashes are not permitted during Service Dog training or Public Access work.

4.2.8 Task-Specific Equipment

Some Service Dogs may require specialized equipment related to trained tasks.

Examples include:

- Guide handles;
- Forward momentum pull harnesses;
- Medical alert packs; and/or
- Retrieval assistance equipment.

All task-specific equipment must be approved prior to use in working environments.

4.2.9 Equipment Fit and Welfare Safeguards

All permitted working equipment must be maintained in safe condition and regularly checked for proper fit, wear, and structural integrity. Equipment that causes rubbing, pressure points, restrictions of movement, or behavioural discomfort must be adjusted or discontinued.

The program reserves the right to require equipment changes where welfare or safety concerns are identified.

4.2.10 Temporary Training Equipment During Preparatory Stages

Some training equipment may be permitted for temporary use during preparatory training stages when additional handling support is required to promote safety, communication clarity, or skill development prior to service-level reliability.

Examples of temporary training equipment may include head halters or other Training Director or designated facilitator-approved support tools used to assist with early-stage leash skills, environmental exposure, or Handler coordination.

Temporary equipment must:

- be used only with program approval,
- support humane, welfare-focused training practices,
- not restrict natural movement or working posture,

- be applied with appropriate training technique, and
- be discontinued as the dog demonstrates readiness to transition to standard working equipment.

Temporary training equipment is not permitted during Public Access work once a dog has entered formal service training status unless specifically authorized by the Training Director or designated program facilitator.

4.3 Prohibited Equipment in Service Training

To ensure the safety, welfare, and professional reliability of Service Dogs trained through CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc., certain equipment is not permitted during Service Dog training, Public Access work, or Certification-level handling. Equipment may be restricted due to its potential to interfere with communication clarity, alter natural gait, create dependency on management tools rather than training, or compromise the physical or behavioural suitability of the dog for service work.

Handlers must not use prohibited equipment while a dog is identified as a Service Dog in training or working Service Dog unless explicitly authorized by the Training Director or designated program facilitator for temporary rehabilitation or assessment purposes.

4.3.1 Front-Attach Harnesses

Front-attach harnesses are not permitted for Service Dog training or working status.

These harnesses:

- Restrict natural shoulder movement;
- Apply sustained pressure to joints and soft tissue structures;
- Interfere with efficient working posture; and
- Promote mechanical steering rather than trained responsiveness.

Service Dogs must demonstrate reliable handling skills without reliance on equipment that alters movement mechanics.

4.3.2 Head Halters

Head halters are not permitted during Service Dog training or Public Access work.

While head halters may be used in some companion dog training contexts, they are not appropriate for Service Dog development because they:

- Alter natural movement patterns;
- Create mechanical control rather than trained engagement;
- Introduce safety concerns in working environments; and
- May interfere with task performance reliability.

Head halters may be permitted during preparatory training stages as outlined in Section 4.2.10 but are not permitted once a dog has entered formal service training status unless specifically authorized by the Training Director or designated program facilitator.

4.3.3 Retractable Leashes

Retractable leashes are not permitted during Service Dog training or Public Access work.

These leashes:

- Reduce Handler precision and timing;
- Introduce safety risks in Public Environments;
- Encourage inconsistent working distance; and
- Interfere with structured handling expectations.

Service Dogs must remain under consistent, predictable Handler control at all times.

4.3.4 Aversive Training Equipment

Aversive training equipment is not permitted at any time while a dog is participating in Service Dog training, Public Access work, task development, Evaluation, or any situation in which the dog is identified as a Service Dog or Service Dog in training under CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc.

This restriction applies whenever the dog is:

- Wearing Service Dog identification;
- Represented as a Service Dog in training;
- Participating in structured service training sessions;
- Practicing trained service tasks;
- Engaged in Public Access preparation or assessment; or

- Working in an active service capacity.

Examples of prohibited equipment during Service Dog training or working status include:

- Prong collars;
- Electronic stimulation collars;
- Bark-control collars; and
- Any corrective collar used as an aversive training device.

Service Dogs must demonstrate reliability, neutrality, and task competency without reliance on aversive training equipment while functioning in a Service Dog role.

Handlers may choose to use equipment outside of Service Dog training contexts at their own discretion; however, such equipment must never be used while the dog is acting, training, or being represented as a Service Dog within the program.

The Training Director or designated facilitator reserves the right to review equipment use if it impacts training Progression, welfare, or Certification readiness.

4.3.5 Equipment That Restricts Natural Movement

Any equipment that interferes with the dog's natural gait, posture, or ability to perform trained service tasks is not permitted.

Examples include:

- Harnesses that restrict shoulder extension;
- Tight-fitting equipment that alters spinal alignment;
- Oversized or unstable gear that shifts during movement; or
- Equipment that creates persistent physical pressure.

All working equipment must support efficient, balanced movement suitable for sustained service work.

4.3.6 Unauthorized Mobility Equipment

Mobility support harnesses may not be used unless the dog has:

- Passed structural suitability screening;

- Reached physical maturity;
- Completed conditioning requirements; and
- Received approval from the Training Director or designated program facilitator.

Premature or unapproved use of mobility equipment may place dogs at risk of long-term injury and is not permitted within the program.

4.3.7 Unapproved Task-Specific Equipment

Specialized task equipment may not be introduced without Training Director or designated program facilitator approval.

Examples include:

- Guide handles;
- Momentum pull harnesses;
- Medical carry systems; and/or
- Retrieval packs or assistive attachments.

Task equipment must match the dog's training level, structure, and working role.

4.3.8 Equipment That Masks Training Deficits

Equipment used primarily to compensate for incomplete training or behavioural instability is not permitted during Service Dog Public Access work.

Examples may include:

- Equipment intended to suppress reactivity;
- Tools used to maintain position artificially; and
- Devices that replace or artificially substitute for Handler communication skills.

Service Dogs must demonstrate functional reliability through training rather than equipment dependency.

4.3.9 Equipment Used Without Program Approval

Equipment introduced without approval from the Training Director or designated program facilitator is not permitted for use during Service Dog training, Public Access work, task development, or Evaluation activities. Unauthorized equipment may interfere with training consistency, welfare standards, or task reliability expectations.

The program reserves the right to require equipment modification or Removal where concerns related to safety, movement, behavioural stability, or Certification readiness are identified.

4.3.10 Equipment That Misrepresents Service Dog Status

Equipment that inaccurately represents a dog's training level, working role, or Certification status within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program is not permitted during Service Dog training, Public Access preparation, Evaluation activities, or working service participation.

Service Dog identification equipment must reflect the dog's current stage of development as determined by the Training Director or designated program facilitator. Handlers must not use vests, patches, labels, or other identification indicating working Service Dog status when a dog has not yet met program-defined readiness criteria for that designation.

Examples of misrepresentation may include:

- identifying a dog as a certified Service Dog prior to program approval;
- using working-status identification during preparatory training stages without authorization;
- displaying task-specific identification before reliable task performance has been established; and
- using program branding in a manner that implies Certification or endorsement not yet granted.

Accurate identification supports public trust, Handler safety, and program integrity.

The program reserves the right to require Removal or modification of identification equipment that does not reflect the dog's current training status or working designation.

4.3.11 Equipment that Creates Public Safety Risk

Equipment that introduces avoidable risk to the dog, Handler, or public is not permitted during Service Dog training or Public Access work. Examples may include unstable attachments, poorly fitted working gear, unsecured task equipment, or devices that interfere with safe Handler control.

The program reserves the right to restrict any equipment determined to compromise safe working conditions.

4.3.12 Equipment Requirements and Program Status

If a dog requires the use of equipment restricted within Service Dog training standards, the team may be temporarily paused from active Service Dog training status until readiness to resume participation is demonstrated.

During this period, Handlers may continue training outside the Service Dog training designation; however, the dog must not be identified, represented, or worked as a Service Dog in training while restricted equipment is in use.

Resumption of service training status requires approval from the Training Director or designated program facilitator.

4.4 Identification Display and Equipment Standards

A dog is considered to be functioning in a service training or service work capacity whenever it is identified, represented, or actively engaged as a Service Dog or Service Dog in training within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program.

This includes situations where the dog is:

* Wearing Service Dog identification equipment, including vests, capes, harnesses, patches, or other program-approved identifiers;

- Participating in structured Service Dog training sessions;
- Practicing trained or developing disability-mitigating tasks;
- Entering Public Environments for training, exposure, or access preparation;
- Participating in Evaluations, assessments, or program activities; or
- Represented verbally, visually, or behaviourally as a Service Dog or Service Dog in training.

While functioning in a service training or service work capacity, the dog and Handler must comply with all applicable equipment, handling, safety, welfare, and behavioural expectations outlined within this manual.

Handlers may choose training approaches outside of active Service Dog training contexts; however, equipment or handling practices inconsistent with program standards must not be used while the dog is identified or represented as participating in the program.

The Training Director retains discretion in determining when a dog is functioning in a service training or service work capacity for the purpose of applying program standards and expectations.

5.1 Definition of Service Dog Identification

Service Dog identification refers to any visual marker indicating that a dog is participating in structured Service Dog training under CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc.

Identification may include:

- a Service Dog vest;
- a cape;
- harness patches indicating Service Dog in training status;
- program-issued identification markers; and/or
- other Training Director or designated program facilitator-approved Service Dog identifiers.

A dog wearing Service Dog identification is considered to be functioning in a Service Dog training capacity and must meet all applicable program standards for equipment use, handling expectations, and behavioural conduct.

Service Dog identification indicates participation in a structured training pathway and does not represent Certification, Graduation, or guaranteed eligibility for unrestricted Public Access work.

Authorization to wear Service Dog identification is granted at the discretion of the Training Director or designated program facilitator and may be modified, restricted, or withdrawn if program expectations are not maintained.

Service Dog identification must accurately reflect the dog's current stage of development within the program training framework.

5.2 Eligibility for Vesting

Eligibility for vesting is determined by the Training Director or designated program facilitator based on the readiness of both the dog and Handler team to participate safely and appropriately in structured Service Dog training environments.

Prior to vesting, the team must demonstrate:

- foundational behavioural stability;
- reliable Handler engagement;
- absence of persistent reactivity toward people or dogs;
- safe handling in controlled Public Environments;
- appropriate use of permitted working equipment; and

- Handler understanding of program expectations and responsibilities while the dog is identified as a Service Dog in training.

Initial authorization to wear Service Dog in training identification reflects determination by the Training Director or designated program facilitator that the team demonstrates sufficient behavioural stability, environmental readiness, and Handler coordination to participate safely in structured public training environments.

Vesting indicates that a dog and Handler team are participating in structured Service Dog training under CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. and are authorized to represent the dog as a Service Dog in training within approved training contexts.

Vesting does not independently grant permission for unrestricted Public Access training. Authorization for entry into non-pet-friendly environments is determined separately by the Training Director or designated program facilitator in accordance with Section 6.1 Eligibility for Public Access Training.

Authorization to wear Service Dog identification may be limited, expanded, suspended, or withdrawn at any time by the Training Director or designated program facilitator based on behavioural readiness, Handler consistency, training Progression, welfare considerations, or safety concerns.

5.3 Behaviour Requirements While Vested

While wearing Service Dog identification, dogs must demonstrate behaviour consistent with structured Service Dog training expectations.

Minimum expectations include:

- neutral behaviour around people and animals;
- absence of uncontrolled vocalization;
- no lunging, pulling, or avoidance behaviours;
- ability to recover appropriately from environmental distractions;
- maintenance of Handler awareness and engagement; and
- safe responses to handling and positioning requests.

Dogs must remain under effective Handler control at all times while vested.

Handlers are responsible for ensuring that their dog is prepared for each working environment prior to vesting in public or structured training settings.

If a dog demonstrates behaviour inconsistent with Service Dog training expectations, vesting privileges may be temporarily removed by the Training Director or designated program facilitator until readiness is re-established.

Service Dog identification must not be used to compensate for incomplete training or to justify behaviour inconsistent with Public Access expectations. Dogs must demonstrate behaviour appropriate to their current stage of training as determined by the Training Director or designated program facilitator.

Temporary Removal of vesting privileges does not indicate program Dismissal and is intended to support continued development toward safe participation in Service Dog training environments.

5.4 Temporary Removal of Vesting Privileges

The Training Director or designated program facilitator may temporarily remove vesting privileges if a dog demonstrates behaviour indicating reduced readiness for Service Dog training environments.

Reasons for temporary Removal may include:

- increased reactivity toward people, dogs, or environment;
- difficulty maintaining Handler engagement;
- environmental sensitivity affecting working reliability;
- regression in foundational obedience skills;
- use of prohibited equipment during Service Dog training;
- signs of stress, avoidance, or behavioural instability; or
- Handler inconsistency affecting training Progression or safe public training participation.

Temporary Removal of vesting privileges is intended to support continued skill development and protect the long-term success of the Service Dog Team.

During this period, the team may continue training in preparatory contexts; however, the dog must not be identified, represented, or worked as a Service Dog in training while vest privileges are suspended.

Vesting privileges may also be temporarily removed where continued identification would be inconsistent with program standards for safety, welfare, or public representation.

Reinstatement of vesting privileges requires review and approval by the Training Director or designated program facilitator.

5.5 Return to Vest Criteria

Return to vest status may occur when the Training Director or designated program facilitator determines that the team has demonstrated sufficient readiness to resume structured Service Dog training while identified as a Service Dog in training.

Criteria for return may include:

- demonstrated behavioural stability in training environments;
- restoration of Handler engagement and responsiveness;
- reliable performance of foundational handling skills;
- improved recovery from environmental distractions;
- consistent use of permitted working equipment; or
- Handler readiness to support continued Progression.

Return to vest status is determined solely at the discretion of the Training Director or designated program facilitator based on observed training readiness and team consistency, and alignment with program expectations for safe participation in structured Service Dog training environments.

Reinstatement of vest privileges indicates that the team may resume participation in structured Service Dog training environments under program expectations and may again represent the dog as a Service Dog in training within approved training contexts.

Reinstatement of vest privileges does not independently authorize entry into non-pet friendly Public Access environments unless separately approved under Section 6.1.

5.6 Transition to Graduated Service Dog Identification

Transition from Service Dog-in-training identification to graduated working Service Dog identification occurs only following successful completion of the program Graduation requirements outlined in Section 9, Certification and Graduation Standards.

Authorization to use graduated working Service Dog identification is granted by the Training Director or designated program facilitator and reflects demonstrated readiness for independent public-access participation consistent with program standards. Graduated working Service Dog identification indicates that the dog has satisfied program-defined training, behavioural, task-performance, and public-access expectations required for Service Dog Graduation and may be represented as a working Service Dog within the scope of its trained role.

Authorization to use graduated working Service Dog identification may be modified, restricted, suspended, or withdrawn where program standards relating to behaviour, welfare, handling, reliability, public conduct, or task performance are no longer maintained.

Continued use of graduated working Service Dog identification remains subject to on-going compliance with all applicable program standards, welfare expectations, handling requirements, and conduct policies outlined within this manual.

6.1 Eligibility for Public Access Training

Public Access training involves structured exposure to non-pet-friendly environments for the purpose of developing behaviour consistent with safe and reliable Service Dog participation in community settings.

Eligibility for participation in Public Access training is determined by the Training Director or designated program facilitator based on demonstrated readiness of both the dog and Handler team.

Prior to entering Public Access training environments, the **dog** must demonstrate:

- behavioural stability in controlled training environments;
- absence of aggressive behaviour toward people or animals;
- absence of persistent reactivity to environmental movement, sound, or proximity;
- the ability to remain under effective Handler control using permitted equipment;
- sustained Handler engagement during movement and positioning tasks;
- the ability to settle quietly beside the Handler when stationary;
- appropriate elimination habits prior to entering training locations; and
- the ability to recover appropriately from novel stimuli.

Prior to entering Public Access training environments, the **Handler** must demonstrate:

- understanding of Service Dog handling expectations;
- consistent use of permitted working equipment;
- the ability to recognize early indicators of stress, distraction, or reduced readiness; and
- the ability to remove the dog promptly if behaviour falls below program expectations.

Authorization for Public Access training is granted at the discretion of the Training Director or designated program facilitator and may be modified or withdrawn if readiness changes.

Participation in Public Access training does not indicate Graduation readiness or unrestricted Public Access eligibility and does not independently authorize entry into all non-pet friendly environments. Teams may be required to return to preparatory training environments if Public Access readiness is not consistently maintained.

Public Access training environments must be selected in accordance with the dog's demonstrated stage of training Progression and readiness for structured exposure.

6.2 Public Access Behaviour Expectations

While participating in Public Access training, Service Dogs in training must demonstrate behaviour consistent with safe, neutral, and unobtrusive presence in Public Environments.

Expected behaviour includes:

- remaining under effective Handler control at all times;
- maintaining a stable working position appropriate to the environment;
- remaining within approximately one metre of the Handler unless task performance requires distance;
- moving calmly through entrances, aisles, elevators, and shared pathways;
- ignoring food, merchandise, and environmental distractions;
- remaining neutral toward members of the public and other animals;
- settling quietly beside the Handler when stationary;
- responding reliably to Handler direction;
- maintaining appropriate toileting reliability during training outings; and
- refraining from soliciting interaction with the public.

Service Dogs in training must not interfere with business operations, public movement, or access to shared spaces. Teams must demonstrate behaviour that supports safe participation in shared Public Environments without drawing unnecessary attention to the themselves.

Behavioural expectations increase progressively as training advances toward Graduation readiness and are evaluated relative to the dog's current stage of training as determined by the Training Director or designated program facilitator.

6.3 Prohibited Public Behaviour

Service Dogs in training must not display behaviour that interferes with safety, Public Access participation, or appropriate representation of a Service Dog Team.

Prohibited behaviour includes:

- any aggressive behaviour toward people or animals;
- lunging toward people, animals, or objects;

- persistent pulling on leash that interferes with Handler control;
- barking, whining, or vocalizing unrelated to trained task performance;
- soliciting attention from members of the public;
- jumping on individuals, counters, seating, or surfaces;
- sniffing merchandise, food displays, or members of the public;
- blocking aisles, entrances, exits, or walkways;
- repeated startle responses without appropriate recovery;
- signs of fear, avoidance, or environmental shutdown;
- elimination in Public Access environments except in emergencies; and
- inability to remain settled when the Handler is stationary.

Dogs displaying prohibited behaviour are not considered ready for continued Public Access training at that stage of development. Service Dog identification must not be used while prohibited behaviour is occurring in public training environments.

The Training Director or designated program facilitator may suspend Public Access training participation until readiness is re-established.

Repeated occurrence of prohibited behaviour may require temporary return to preparatory training environments or modification of training exposure levels until behavioural stability improves.

6.4 Recovery Expectations

Service Dogs in training must demonstrate the ability to recover appropriately from environmental distractions or unexpected stimuli encountered during Public Access training.

Appropriate recovery includes:

- returning attention to the Handler within a reasonable timeframe;
- resuming working position following disruption;
- maintaining responsiveness to handling cues;
- demonstrating emotional regulation after exposure to novel environments;
- recovering without escalation into avoidance, vocalization, or reactivity; and

- maintaining the ability to continue working following minor environmental disturbance.

Dogs that are unable to demonstrate appropriate recovery are not considered ready for continued participation in Public Access training environments at their current stage of development.

The Training Director or designated program facilitator may require a temporary modification of training exposure levels or return to preparatory training environments prior to resuming Public Access training participation.

Public Access training expectations are adjusted progressively as recovery reliability improves across environments of increasing complexity. Recovery expectations apply to both planned training exposures and unexpected environmental events encountered during Public Access participation.

6.5 Handler Responsibilities During Public Access Work

Handlers participating in Public Access training are responsible for maintaining safe, accurate, and appropriate representation of their Service Dog in training at all times.

Handler responsibilities include:

- representing the dog according to its current stage of training;
- using only permitted working equipment during Service Dog training activities;
- ensuring the dog is behaviourally prepared prior to entering Public Access training environments;
- maintaining effective control of the dog at all times;
- monitoring the dog continuously for signs of stress, distraction, or reduced readiness;
- removing the dog promptly if behaviour falls below program expectations;
- selecting training environments appropriate to the dog's current level of development;
- ensuring the dog does not interfere with Public Access, business operations, or shared spaces; and
- supporting structured skill development between public training exposures.

Handlers must prioritize safety, welfare, and working reliability during all Public Access training activities.

Public Access participation must reflect the dog's demonstrated readiness and must not be used as a substitute for foundational training or behavioural stability that has not yet been established in preparatory training environments.

Handlers are expected to make conservative training decisions in Public Environments and prioritize long-term training success over immediate exposure goals.

The Training Director or designated program facilitator retains authority to modify, limit, suspend, or reinstate Public Access training participation based on observed readiness, Handler consistency, welfare considerations, and safety concerns.

6.6 Environmental Progression Expectations

Public Access training progresses through structured exposure to environments of increasing complexity as the dog demonstrates readiness for expanded participation in Service Dog training activities.

Teams begin Public Access training in lower-distraction environments and advance gradually to busier or less predictable settings as behavioural stability, recovery ability, Handler coordination, and working reliability improve.

Environmental Progression may include exposure to:

- quiet indoor training locations;
- low-traffic retail environments;
- moderately busy public spaces;
- environments with increased movement, sound, or proximity to people;
- transportation settings or complex shared-access locations; and
- high-distraction Public Environments requiring sustained working reliability.

Advancement between environments is determined by the Training Director or designated program facilitator based on the dog's demonstrated behavioural stability, recovery ability, Handler engagement, environmental neutrality, and ability to maintain appropriate working conduct across settings. Teams must not progress to more complex environments until readiness has been demonstrated at the current level of exposure.

Environmental exposure levels may be modified, limited, or temporarily reduced if behavioural stability, recovery reliability, Handler consistency, or welfare indicators change during training Progression. Environmental Progression decisions are made to support long-term training success and must prioritize safety, welfare, and working reliability over exposure intensity.

Public Access training environments must be selected conservatively and in alignment with the dog's current stage of training as determined by the Training Director or designated program facilitator.

Handlers are expected to make Progression decisions that reflect demonstrated readiness rather than training ambition and must not use higher-distraction environments as a substitute for foundational skill development.

Temporary return to lower-complexity environments is considered a normal and appropriate part of training Progression and does not indicate regression in overall program participation status.

6.7 Equipment Requirements During Public Access Training.

Service Dogs in training participating in Public Access training within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program must be handled using equipment permitted under Section 4 — Equipment Policies.

During Public Access participation:

- Equipment must support safe and humane Handler control;
- Service Dog identification must accurately reflect the dog's current authorized training status;
- Handling practices must remain consistent with program standards for responsible public representation; and
- Equipment use must remain appropriate to the dog's demonstrated training level, welfare needs, and Public Access readiness.

Equipment identified under Section 4.3 — Prohibited Equipment in Service Training may not be used while a dog is identified or represented as participating in Public Access training. Use of unauthorized or non-compliant equipment during Public Access participation may result in temporary modification, restriction, Suspension, or reassessment of Public Access training privileges until compliance with program standards is restored.

If a dog requires equipment inconsistent with Public Access readiness expectations, the Training Director or designated program facilitator may temporarily restrict participation in Public Access environments and recommend return to preparatory or controlled training settings until readiness is re-established.

The Training Director or designated program facilitator may require equipment adjustments at any stage of Public Access training to support safety, humane handling, canine welfare, or responsible public participation.

6.8 Temporary Suspension of Public Access Training Participation

Participation in Public Access training environments may be temporarily limited or suspended if the Training Director or designated program facilitator determines that additional preparatory training is required to support behavioural stability, Handler coordination, working reliability, or welfare protection.

Temporary Suspension of Public Access training participation may occur when a dog demonstrates:

- reduced behavioural stability in Public Environments;
- difficulty maintaining Handler engagement;
- persistent distraction affecting working reliability;
- delayed or inconsistent recovery from environmental stimuli;
- signs of stress, avoidance behaviour, or environmental shutdown;
- regression in foundational handling skills required for safe public participation; or
- reliance on equipment not permitted for Service Dog training participation.

Public Access training participation may also be temporarily limited if Handler readiness, environment selection, or training Progression decisions are inconsistent with program expectations for safe and appropriate public exposure. Temporary Suspension of Public Access training participation does not indicate Removal from the Service Dog training program and does not necessarily affect vesting status unless separately determined under Section 5, Vesting Policy.

During periods of temporary Suspension, teams may continue structured training in preparatory environments until readiness for Public Access participation is reestablished.

Resumption of Public Access training participation occurs only after review and approval by the Training Director or designated program facilitator based on demonstrated readiness across behavioural stability, recovery reliability, Handler consistency, and appropriate equipment use.

Temporary return to lower-complexity environments is considered a normal component of structured training Progression and supports long-term Service Dog development.

Public Access participation decisions are made conservatively and must prioritize safety, welfare, and working reliability over exposure intensity or training pace.

6.9 Functional Task Reliability in Public Environments

Service Dogs in training must demonstrate the ability to perform trained or developing service tasks in Public Environments in a manner that maintains safety, Handler control, and appropriate public neutrality.

Task performance in Public Environments must:

- occur without interfering with safe navigation of shared public spaces;
- remain responsive to Handler direction before, during, and after task execution;
- avoid creating disruption to surrounding individuals or business operations;
- maintain appropriate working positioning when tasks are completed; and
- reflect the dog's current stage of training readiness as determined by the Training Director or designated program facilitator.

Tasks that require temporary changes in positioning or movement away from the Handler must be performed in a controlled and predictable manner appropriate to the environment. Service tasks must not be practiced in environments that exceed the dog's demonstrated level of behavioural stability, recovery reliability, or environmental readiness.

Public task practice may be temporarily limited or modified if task performance interferes with working neutrality, Handler control, or safe participation in shared Public Environments.

Advancement of task performance expectations in public settings occurs progressively as environmental stability and training reliability improve.

6.10 Emergency Public Access Removal Expectations

Handlers participating in the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program are expected to immediately remove their dog from a Public Environment when the dog's behaviour, emotional state, physical condition, or level of control indicates that continued participation may be unsafe, inappropriate, or inconsistent with Public Access standards.

Emergency Removal from a public setting is considered a responsible handling decision and may be necessary to protect:

- Public safety;
- Canine welfare;
- The Handler;

- Other animals;
- The working relationship between Handler and dog; and
- The integrity of Service Dog Public Access expectations.

Circumstances requiring immediate Public Access Removal may include, but are not limited to:

- Escalating stress, fear, or environmental overwhelm;
- Loss of behavioural neutrality or inability to recover appropriately;
- Vocalization, lunging, reactivity, or aggressive behaviour;
- Inability to maintain reasonable Handler control;
- Medical distress, illness, injury, overheating, or fatigue;
- Repeated tasking conflict or inability to safely function in the environment;
- Elimination accidents inconsistent with Public Access standards;
- Significant distraction, shutdown behaviour, or avoidance responses; or
- Any situation in which continued public participation may compromise safety, welfare, or responsible public conduct expectations.

Handlers are expected to prioritize humane decision-making and canine welfare over continued Public Access participation. Temporary Removal from an environment for decompression, recovery, reassessment, or transportation home is considered an appropriate and responsible component of Service Dog handling.

Repeated incidents involving failure to appropriately remove a dog from unsuitable Public Access situations may result in reassessment, temporary restriction of Public Access participation, remediation requirements, or additional review by the Training Director.

6.11 Handling, Care, and Stability Standards

Service dogs enrolled in the program must demonstrate safe, stable, and cooperative behaviour during routine handling, husbandry, grooming, and veterinary care procedures. Dogs must remain manageable and able to tolerate reasonable physical handling necessary for health, hygiene, public access readiness, and ongoing welfare maintenance.

The following standards apply to all dogs participating in the program:

- The dog must permit routine full-body handling without displaying unsafe, aggressive, or extreme avoidance behaviours.

- The dog must tolerate routine grooming and hygiene procedures, including bathing, brushing, drying, ear cleaning, and basic coat maintenance appropriate to the breed or coat type.
- The dog must safely tolerate nail trimming, paw handling, and physical restraint reasonably required for grooming or veterinary care.
- The dog must permit routine veterinary examination procedures, including physical assessment, handling by veterinary staff, and standard preventative care procedures.
- The dog must demonstrate appropriate recovery from mild stress, discomfort, environmental pressure, or unexpected handling during care procedures.
- The dog must maintain behavioural stability and remain safely manageable during public access activities while clean, physically maintained, and medically fit for work.

Dogs demonstrating significant distress, unsafe handling responses, persistent avoidance, or inability to safely participate in required care procedures may be paused, reassessed, or removed from active training or public access participation until concerns have been appropriately addressed.

7.0 Training Progression Standards

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. provides multiple training delivery pathways to support diverse Handler needs, including board-and-train programs with structured follow-up instruction, in-person private training, and remote private coaching.

Advancement through training stages is competency-based rather than delivery-format-based. However, stages involving advanced Public Access reliability, task training reliability, team integration, public representation readiness, and Graduation readiness assessment require direct in-person Evaluation to ensure Handler safety, task accuracy, and appropriate Public Access readiness.

Remote instruction may support early-stage skill development but cannot replace required in-person competency verification for advanced stage Progression or Graduation readiness determination.

Where neurological, developmental, or psychiatric disability factors influence environmental tolerance or training readiness, Progression timelines may be adjusted using consultation-informed strategies intended to support safe and effective team development while maintaining canine welfare standards and program integrity

Progression between training stages is not automatic and requires documented Training Director or designated program facilitator approval based on behavioural stability, task reliability development, environmental readiness, Handler coordination, and welfare suitability.

All stage advancement decisions reflect demonstrated team readiness rather than instructional intensity, training duration, or program format.

Prior to entering formal service training Progression within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program, dogs must demonstrate sufficient developmental, behavioural, environmental, and welfare stability to safely and effectively participate in advancing Service Dog training expectations.

Readiness for service training Progression is determined through individualized assessment by the Training Director or designated program facilitator and may include Evaluation of:

- Behavioural stability;
- Foundational obedience reliability;
- Environmental neutrality and recovery ability;
- Handler engagement and responsiveness;
- Structural and physical suitability;
- Stress tolerance and welfare stability;

- Ability to safely participate in public training environments; and
- Overall developmental readiness for increased training expectations.

Progression decisions are made on an individual basis with consideration for canine welfare, public safety, training consistency, and long-term service work suitability. Advancement within the training program does not automatically grant Certification eligibility, unrestricted Public Access participation, or unrestricted use of Service Dog identification.

7.0.1 Behavioural Stability

The dog must demonstrate:

- Emotional neutrality in novel environments;
- Appropriate recovery from environmental stressors;
- Absence of persistent reactivity toward people, dogs, or surroundings; and
- The ability to remain composed during handling and positioning.

Dogs showing unresolved behavioural instability may remain in preparatory stages until stability improves to a level consistent with safe participation in service training environments.

7.0.2 Foundational Obedience Reliability

Prior to transition, the dog must reliably perform foundational handling skills, including:

- Loose-leash walking;
- Stationary positions (sit, down, stand as appropriate);
- Recall responsiveness;
- Duration and disengagement from distractions; and
- Handler-focused engagement in public settings.

These skills must function without reliance on prohibited equipment and must support predictable handling in structured training environments.

7.0.3 Environmental Readiness

The dog must demonstrate the ability to work safely and predictably in environments such as:

- Indoor public-access spaces;

- Outdoor pedestrian environments;
- Areas with moderate noise and movement; and
- Structured training locations with controlled distractions.

Environmental readiness does not require perfection but must support continued skill development without undue stress or behavioural regression.

7.0.4 Structural Suitability

Dogs entering Service Training must demonstrate physical suitability for their intended working role.

Evaluation may include:

- Movement efficiency;
- Physical maturity;
- Task compatibility; and/or
- Long-term workload sustainability.

Additional screening may be required for dogs being considered for mobility-support tasks or other physically demanding working roles.

7.0.5 Handler Readiness

The transition to Service Training also requires Handler readiness.

Handlers must demonstrate:

- Consistent equipment use within program standards;
- understanding of handling expectations;
- ability to support training structure between sessions; and
- commitment to maintaining Service Dog conduct expectations in Public Environments.

Service Dog training is considered a team Progression, and both dog and Handler must be prepared before transition occurs.

7.0.6 Training Director or designated program facilitator Approval

Final transition from Preparatory Training to Service Training occurs only with approval from the Training Director or designated program facilitator. Approval indicates the team is ready to begin structured task development and higher-level Public Access preparation under Service Dog training standards.

7.0.7 Welfare Stability Prior to Transition

Prior to entering formal service training status, the dog must demonstrate the ability to participate in training activities without signs of sustained stress, avoidance behaviour, or reduced working engagement.

Dogs must show appropriate recovery following training exposure, maintain willingness to work across environments, and demonstrate behavioural stability consistent with long-term participation in service work expectations.

Transition may be delayed if additional conditioning, environmental exposure, or confidence development is required to support welfare and training success.

7.1 Stage 1 - Entry Confirmation

This stage confirms eligibility for participation in the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. training pathway. Entry confirmation includes Handler intake review, documentation review where applicable, behaviour screening of the dog, temperament suitability review, environmental stability screening, welfare and lifestyle compatibility assessment, and confirmation of Handler participation readiness.

Where applicable, veterinary history and developmental suitability of the dog are reviewed to ensure appropriate timing for structured training preparation.

Initial training pathway recommendations may also be identified during this stage based on team needs and program delivery options.

Progression beyond Stage 1 indicates suitability to begin structured Service Dog training preparation but does not indicate Public Access readiness, task reliability, or Certification eligibility.

7.2 Stage 2 – Foundation Public Access Skills

During this stage, dogs and Handlers develop foundational Public Access behaviours required for safe participation in controlled training environments. Training focuses on Handler engagement, leash handling mechanics, positional stability, neutral response to people and dogs, recovery from distraction, foundational duration behaviours, reinforcement structure development, and introductory environmental exposure. Instruction also includes development of Handler mechanical skills such as reinforcement timing, environmental awareness, and communication

clarity. Introductory targeting, shaping participation, and learning readiness skills may be introduced to support future task training Progression.

Training may occur in structured indoor environments, instructor-guided public settings, or other controlled exposure locations appropriate to the team's stage of development.

This stage may be completed through remote coaching, in-person instruction, or board and train participation. Progression beyond Stage 2 indicates readiness to begin structured Public Access reliability development but does not indicate full Public Access readiness. Advancement is based on demonstrated consistency rather than exposure volume.

7.3 Stage 3 – Task Training Development and Imprinting

This stage introduces development and early imprinting of service-specific task behaviours aligned with the Handler's disability-related functional needs.

Task selection focuses on behaviours that directly support functional mitigation and may include alert, response, interruption, retrieval, or mobility support tasks as appropriate for the team.

A minimum of three disability-mitigating tasks are developed across the training pathway in alignment with program Graduation requirements. Training includes behaviour shaping and capture strategies, cue development and clarity, reinforcement structure for task acquisition, progressive criteria building, and early generalization of emerging task behaviours within controlled training environments and simulated functional contexts.

Instruction also supports Handler skill development in cue consistency, reinforcement timing, criteria Progression, and task deployment awareness.

Tasks trained during this stage are considered in development and are not yet expected to demonstrate functional reliability or consistent performance in Public Environments.

Advancement beyond Stage 3 requires demonstration of emerging task understanding but not task independence or reliability.

7.4 Stage 4 – Environmental Expansion

This stage introduces progressively complex environments to strengthen behavioural stability and adaptability while maintaining emerging task behaviours.

Training includes structured exposure to retail spaces, public buildings, transportation areas, structured outdoor environments, and moderate-distraction zones appropriate to the team's developmental level. Dogs are expected to demonstrate recovery from environmental stressors and novelty, sustained Handler engagement, maintenance of learned positional behaviours, and appropriate neutrality to people, animals, and movement within expanding environments.

Emerging task behaviours should remain available under increasing environmental complexity but are not yet expected to demonstrate full reliability.

Instruction during this stage also supports Handler skill development in environmental assessment, exposure pacing, stress-signal recognition, and engagement maintenance across changing contexts.

Advancement beyond Stage 4 requires demonstrated environmental stability and adaptability across multiple structured settings and indicates readiness to begin Public Access reliability development rather than full Public Access readiness

7.5 Stage Five: Advanced Public Access Reliability

This stage evaluates consistent behavioural stability across unpredictable, high-distraction, and extended-duration Public Environments.

Teams must demonstrate sustained neutrality in crowded settings, extended-duration positioning, controlled navigation through dynamic environments, appropriate recovery from unexpected stimuli, and coordinated Handler awareness, positioning decisions, and response timing. Dogs are expected to maintain previously established positional behaviours and demonstrate availability of emerging task behaviours within public settings while working under increasing environmental complexity and duration demands.

Reliability at this stage reflects behavioural persistence across transitions, novelty, and cumulative exposure rather than isolated performance instances.

This stage must be completed through in-person instruction or board and train participation with structured follow-up and Handler sessions to allow direct observation of team functioning in real-world environments.

Advancement beyond Stage 5 indicates readiness for integrated Public Access performance expectations and final task reliability development but does not yet indicate Graduation readiness.

7.6 Stage Six: Task Training Reliability

This stage establishes functional reliability of trained service tasks across environments relevant to the Handler's needs.

Evaluation includes task cue clarity, response latency, consistency across environments and contexts, independence where appropriate to the task type, Handler reinforcement timing, and demonstrated functional usefulness of trained behaviours in mitigating disability-related needs.

Tasks must remain available under distraction, across location changes, and during variations in Handler presentation where applicable. Dogs are expected to demonstrate persistence in task performance and appropriate re-engagement following interruption or environmental distraction.

Task reliability must be demonstrated during supervised in-person sessions to allow direct Evaluation of functional performance prior to advancement. Completion of Stage 6 indicates that trained tasks meet program reliability expectations and supports Progression to final integrated team functioning and Graduation readiness assessment.

7.7 Stage Seven: Team Integration

This stage evaluates the Handler's ability to integrate reliable task performance into daily routines while maintaining behavioural stability, environmental awareness, and On-going welfare responsibility for the dog.

Assessment focuses on appropriate task deployment timing, task selection judgment, Handler decision-making in Public Environments, maintenance of engagement between tasks, and smooth transitions between active task performance and neutral working states. Evaluation also includes recognition and response to canine stress indicators, reinforcement planning and fading strategies, workload pacing, and consistency of team functioning across routine and non-routine environments.

Teams are expected to demonstrate independent operational functioning with reduced instructor support while maintaining reliability and stability across changing contexts.

This stage must be demonstrated during in-person sessions or board-and-train follow-up instruction to allow direct observation of integrated team performance prior to advancement toward Graduation readiness assessment.

7.7.1 Workload Management and Welfare Integration

During Stage 7, Handlers must demonstrate the ability to manage appropriate working expectations for the Service Dog, including recognition of fatigue indicators, environmental stress load, and the need for structured rest periods.

Service Dogs are not expected to work continuously throughout the day. Handlers must demonstrate the ability to recognize behavioural indicators of fatigue or stress, provide regular rest opportunities during outings, adjust expectations based on environment and duration of activity, balance working time with off-duty recovery periods, and maintain appropriate daily workload levels for the individual dog.

The Training Director or designated program facilitator may recommend workload adjustments where environmental intensity, task frequency, travel demands, or Handler reliance levels exceed appropriate working thresholds. CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. does not support expectations that Service Dogs remain in continuous working status throughout the day without rest, decompression time, or off-duty periods appropriate to the individual dog.

7.8 Stage Eight: Integrated Working Team Readiness

This stage evaluates readiness for the Handler-dog team to function as a stable, reliable, and integrated working partnership within Public Environments.

Assessment considerations may include:

- Professional public conduct;
- Handler understanding and appropriate application of Public Access expectations;
- Safe navigation of complex or unfamiliar environments;
- Consistency of behavioural regulation and recovery;
- Stability across varying public settings;
- Appropriate use of proportionate advocacy skills when interacting with the public;
- Maintenance of trained positional behaviours;
- Behavioural neutrality in real-world working contexts;
- Availability and reliability of trained tasks during public activity; and
- Handler awareness of workload management and canine welfare considerations.

Teams are expected to demonstrate consistent working function, environmental stability, safe decision-making, and appropriate welfare stewardship during public participation.

Final readiness requires live Evaluation across multiple environments to confirm consistent team integration and operational reliability prior to Graduation readiness consideration.

7.9 Stage Nine: Graduation Readiness Assessment

This stage serves as the final developmental review prior to entry into formal Graduation and Certification Evaluation processes within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program. Graduation readiness assessment considers whether the Handler-dog team demonstrates sufficient consistency, integration, stability, and operational readiness to safely participate in formal Evaluation procedures.

Considerations may include:

- Public Access reliability;
- Functional task availability;
- Handler operational skill and situational judgment;
- Environmental adaptability;
- Recovery and stress-regulation ability;
- Welfare stewardship and workload awareness;
- Safe public interaction practices; and
- Consistency of working function across multiple environments.

Assessment is conducted in person unless exceptional accommodation approval is granted by the Training Director.

Successful completion of this stage indicates that the team is considered developmentally prepared to enter formal Graduation Evaluation procedures outlined in Section 9 — Certification and Graduation Standards. Completion of Stage 9 does not itself constitute Certification, Graduation, or permanent working approval.

7.10 Stage Progression Policy Statement

The CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. training pathway follows a structured, stage-based Progression framework designed to support the safe and reliable development of Service Dog Teams across increasing levels of environmental complexity, task performance expectations, and working responsibility.

Advancement between training stages is determined by the Training Director or designated program facilitator based on demonstrated readiness rather than elapsed time in training.

Progression reflects the team's ability to maintain safe participation in structured Service Dog training environments consistent with program standards. Stage advancement decisions are based on demonstrated readiness across multiple areas, including behavioural stability, Handler coordination competencies, environmental reliability across training sessions, Progression of task development and performance, recovery ability following environmental disruption, appropriate use of permitted working equipment, and welfare indicators supporting continued participation in Service Dog training activities.

Final determination of stage advancement remains at the discretion of the Training Director or designated program facilitator and reflects the team's readiness for increased responsibility within Public Access training, task performance expectations, and Service Dog representation standards.

7.11 Non-Linear Progression Expectations

Training stage Progression within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog program is not strictly linear. Advancement through stages reflects demonstrated readiness rather than continuous forward movement. Teams may pause Progression or temporarily return to earlier stages to strengthen foundational skills, improve environmental confidence, support task development, or address changes in behavioural stability, recovery reliability, Handler consistency, or welfare indicators. Temporary return to earlier training stages does not indicate regression in overall program participation status and is considered a normal and expected component of structured Service Dog development.

Adjustments to training stage placement are determined by the Training Director or designated program facilitator based on observed readiness across environments, task performance expectations, and team-level working reliability. Stage Progression decisions are made conservatively and prioritize long-term training success, safety, welfare, and appropriate public representation over advancement speed

7.12 Stage Delivery Eligibility Table

Stage	Remote Eligible	In-Person Required	Board & Train Eligible
Stage 1	Yes	Optional	Yes
Stage 2	Yes	Optional	Yes
Stage 3	Yes (Recommended in-person)	Optional	Yes
Stage 4	Yes (Recommended in-person)	Optional	Yes
Stage 5	No	Required	Yes
Stage 6	No	Required	Yes

Stage 7	No	Required	Yes
Stage 8	No	Required	Yes
Stage 9	No	Required	Yes

Stage delivery eligibility identifies which portions of the training pathway may be completed through remote coaching, in-person instruction, or board-and-train participation based on safety requirements, environmental complexity, and Evaluation needs associated with each stage. Delivery pathway eligibility is determined by the Training Director or designated program facilitator based on team readiness, task type, and the need for direct observation in real-world environments.

Participation through different delivery formats does not alter stage competency requirements or advancement criteria within the program. Teams may transition between delivery pathways as training needs change throughout the Progression framework.

Service Dogs within the program are trained and handled in accordance with welfare-informed workload expectations that include structured rest periods, environmental recovery opportunities, and limits on sustained working duration consistent with Section 7.7.1 Workload Management and Welfare Integration.

7.13 Minimum Training Exposure Expectations

The CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. training pathway follows a competency-based Progression model rather than a fixed-hour training structure. However, cumulative training exposure across the full development pathway typically meets or exceeds commonly referenced minimum training benchmarks for Service Dog preparation, including approximately 240 hours of structured training across foundational handling skills, Public Access development, environmental exposure, and disability-mitigating task training prior to Graduation readiness assessment.

Training hours are not used as the sole criterion for advancement or Graduation. Completion decisions remain based on demonstrated behavioural reliability, task performance consistency, Handler integration skills, and welfare readiness consistent with program standards.

8.1 Purpose of Task Training Standards

Task training standards define the criteria used to determine whether a trained behaviour qualifies as a disability-mitigating service task within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program.

These standards ensure that trained tasks are functional, reliable, observable, and measurable, and directly related to mitigating the Handler's disability-related functional limitations across relevant environments. Task training standards support consistent Evaluation practices and form part of the Graduation requirements for all Service Dog Teams.

Teams are required to demonstrate multiple disability-mitigating tasks that meet program reliability expectations prior to Graduation readiness assessment.

8.2 Definition of a Disability-Mitigating Task

A disability-mitigating task is a trained behaviour that a Service Dog performs to reduce the impact of a Handler's disability on daily functioning. Tasks must be intentionally trained and directly linked to a functional support need identified by the Handler.

Task selection is individualized and based on functional limitations rather than diagnosis, and tasks are not assigned from a standardized task list within the program.

A qualifying task must:

- be intentionally trained rather than naturally occurring behaviour;
- mitigate a functional limitation related to the Handler's disability;
- be performed on cue or automatically when needed, as appropriate to the task type;
- be observable and measurable;
- be repeatable with functional consistency; and
- remain available across relevant environments and contexts.

Behaviours that provide general companionship, emotional presence, or comfort without a trained mitigation function do not qualify as disability-mitigating service tasks within the program framework

8.3 Behaviours That Do Not Qualify as Tasks

The following do not qualify as disability-mitigating trained tasks within the program:

- companionship or presence alone;
- general emotional comfort without a trained behavioural response;
- affection-seeking behaviour;
- untrained calming responses;
- passive proximity without a defined trained function;
- naturally occurring alert behaviours that have not been intentionally trained for reliability;
- behaviours that occur inconsistently or cannot be performed reliably when needed; or
- behaviours that are not directly connected to a disability-related functional support need

These behaviours may support Handler well-being but are not considered trained Service Dog tasks for program Progression or Graduation purposes.

8.4 Minimum Task Training Expectations

Service Dog Teams within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program are expected to demonstrate reliable performance of a minimum of three disability-mitigating tasks appropriate to the Handler's identified functional needs.

Tasks must be:

- Functional;
- Observable;
- Measurable;
- Appropriate to the Handler's disability-related needs; and
- Demonstrated with consistency across environments relevant to the Handler's daily activities and working expectations.

Tasks may be performed on cue or independently where appropriate to the specific task type and must meet established program reliability expectations prior to entry into formal Graduation Evaluation procedures.

8.5 Task Reliability Expectations

Trained tasks must demonstrate functional reliability before being considered complete. Reliability includes consistent response to cue or context, timely performance of the trained

behaviour, ability to perform without dependence on food lures, stability across multiple environments, appropriate performance in the presence of common distractions, and sustained accuracy over time.

Tasks must remain available during relevant functional situations and demonstrate appropriate persistence or re-engagement following interruption when applicable. Independence expectations vary by task type and may include either Handler-cued or context-responsive performance.

Reliability expectations are evaluated within the context of the Handler's working environments, access needs, and demonstrated consistency of Handler cue delivery and task deployment.

8.5.1 Task Prompt Dependency Standards

Service Dogs progressing toward Graduation within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program must demonstrate functional task reliability that is not dependent upon continual Handler prompting, excessive cueing, or repetitive redirection during routine working conditions.

Tasks may initially be taught using structured prompts, guidance, environmental setups, verbal support, physical assistance, visual markers, or reinforcement strategies during skill acquisition and proofing stages. However, as training progresses, dogs must demonstrate increasing independence, consistency, and reliability in task execution appropriate to the dog's trained working role and the Handler's disability-related needs.

Graduation-level task performance requires the dog to reliably recognize trained task cues, contextual indicators, or established working patterns without requiring continual prompting that interferes with functional Service Dog use, Handler independence, public-access stability, or task effectiveness. Occasional clarification cues, environmental support, or reasonable handling assistance may remain appropriate depending upon the complexity of the task, the Handler's disability-related limitations, environmental conditions, or the individualized working relationship of the team.

Evaluation of acceptable support levels remains subject to the professional judgment of the Training Director or designated program facilitator.

Dogs demonstrating significant task prompt dependency, inconsistent task recognition, repeated cue reliance, or inability to perform trained tasks with functional reliability in real-world environments may require additional conditioning, proofing, task generalization, or advancement delay prior to Graduation approval.

8.6 Environmental Generalization Requirements

Tasks must be demonstrated across environments appropriate to the Handler's lifestyle and access needs. These environments may include the home environment, quiet community settings, moderately distracting Public Environments, and real-world functional contexts where tasks are expected to occur.

Environmental generalization ensures trained behaviours remain available outside of structured training sessions and across conditions relevant to the Handler's daily routines, including variations in location, distraction level, activity context, and duration between task use. Demonstration environments must reflect situations in which the task provides functional disability mitigation rather than exposure to arbitrary locations.

Environmental generalization is evaluated through direct observation or verified performance prior to task completion approval within the program pathway.

8.7 Documentation and Verification of Tasks

All disability-mitigating tasks must be documented prior to Graduation. Documentation may include instructor observations, structured Evaluation activities, Handler training logs, and task verification records maintained as part of the program documentation framework.

Task verification confirms that trained behaviours meet program expectations for functional reliability, environmental generalization, and consistency appropriate to the Handler's identified needs. Verification may include direct observation of task performance within relevant working environments prior to approval for Graduation readiness assessment.

Task verification is completed in alignment with program training stage expectations and Graduation standards and is recorded as part of the team's training record within the program documentation framework.

8.8 Trainer Approval of Task Completion

Final approval of task completion is determined by the Training Director or designated program facilitator based on observed reliability, environmental generalization, and functional relevance to the Handler's identified needs.

Trainer approval confirms that the task meets program standards for Graduation readiness and aligns with task reliability expectations, environmental transfer requirements, and functional mitigation criteria established within the program framework.

Tasks are not considered complete until approval has been documented as part of the team's training record.

8.9 Task Individualization Policy

Disability-mitigating tasks within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program are selected based on the Handler's identified functional support needs rather than diagnosis alone.

Task selection reflects the specific ways a Service Dog assists the Handler in daily life and is not limited to a standardized task list. Task development considers the Handler's lifestyle, environments of participation, access requirements, and patterns of functional difficulty. Selection also reflects the individual dog's temperament, learning strengths, behavioural stability, and long-term welfare suitability for the requested working role.

Multiple task strategies may provide effective disability mitigation, and task plans may be adjusted as team needs evolve throughout the training pathway.

All selected tasks must meet program standards for reliability, environmental generalization, and functional relevance prior to Graduation readiness assessment.

8.10 Post-Graduation Task Maintenance Expectations

Following Graduation, Service Dog Teams are expected to maintain the reliability, functional relevance, and environmental availability of all disability-mitigating tasks demonstrated during the training pathway.

On-going task performance depends on continued Handler reinforcement, appropriate deployment practices, and maintenance of behavioural stability within the working partnership.

Handlers are responsible for monitoring task effectiveness as environments, routines, or functional needs change over time. Where task reliability declines or functional needs shift, additional training or task adjustment may be recommended to support continued working effectiveness.

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. may recommend reassessment or refresher training where task performance no longer reflects program Graduation standards or where changes in team functioning affect safe and reliable Service Dog work.

Graduation confirms demonstrated readiness at the time of Evaluation and does not guarantee permanent task reliability without On-going maintenance by the Handler.

8.11 Task Suitability and Welfare Compatibility Review

All requested disability-mitigating tasks are evaluated for suitability in relation to the individual dog's physical structure, temperament, stress tolerance, and long-term working sustainability.

Task selection must support safe and appropriate participation in Service Dog work and remain consistent with program welfare standards. Tasks that introduce elevated physical strain, environmental stress exposure beyond the dog's demonstrated stability, or expectations inconsistent with safe working capacity may be modified, delayed, or declined by the Training Director or designated program facilitator.

Task suitability review ensures that disability-mitigating support remains functional for the Handler while preserving behavioural stability, welfare protection, and long-term working reliability of the Service Dog.

Where necessary, alternative mitigation strategies may be identified to support the Handler's needs within appropriate working expectations.

9.0 Certification and Graduation Standards Overview

Graduation from the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog Program confirms that a Service Dog Team has demonstrated reliable, safe, and appropriate performance across Public Access behaviour, environmental stability, disability-mitigating task execution, Handler integration, and emotional regulation consistent with program standards.

Graduation is determined using the CanineSidekicks Service Dog Service Dog Team Certification and Graduation Checklist (Appendix I), which documents demonstration of required Public Access behaviours, trained tasks, environmental stability, and Handler competency across multiple environments and training contexts.

Graduation reflects team readiness rather than dog-only competency. Graduation reflects demonstrated readiness at the time of Evaluation and does not represent permanent qualification independent of On-going performance, Handler participation, and welfare maintenance expectations.

All Graduation decisions are made at the discretion of the Training Director or designated program facilitator and must be supported by documented observation across multiple training environments and sessions. Meeting minimum criteria during a single assessment does not guarantee Graduation eligibility.

Teams that do not yet meet Graduation criteria may continue in advanced-stage training, receive targeted remediation plans, undergo reassessment at a later date, transition to an alternate working role where appropriate, or be released from the program when suitability concerns cannot be resolved. Graduation eligibility is determined according to the standards outlined below.

9.1 Equipment Independence at Graduation

Graduating Service Dogs must demonstrate the ability to perform safely and reliably without reliance on corrective behavioural training equipment unless such equipment is directly required for disability mitigation or task execution.

At Graduation, Service Dogs must maintain consistent loose-leash walking, respond reliably to Handler cues, demonstrate sustained engagement with the Handler, maintain behavioural neutrality in Public Environments, perform trained tasks without lure dependency, and function without reliance on corrective training tools.

Permitted working equipment at Graduation includes flat collars, service harnesses, mobility harnesses when medically appropriate, head halters used specifically for Handler disability mitigation, and task-specific assistive equipment.

The following equipment must not be required for behavioural control at Graduation:

- prong collars;

- electronic collars;
- slip leads used for correction;
- martingale collars used as corrective devices;
- treat lures required to initiate known behaviours; or
- physical prompting used to suppress environmental responses.

Intermittent reinforcement remains appropriate as part of normal working maintenance and does not conflict with Graduation readiness.

Where assistive equipment is required for Handler stability or accessibility, documentation may be requested to confirm functional necessity. Equipment independence expectations are evaluated in relation to safe, welfare-supported working performance consistent with program standards.

9.2 Public Access Behaviour Requirements.

Graduating Service Dogs must demonstrate behaviour consistent with safe and unobtrusive participation in Public Environments under typical Handler guidance appropriate to working conditions.

Public Access reliability must be demonstrated across multiple locations, contexts, and working conditions rather than a single Evaluation exposure.

Graduating Service Dogs must reliably:

- walk calmly beside the Handler through pedestrian traffic;
- ignore food on the ground and food carried by others;
- remain neutral toward unfamiliar people;
- remain neutral toward unfamiliar animals;
- settle quietly beside the Handler during stationary activities;
- maintain position during conversations and transactions;
- remain under Handler control in confined public spaces without reliance on corrective training equipment;
- navigate doors, aisles, and entryways safely;
- ignore routine environmental distractions;

- remain composed around mobility equipment and carts;
- demonstrate appropriate recovery following unexpected environmental stimuli;
- transition smoothly between movement, positioning, and stationary activities; and
- maintain appropriate behaviour during extended-duration outings.

Graduating Service Dogs must not:

- pull persistently on leash;
- solicit interaction from the public;
- vocalize unnecessarily;
- display reactive behaviour;
- jump on people;
- interfere with business operations;
- block walkways or exits; or
- display avoidance behaviours that limit a Handler's access participation.

Public Access behaviour must remain stable across time and environments rather than dependent on a single successful public outing.

9.3 Environmental Stability Requirements

Graduating Service Dogs must demonstrate behavioural resilience and functional stability across common public and community environments. Dogs must remain responsive to Handler cues and capable of task performance within the following environments:

Dogs must remain functional and responsive in:

- retail environments
- medical and clinical environments
- indoor public facilities (e.g. Offices, community buildings)
- outdoor pedestrian environments

- moderate traffic areas (vehicular and foot traffic)
- unfamiliar training and Public Access locations
- variable flooring surfaces (e.g. tile, concrete, grates, mats)
- elevator and doorway transitions
- environments containing moving objects (carts, automatic doors)
- environments with typical public noise levels (e.g. conversation, equipment, intermittent sudden sounds)

Dogs must demonstrate appropriate recovery promptly and independently following exposure to unexpected but non-threatening environmental stimuli (e.g. sudden noises, object movement, or environmental changes). Recovery is defined as a return to a functional working state without escalation, avoidance, or Handler-dependent regulation beyond standard cueing.

Graduating Service Dogs must not:

- attempt to flee or avoid the environment;
- exhibit sustained behavioural shutdown, or refusal to engage;
- display defensive, reactive, or aggressive responses;
- demonstrate prolonged stress indicators that interfere with working ability; or
- require Removal from environments to regain functional stability.

Environmental stability must be demonstrated through repeated exposure across varied settings and documented through structured training observations over time. Single-event Evaluation is not sufficient to meet this standard.

9.4 Task Performance Standards

Graduating Service Dogs must demonstrate reliable execution of trained tasks that directly mitigate the Handler's documented disability-related needs. Tasks must be purposeful, functionally relevant, observable, and repeatable.

Tasks must be reliably executed across environments and under typical Public Access conditions, including the presence of environmental distractions, movement, and noise consistent with real-world settings.

Tasks may be performed:

- on verbal cue;

- on physical cue;
- in response to contextual or environmental triggers; or
- in response to medical or behavioural indicators specific to the Handler.

Graduating teams must demonstrate a minimum of **three (3) disability-mitigating trained tasks**, unless an alternate task structure has been formally approved by the Training Director or designated program facilitator based on individualized Handler need.

Task execution must demonstrate:

- consistency across repetitions and environments;
- clear, identifiable task criteria (observable start and completion);
- functional usefulness in mitigating the Handler's disability;
- appropriate response timing relative to cue or trigger; and
- reliability without dependency on continuous prompting or escalation.

Dogs must be capable of initiating and completing known tasks without reliance on continuous high value reinforcement. Reinforcement may be used to maintain behaviour, but it must not be required for task initiation or completion during Evaluation.

Task performance must be compatible with Handler independence. This means tasks can be executed in a manner that supports the Handler's functional ability without requiring excessive physical, verbal, or cognitive effort beyond the Handler's capacity.

Reliability of task performance must be demonstrated through repeated successful execution and documented training observations over time. Single-event performance is not sufficient to meet this standard

9.5 Handler Integration Requirements

Graduation requires confirmation that the Handler can independently and appropriately manage the Service Dog as a functional working partner in public and private environments.

Handlers must demonstrate the ability to:

- maintain consistent handling and communication with the dog;
- deliver timely and effective cues;
- recognize and appropriately respond to canine stress, fatigue, and behavioural indicators;

- support and reinforce task performance appropriately without over-prompting or interference;
- maintain appropriate reinforcement strategies to sustain trained behaviours;
- uphold behavioural expectations in Public Environments;
- transport and manage the dog safely in vehicles and during transitions;
- utilize and comply with program-approved equipment policies;
- maintain training continuity, including on-going skill development and reinforcement;
- respond appropriately to behavioural regression or performance decline;
- advocate appropriately for access rights when required without escalation or misrepresentation; and
- accurately represent the dog's training level, role, and capabilities in public contexts.

Handlers must also demonstrate working knowledge of:

- Public Access expectations and applicable legal framework;
- Service Dog Team responsibilities in public and private settings;
- ethical representation standards;
- canine welfare monitoring and management; and
- program participation requirements and expectations.

Handler competency must be demonstrated through observed handling performance, scenario-based Evaluation, and documented training participation over time. Graduation reflects the readiness of the Service Dog Team as a functional, reliable working partnership. Single-event Evaluation is not sufficient to meet this standard.

9.6 Emotional Stability Requirements

Graduating Service Dogs must demonstrate emotional regulation appropriate for sustained service work across public and private environments. Emotional stability is defined as the dog's ability to remain behaviourally consistent, resilient, and functionally engaged despite environmental variability.

Dogs must consistently demonstrate:

- neutral, non-reactive responses to unfamiliar people;
- neutral, non-reactive response to unfamiliar dogs;
- appropriate startle response with timely and complete recovery;
- willingness to remain engaged with the Handler under distraction;
- ability to maintain working focus in novel or high-stimulation environments; and
- absence of defensive or escalating behavioural responses.

Dogs must not demonstrate:

- fear-based reactivity;
- Handler guarding or protective behaviour directed at others;
- environmental shutdown responses (e.g. refusal to move, disengagement, or Withdrawal);
- persistent avoidance behaviours that interfere with task performance;
- unpredictable or disproportionate behavioural escalation; or
- stress responses that compromise functional participation in work.

Emotional suitability for service work is evaluated as a longitudinal welfare indicator rather than a single-point assessment outcome. Stability must be demonstrated consistently over time and across contexts.

Dogs experiencing temporary regression may remain in advanced-stage training until stability is re-established and documented through repeated Evaluation.

Where concerns regarding long-term emotional suitability persist, the Training Director may recommend reassignment, role modification, or release from service work candidacy. These decisions are made in consideration of canine welfare, Handler safety, and public safety.

9.7 Graduation Evaluation and Procedures

Graduation eligibility is determined through a structured Evaluation process designed to confirm that both the Service Dog and Handler meet established program standards for safe, reliable Public Access participation and disability-mitigating task performance.

Graduation decisions are based on documented performance across time and multiple environments rather than performance during a single assessment session. Evaluation outcomes must reflect consistent, repeatable behaviour and task reliability under varying conditions.

All Evaluation findings are formally recorded in the team's training record prior to Graduation approval. Documentation must include observable performance, identified strengths, any areas requiring continued development, and confirmation that all Graduation criteria have been met.

All teams must complete all required Evaluation components outlined in Sections 9.7.1 through 9.7.9 to be approved for Graduation.

9.7.1 Evaluation Components

Graduation readiness is assessed through multiple standardized Evaluation methods conducted by the Training Director or designated program Evaluator when applicable. All Evaluators must apply program criteria consistently and document findings in accordance with established Evaluation protocols.

Evaluation methods include, but are not limited to:

- structured Public Access Evaluations;
- task performance and reliability assessments;
- environmental stability and generalization observations;
- Handler competency assessments;
- training record and documentation review;
- supervised field observations in real-world environments; and/or
- scenario-based assessments evaluating functional task application.

Minimum Evaluation Requirements

To be considered for Graduation, each team must meet the following minimum Evaluation thresholds:

- A minimum of 12 documented Evaluation sessions completed over a period of no less than 4 consecutive weeks
- Evaluation conducted across a minimum of 5 distinct environment categories, including:
 - Retail or commercial environments
 - Outdoor public spaces
 - Controlled indoor training environments

- Novel or unfamiliar locations
- Moderate to high-distraction settings

Inclusion of at least:

- 2 structured Public Access Evaluations
- 2 task performance verification sessions
- 2 Handler competency assessments
- 2 supervised real-world field observations

All required disability-mitigating tasks must be evaluated a minimum of 5 times each, across at least 2 different environments, with consistent performance outcomes

Environmental stability observations must demonstrate consistent behaviour across all evaluated contexts, with no pattern of regression exceeding established thresholds

Evaluation Integrity Standards

No single assessment independently determines Graduation eligibility. All Evaluation components must be considered collectively, and results must demonstrate:

- Behavioural consistency across environments and contexts
- Task reliability under varying conditions
- Functional applicability of trained tasks to the Handler's disability-related needs
- Stable emotional regulation as defined in Section 9.6

Performance must be repeatable, reliable, and generalizable, not situational, or dependent on a specific environment, Handler prompt pattern, or Evaluator presence.

Documentation Requirements

All Evaluation activities must be documented in the team's training record and must include:

- Date, location, and type of Evaluation conducted
- Description of observed performance
- Notation of successes, errors, or areas requiring improvement
- Environmental conditions and distraction level
- Evaluator name and verification

A minimum overall success rate of 90% across all logged Evaluation criteria is required to proceed to Graduation determination. Failure to meet minimum thresholds or documentation standards will result in deferral of Graduation eligibility until criteria are met and stability is demonstrated over time.

9.7.2 Public Access Evaluation

Graduation candidates must successfully complete a standardized Public Access Evaluation confirming readiness for safe, controlled, and unobtrusive participation in shared Public Environments.

The purpose of the Public Access Evaluation is to verify that the Service Dog can remain behavioural neutrality, Handler responsiveness, and environmental stability while navigating real-world settings with varying levels of distraction.

Evaluation Requirements

Each team must complete a minimum of:

- 2 structured Public Access Evaluation sessions conducted in different environments
- 2 supervised real-world public exposures in moderate to high-distraction settings

Evaluations must occur across at least 2 distinct environment types, such as:

- Retail or commercial environments
- Indoor public-access facilities
- Outdoor public spaces with pedestrian traffic

Performance Criteria

During Evaluation, the team must demonstrate:

- Safe and controlled navigation through Public Environments without pulling, forging, or lagging
- Behavioural neutrality toward unfamiliar people, including proximity, movement, and interaction attempts
- Behavioural neutrality toward unfamiliar dogs and animals
- Ability to remain settled and unobtrusive when stationary for a minimum of 5 minutes
- Controlled, appropriate responses to environmental distractions (e.g., noise, movement, dropped objects)
- Handler ability to maintain control and clear communication in dynamic environments

- Maintenance of position and responsiveness during changes in direction, pace, and environmental flow
- Unobtrusive presence in shared spaces (no interference with the public, businesses, or access pathways)
- Appropriate startle response with recovery to baseline behaviour within a timeframe that does not interfere with safe and functional task performance

Disqualifying Behaviours

The following behaviours are not permitted during Evaluation and will result in failure of the assessment:

- Lunging, barking, growling, or other reactive behaviour toward people or animals
- Repeated pulling, loss of Handler control, or inability to maintain working position
- Soliciting attention from the public or interfering with others
- Elimination in inappropriate locations
- Inability to recover from environmental stressors within defined thresholds
- Signs of environmental instability, shutdown, or avoidance that interfere with function

Evaluation Standards

Performance must be consistent, repeatable, and maintained throughout the duration of each Evaluation session. A minimum success rate of 90% across all evaluated criteria is required. No single Public Access session independently determines readiness.

Where performance consistency cannot be confirmed, additional Evaluation sessions will be required until reliability is established and documented. Evaluation outcomes must be recorded in the team's training record, including environment type, observed behaviours, distraction level, and Evaluator verification.

9.7.3 Task Performance Verification

Graduating Service Dogs must demonstrate reliable and functional execution of trained, disability-mitigating trained tasks under direct observation by the Training Director or designated program Evaluator.

Task performance verification confirms that each trained task is clearly defined, consistently executed, and functionally applicable to the Handler's disability-related needs.

Evaluation Requirements

Each required task must be evaluated across multiple sessions and environments sufficient to demonstrate reliability and generalization.

At minimum:

- Each trained task must be directly observed and evaluated a minimum of 5 times
- Task performance must be demonstrated across at least 2 different environments
- Evaluation must include exposure to moderate distraction levels
- A minimum of 2 separate Evaluation sessions must include full task review under observation

Performance Criteria

During Evaluation, each task must demonstrate:

- Clarity of execution (task is performed in a consistent and recognizable manner)
- Consistency across environments (task performance does not degrade in new or changing contexts)
- Functional usefulness (task directly supports the Handler's disability-related needs)
- Appropriate response timing (task is performed without delay that interferes with functional use)
- Independence from prompts (task is not dependent on lure-based guidance or excessive cueing)
- Reliability under distraction (task remains accurate in the presence of environmental stimuli)

Disqualifying Task Performance

The following will result in failure of task verification:

- Inconsistent or unclear task execution
- Failure to perform required tasks when cued or when contextually appropriate
- Task performance dependent on food lures, repeated prompting, or Handler compensation
- Task breakdown in novel or moderately distracting environments
- Task responses that are delayed or incomplete to the extent that functional usefulness is compromised

Evaluation Standards

Task reliability must be demonstrated as consistent, repeatable, and generalizable across environments and sessions. A minimum of 90% successful performance across all evaluated task repetitions is required, with no pattern of failure in any individual task.

All task performance Evaluations must be documented in the team's training record, including:

- task evaluated;
- environment and conditions;
- level of distraction present;
- observed performance and any errors; and
- Evaluator verification.

Failure to meet task performance criteria will result in deferral of Graduation eligibility until reliability is demonstrated and documented over time.

9.7.4 Environmental Stability Confirmation

Environmental stability is confirmed through observation across varied training and Public Access contexts. Evaluation is conducted by the Training Director or a designated program Evaluator and must reflect the dog's ability to function consistently across environments.

Environmental stability is assessed longitudinally and may not be determined based on a single exposure or isolated Evaluation event.

Evaluation Requirements

Environmental stability must be demonstrated across a range of environments sufficient to confirm behavioural consistency and generalization.

At minimum:

- Observation must occur across at least 5 distinct environment categories, which may include:
 - Retail or commercial environments
 - Outdoor public spaces
 - Controlled training environments
 - Novel or unfamiliar locations
 - Moderate to high-distraction environments

- Environmental exposure must occur across multiple sessions over time, allowing for confirmation of sustained stability
- Evaluation must include exposure to novel stimuli and changing environmental conditions

Performance Criteria

Graduating Service Dogs must demonstrate:

- confidence in unfamiliar environments, without hesitation that interferes with movement or task performance;
- appropriate response to novel stimuli, including startle with prompt return to baseline behaviour;
- sustained engagement with the Handler across environments and distraction levels;
- absence of avoidance behaviours that interfere with access or task participation;
- absence of defensive or escalating behavioural responses; and
- the ability to maintain working focus despite environmental variability.

Indicators of Instability

The following patterns indicate failure to meet environmental stability requirements:

- Repeated hesitation, refusal to move, or Withdrawal in unfamiliar environments
- Persistent avoidance of specific stimuli, environments, or situations
- Escalating stress responses when exposed to environmental change
- Loss of engagement with the Handler in novel or distracting contexts
- Behavioural inconsistency across environments

Evaluation Standards

Environmental stability must be demonstrated as consistent, repeatable, and generalizable across all evaluated contexts. Evaluation is based on observed patterns over time. Isolated successful exposures are not sufficient to confirm stability.

Where environmental inconsistency or regression is observed, additional Evaluation and exposure may be required prior to Graduation determination. All observations must be documented in the team's training record, including environment type, conditions, observed behaviour, and Evaluator verification.

9.7.5 Handler Competency Verification

Handlers must demonstrate the ability to independently manage their Service Dog safely, consistently, and appropriately in public and private working environments.

Handler competency verification confirms that the Handler can effectively maintain the dog's training, support task performance, and navigate real-world situations in a manner that ensures canine welfare, public safety, and program integrity.

Handler competency is evaluated in alignment with the Handler Integration Requirements outlined in Section 9.5 and reflects the Handler's ability to independently apply those skills in functional, real-world contexts. Successful completion of Handler Integration Requirements does not guarantee Graduation eligibility. Competency must be independently demonstrated during Evaluation.

Evaluation Requirements

Handler competency must be assessed across multiple Evaluation sessions and environments sufficient to confirm consistent and independent handling ability.

At minimum:

- Handler performance must be evaluated during Public Access Evaluations, task performance verification, and supervised field observations
- Evaluation must include exposure to dynamic and moderately distracting environments
- The Handler must demonstrate independent handling, without reliance on continuous guidance from the Evaluator

Performance Criteria

Handlers must demonstrate:

- Cue consistency, including clear, timely, and appropriate communication with the dog
- Recognition of canine stress indicators, including the ability to identify early signs of stress or discomfort
- Appropriate reinforcement of behaviour, supporting both task performance and behavioural stability
- Effective support of task execution, without over-prompting or interfering with task independence
- Safe and appropriate management during public interactions, including maintaining boundaries with the public
- Compliance with program equipment policies
- Appropriate response to behavioural changes, including the ability to adjust handling in real time

- Maintenance of behavioural expectations in Public Environments
- Accurate and appropriate representation of the Service Dog in Public Environments, including adherence to applicable laws and program standards

Indicators of Insufficient Competency

The following may result in failure to meet Handler competency requirements:

- Inconsistent or unclear cueing that impacts dog performance
- Failure to recognize or respond appropriately to signs of canine stress
- Over-reliance on prompting, luring, or compensatory handling
- Inability to maintain control of the dog in Public Environments
- Inappropriate management of public interactions
- Misrepresentation of the Service Dog's role or access rights
- Failure to follow program equipment or handling standards

Evaluation Standards

Handler competency must be demonstrated as consistent, independent, and functionally effective across all evaluated contexts.

Handler readiness is required for Graduation eligibility. A team may not be approved for Graduation if Handler competency standards are not met, regardless of the dog's performance.

Where Handler performance is inconsistent or insufficient, Graduation may be deferred until competency is demonstrated and documented over time.

All Handler Evaluations must be recorded in the team's training record, including observed performance, environment, and Evaluator verification.

9.7.6 Documentation Review

Prior to Graduation approval, the Training Director or designated program Evaluator must complete a formal review of the team's training record to confirm all program requirements have been met and appropriately documented.

Documentation review serves to verify that Graduation eligibility is supported by consistent, recorded evidence across training, Evaluation and Handler participation.

Review Requirements

The training record must demonstrate:

- Completion of all required training stages as outlined in the program Progression framework

- Verified task acquisition and demonstrated task reliability across multiple contexts
- Documented environmental exposure Progression, including varied and novel environments
- Confirmation of emotional stability indicators as defined in Section 9.6
- Absence of unresolved behavioural concerns or patterns of instability
- Consistent Handler participation and engagement in accordance with program expectations

Documentation Standards

All required documentation must be:

- Complete, accurate, and up to date
- Sufficient to demonstrate longitudinal progress and behavioural consistency
- Supported by Evaluator or trainer verification where applicable

Records must include, where relevant:

- Training session logs
- Evaluation records
- Environmental exposure notes
- Task Progression and performance tracking
- Regression and recovery documentation (if applicable)

Evaluation Standards

Graduation eligibility must be supported by clear and consistent documentation. Missing, incomplete, or inconsistent records may delay Graduation eligibility until deficiencies are addressed.

Documentation review is required prior to final approval and must confirm that all Evaluation components outlined in Sections 9.7.1 through 9.7.5 have been completed and meet program standards.

9.7.7 Evaluation Outcome Determination

Following completion of the Graduation Evaluation process, each team will receive a formal outcome determination based on performance across all Evaluation components.

Outcome determinations are based on documented evidence and must reflect consistent performance across time, environments, and Evaluation contexts.

Outcome Categories

Graduation Approved

The team meets all program standards for Public Access, task performance, environmental stability, and Handler competency.

All required documentation is complete and verified. The team is approved for Graduation.

Graduation Pending

The team demonstrates overall readiness for Graduation; however, minor criteria remain incomplete or require clarification prior to approval.

This may include:

- Minor inconsistencies in performance that do not indicate a pattern of instability
- Incomplete or missing documentation requiring verification or update
- Limited areas requiring targeted reinforcement or follow-up Evaluation Graduation approval will be granted upon successful completion and documentation of outstanding requirements.

Extended Training Required

The team does not currently meet Graduation standards. Additional structured training and Evaluation are required before Graduation eligibility may be reconsidered.

This determination applies where:

- Performance lacks consistency across environments or contexts
- Task reliability is not yet sufficiently established
- Handler competency requires further development
- Environmental or emotional stability requires continued Progression A targeted training plan may be provided to support continued development.

Role Modification Recommended

The dog demonstrates strengths that may be better suited to an alternate working role or reduced scope of service work.

This determination may be made where:

- Full Service Dog criteria are not met, but the dog remains suitable for other structured roles
- Task demands or environmental expectations exceed the dog's demonstrated capabilities

- Modification supports improved welfare and functional success

Recommendations will be provided based on the dog's demonstrated strengths and limitations.

Release from Service Dog Candidacy

The team does not meet Graduation standards, and continuation in the program is not appropriate within acceptable welfare or safety parameters.

This determination may be made where:

- Persistent behavioural instability or safety concerns are present
- Emotional suitability for service work cannot be established
- Required performance criteria cannot be met despite appropriate training Progression

This decision is made in consideration of canine welfare, Handler safety, and public safety.

Documentation Requirements

All outcome determinations must be recorded in the team's training record and must include:

- Final Evaluation summary
- Outcome category assigned
- Rationale for the determination
- Any required next steps or recommendations

9.7.8 Final Approval Authority

Final Graduation approval is granted by the Training Director of CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc.

The Training Director retains sole authority over all Graduation decisions. A designated program Evaluator may conduct Evaluations and provide recommendations; however, final approval authority remains exclusively with the Training Director.

External Evaluators or subject-matter professionals may be consulted where appropriate. Such consultation is advisory in nature and does not supersede the authority of the Training Director.

Decision Basis

Graduation decisions are based on a comprehensive review of:

- Documented training history and Progression
- Demonstrated team readiness across all Evaluation components
- Observed performance reliability across environments and contexts

All Graduation decisions must be supported by documented evidence and aligned with established program standards.

9.7.9 Post-Graduation Transition

Following Graduation approval, Service Dog Teams enter the post-Graduation transition phase. Graduated teams may receive transition guidance, maintenance training recommendations, welfare monitoring expectations, Handler responsibility reminders, and access to follow-up consultation where applicable.

Graduation indicates that the team has demonstrated readiness for independent Public Access and task work; however, Graduation does not conclude the Handler's responsibility to maintain training standards, behavioural reliability, task proficiency, Public Access manners, or canine welfare.

Handlers are expected to continue reinforcing learned behaviours, maintaining appropriate handling practices, monitoring the dog's physical and emotional wellbeing, and addressing training concerns promptly should regression, stress-related behaviours, or reliability concerns emerge.

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. may recommend refresher training, reassessment, temporary work reduction, or additional support services when concerns regarding team stability, welfare, safety, or Public Access reliability are identified. The program reserves the right to revoke Graduation recognition, Public Access endorsement, or program affiliation if substantial behavioural deterioration, welfare concerns, Handler misconduct, fraudulent representation, unsafe handling practices, or significant policy violations are observed following Graduation.

9.7.10 Appeals and Re-Evaluation Process

Applicants, Handlers, or Service Dog Teams may request reconsideration of an Evaluation outcome, training decision, Suspension recommendation, or Graduation determination through the program's formal appeals and re-Evaluation process.

Appeals must be submitted in writing within a reasonable timeframe following notification of the decision and must clearly identify the concern, disputed outcome, supporting information, and any requested reconsideration. Submission of an appeal does not guarantee reversal of the original determination.

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. reserves the right to review training records, Evaluation documentation, behavioural history, welfare concerns, Public Access observations, video submissions, instructor notes, and additional supporting material when considering an appeal or re-Evaluation request.

Re-Evaluations may require additional handling assessments, Public Access testing, task demonstrations, veterinary clearance, behavioural review, or supplemental training prior to reconsideration of program status or Graduation eligibility.

All appeal and re-Evaluation decisions are made in consideration of public safety, canine welfare, program integrity, Handler capability, and demonstrated team reliability. Final determination authority remains with the Training Director or designated program authority.

9.8 Graduation Documentation and Certification Scope

9.8.1 Graduation Documentation

Upon successful completion of all Graduation requirements outlined in Section 7, Training Stage Progression Framework, and Section 8, Task Training Standards, Service Dog Teams may be issued program documentation recognizing completion of the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog training program.

Graduation documentation confirms that the Service Dog Team demonstrated reliability in disability-mitigating tasks, Public Access behaviour, Handler competency, and training standards at the time of formal Evaluation.

Graduation documentation may include:

- Certificate of program completion
- Service Dog Team confirmation letter
- Summary of trained disability-mitigating tasks
- Confirmation of Public Access training standards achieved
- Handler responsibility acknowledgement
- Equipment transition status, where applicable
- Recommendations for On-going maintenance training
- Annual Recertification requirements, where applicable

Documentation issued at Graduation reflects performance demonstrated during structured Evaluation and does not represent a lifetime guarantee of behavioural stability, task reliability, Public Access suitability, or future performance outcomes.

Handlers remain responsible for maintaining training standards, reinforcing learned behaviours, ensuring continued task reliability, and monitoring the On-going physical, emotional, and working welfare of their Service Dog following Graduation.

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. retains records supporting Graduation determinations in accordance with Section 11, Record Keeping and Documentation Policy. Replacement documentation may be issued upon reasonable request.

9.8.2 Certification Scope Statement

Documentation issued by CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. confirms that a Service Dog Team successfully completed program training requirements and demonstrated reliable performance of disability-mitigating tasks, Public Access skills, and Handler competency standards at the time of Graduation Evaluation.

Program-issued documentation does not constitute government-issued identification, legal Certification, or independent authorization of Public Access rights under applicable laws. Handlers remain solely responsible for ensuring their Service Dog continues to meet behavioural, task-related, welfare, and Public Access reliability expectations required for On-going participation in Public Environments.

Certification reflects training achievement within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program framework and may support verification of structured training completion when confirmation of program participation or preparation is requested by third parties.

9.9 Airline Travel Documentation and Attestation Records

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. may provide structured training documentation to support verification of Service Dog training for airline travel or other transportation access requirements. Because Canadian law does not require government-issued Certification for Service Dogs, some transportation providers may request additional confirmation regarding training standards, task reliability, Public Access preparation, and Handler competency prior to approving travel accommodations.

Where appropriate, documentation issued for transportation verification purposes may include:

- Service Dog training attestation letter
- Service Dog training completion certificate
- Dog-specific Handler Service Dog handling certificate
- Structured program training outline
- Disability-mitigating task summary
- Public Access training summary
- Equipment transition status, where applicable
- Estimated training hours across major skill domains

Training outlines prepared for transportation verification purposes may include:

- Total Public Access training hours
- Total disability-mitigating task training hours

- Environmental exposure categories completed
- Handler coaching or instructional hours completed
- Online instructional participation, where applicable
- Description of each trained disability-mitigating task
- Purpose of each task in relation to disability mitigation
- Description of how task reliability was demonstrated during training

Documentation issued for transportation verification reflects performance demonstrated during structured training and Evaluation processes and does not represent a guarantee of future behaviour, Public Access suitability, or performance reliability during travel or within unfamiliar environments.

Handlers remain responsible for maintaining training reliability, ensuring continued behavioural stability, and confirming that their Service Dog continues to meet behavioural expectations required for safe public transportation participation.

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. reserves the right to decline issuance of transportation verification documentation where training standards, behavioural reliability, public safety considerations, Handler competency, welfare concerns, or program compliance requirements have not been sufficiently demonstrated

9.10 Recertification and Maintenance Requirements

Service Dog Teams graduating from the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog Program are expected to maintain training reliability, behavioural stability, task proficiency, and Public Access readiness following Graduation.

To support long-term working stability, Handler competency, and Service Dog welfare, graduated teams are required to participate in periodic Recertification and maintenance training activities.

Graduated teams must complete a minimum of three (3) hours of Recertification training annually. Annual Recertification activities may be completed through:

- Structured online refresher sessions
- Submitted training logs
- Video-based task demonstrations
- Instructor-led virtual review sessions
- Approved maintenance training modules

- Additional program-approved continuing education activities, where applicable

In addition to annual Recertification participation, Service Dog Teams must complete an in-person Recertification assessment at least once every three (3) years.

The purpose of periodic Recertification is to:

- Confirm continued reliability of disability-mitigating tasks
- Verify maintenance of Public Access behavioural standards
- Monitor Handler cue clarity, consistency, and team communication
- Support the On-going physical, emotional, and working welfare of the Service Dog
- Identify training updates, regression concerns, or recommended adjustments where appropriate

Where concerns regarding task reliability, behavioural stability, Public Access suitability, Handler consistency, or canine welfare are identified during Recertification review, additional training objectives, reassessment requirements, or temporary work restrictions may be assigned prior to continuation of Recertification recognition.

Failure to complete required Recertification activities may result in temporary Suspension of Recertification recognition status until maintenance requirements have been fulfilled.

Documentation of Recertification participation and assessment outcomes is retained in accordance with Section 11, Record Keeping and Documentation Policy. Current Recertification recognition reflects completion of required maintenance and reassessment activities within the program's established Recertification timeline.

Recertification supports the long-term reliability, safety, and welfare of Service Dog Teams and reflects the program's commitment to maintaining professional working standards.

9.11 Graduation Status Limitation Statement

Graduation from the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog Program reflects that the Service Dog Team successfully demonstrated required program training standards, disability-mitigating task reliability, Public Access behaviour, and Handler competency at the time of formal Evaluation and Graduation. Graduation recognition does not represent a lifetime guarantee of behavioural stability, task reliability, Public Access suitability, or future working performance in all environments, situations, or circumstances.

Program-issued Graduation documentation does not independently establish legal disability status, confer government-issued Certification, or override applicable laws, transportation policies, housing policies, workplace requirements, insurance requirements, or public safety regulations.

The Handler remains solely responsible for maintaining training standards, reinforcing learned behaviours, monitoring canine welfare, ensuring safe public participation, and maintaining On-going compliance with applicable laws, behavioural expectations, and organizational standards following Graduation.

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. reserves the right to suspend, revoke, withdraw, or decline continued recognition of Graduation status, Recertification status, or program affiliation within organizational records and representations where substantial behavioural deterioration, welfare concerns, unsafe handling practices, fraudulent representation, misrepresentation of training status, or significant policy violations are identified.

9.12 – Post-Graduation Monitoring and Support

Graduated Service Dog Teams remain subject to On-going Recertification and maintenance requirements intended to support continued behavioural stability, disability-mitigating task reliability, Handler competency, Public Access readiness, and canine welfare suitability.

Additional reassessment, training review, or temporary work modification recommendations may be required where regression patterns, behavioural concerns, Public Access reliability issues, Handler inconsistency, safety concerns, or welfare-related concerns are identified between scheduled Recertification intervals.

Handlers are encouraged to maintain On-going training engagement through refresher training, maintenance exercises, structured practice, environmental exposure opportunities, and continued skill reinforcement to support long-term working success and team stability.

Where appropriate, CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. may provide:

- Follow-up consultation support
- Maintenance training recommendations
- Refresher training opportunities
- Behavioural troubleshooting guidance
- Public Access skill review
- Task reliability reassessment
- Handler coaching support
- Welfare-based work modification recommendations

Post-Graduation monitoring and support activities are intended to promote safe, ethical, and sustainable long-term Service Dog partnerships while supporting continued program integrity and Public Access reliability standards.

Participation in post-Graduation support services does not guarantee continued Certification recognition and does not replace required Recertification obligations outlined within this program manual.

10 Handler Participation Requirements

Active Handler participation is required throughout all stages of the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog Training Program. Successful Service Dog development depends on consistent Handler engagement, reinforcement continuity, ethical representation, and adherence to program policies and on-going participation in the training process.

Handlers are considered active members of the training team and share responsibility for maintaining behavioural reliability, task functionality, Public Access standards, and welfare throughout the duration of the program.

Failure to meet participation requirements may result in delayed Progression, temporary Suspension of advancement training status, modification of training plans, temporary program holds, or release from the program where appropriate.

Participation expectations are established, monitored, and guided by the Training Director or designated program instructor.

10.1 Training Session Participation

Handlers are expected to participate consistently in training activities appropriate to their stage of program enrollment. Participation expectations include attending scheduled training sessions when applicable, completing assigned training exercises between sessions, maintaining communication with the Training Director or designated instructor, implementing training feedback, practicing assigned task sequences, participating in structured Public Access exposure, and maintaining Progression through required training stages.

Handlers participating through remote or hybrid instructional formats must demonstrate equivalent engagement through scheduled check-ins, video submissions when requested, progress tracking documentation, and participation in structured Evaluation sessions.

Repeated missed sessions, incomplete assignments, lack of communication, or On-going disengagement may result in delayed training Progression, modification of training plans, temporary program holds, or delayed Graduation eligibility where appropriate.

Participation expectations may be reasonably modified when disability-related accommodations are required, provided that program safety, training integrity, and welfare standards can continue to be maintained.

10.2 Reinforcement Responsibilities

Handlers are responsible for maintaining behavioural reliability through appropriate reinforcement practices throughout training and following Graduation. Handlers must reinforce trained behaviours consistently, maintain task clarity through structured repetition, avoid reliance on lure-based prompting for known behaviours, follow program guidance regarding reinforcement schedules, support behavioural stability in Public Environments, and maintain appropriate working engagement during service activities.

Handlers must not introduce unapproved training methods that conflict with program standards, apply corrective equipment prohibited under program policy, discontinue reinforcement

prematurely during active skill development stages, or permit behavioural drift through inconsistent expectations or handling practices.

Reinforcement responsibilities continue following Graduation as part of the long-term maintenance and preservation of Service Dog reliability, task performance, Public Access behaviour, and overall team stability.

10.3 Public Representation Responsibilities

Handlers are responsible for representing their Service Dog accurately, ethically, and in accordance with program expectations throughout all stages of training and program participation.

Handlers must represent the dog only at its current stage of training, avoid presenting the dog as fully trained prior to Graduation, maintain appropriate behavioural standards during public outings, ensure the dog remains under control in shared environments, follow applicable Public Access expectations and legal responsibilities, respond appropriately to reasonable access questions or challenges, and prioritize the safety of the Handler, the public, and the dog at all times.

Handlers must not misrepresent the training status of the dog, permit disruptive or uncontrolled behaviour in Public Environments, allow inappropriate public interactions that interfere with working behaviour or task performance, or misrepresent the program, training process, Certification status, or Graduation status of the Service Dog Team.

Ethical public representation supports public trust, protects the integrity of Service Dog access, and contributes to the long-term reliability and credibility of working Service Dog Teams.

10.4 Equipment Policy Compliance

Handlers must follow program equipment policies throughout all stages of training and following Graduation. Handlers are responsible for using approved equipment appropriate to the dog's stage of training, transitioning away from management tools when instructed, maintaining proper fit and condition of working equipment, using task-supportive equipment appropriately, avoiding unauthorized corrective tools, and consulting the Training Director prior to introducing new working equipment.

Equipment prohibited for behavioural control at Graduation includes prong collars, electronic collars, correction-based slip leads, and behaviour suppression devices not approved within the program framework.

Exceptions may be permitted where equipment supports disability mitigation, improves Handler accessibility, addresses demonstrated safety concerns, or is otherwise approved by the Training Director within the scope of program standards and welfare considerations.

Failure to comply with equipment policies may result in modification of training plans, delayed advancement, Suspension of Public Access Progression, or delayed Graduation eligibility where appropriate.

10.5 Welfare Monitoring Responsibilities

Handlers share responsibility for monitoring the on-going welfare, behavioural stability, and working suitability of their Service Dog throughout training and following Graduation.

Handlers must observe behavioural changes that may:

- indicate stress, fatigue, burnout, or declining working engagement;
- monitor physical condition and health factors affecting working ability;
- report emerging behavioural concerns;
- adjust workload when necessary to support welfare;
- follow guidance regarding rest, recovery, environmental management, and task balance; and
- maintain realistic expectations regarding the dog's working capacity and long-term sustainability.

Handlers must not continue Public Access work when the dog demonstrates sustained stress indicators, avoidant behaviour affecting performance, emerging reactivity, behavioural deterioration, or signs of physical discomfort affecting mobility, task work, or overall welfare.

Where welfare concerns arise, training expectations, workload, Public Access participation, or program Progression may be temporarily modified while working suitability is reassessed.

Long-term Service Dog success depends upon maintaining both behavioural reliability and emotional stability throughout the working lifespan of the dog.

10.6 Communication and Reporting Responsibilities

Handlers are responsible for maintaining timely, accurate, and on-going communication with the Training Director or designated program instructor throughout all stages of training and following Graduation where continued program support applies.

Handlers must report behavioural concerns, emerging reactivity, Public Access difficulties, health changes affecting working ability, injury or illness, bite incidents, significant environmental or household changes, equipment concerns, interruptions in training continuity, and any circumstance that may affect the welfare, suitability, safety, or reliability of the Service Dog Team.

Handlers are expected to respond to program communications within a reasonable timeframe, participate in scheduled check-ins or reassessment sessions when requested, provide progress updates where applicable, and maintain accurate documentation or training records when required as part of the training program.

Failure to report significant behavioural or welfare concerns, withholding relevant information affecting suitability, repeated communication failures, or refusal to participate in requested reassessment or support planning may result in modification of training plans, temporary Suspension of advanced training activities, reassessment of Public Access readiness, or delayed Graduation eligibility where appropriate.

Open communication supports early intervention, protects canine welfare, maintains public safety, and contributes to the long-term success and stability of the Service Dog Team.

10.7 Training Continuity Requirements

Handlers are responsible for maintaining consistent training practice and behavioural reinforcement throughout all stages of the Service Dog program and following Graduation. On-going training continuity is necessary to preserve task reliability, behavioural stability, Public Access readiness, and long-term working performance.

Handlers must regularly practice trained skills and task sequences, maintain reinforcement schedules appropriate to the dog's stage of learning, apply consistent behavioural expectations across environments, continue Public Access exposure as appropriate to the dog's working level, and follow assigned training plans or maintenance recommendations provided by the Training Director or designated instructor.

Handlers are expected to maintain training consistency during daily routines, avoid extended interruptions in skill maintenance, and address emerging behavioural changes promptly before deterioration of working performance occurs.

Handlers must not knowingly permit behavioural regression through inconsistent handling, discontinue maintenance training prematurely, introduce conflicting handling techniques that interfere with trained behaviours, or place the dog in situations beyond its current working ability without appropriate preparation and support.

Where significant interruptions in training continuity occur due to illness, environmental changes, extended leave, welfare concerns, or other circumstances affecting team stability, reassessment or temporary modification of training expectations may be required prior to advancement or continuation of Public Access Progression.

Long-term Service Dog reliability depends upon consistent maintenance, structured reinforcement, On-going skill practice, and responsible Handler engagement throughout the working lifespan of the dog.

10.8 Attendance and Program Engagement

Consistent attendance and active program engagement are required throughout all stages of the Service Dog training program. Regular participation supports skill development, reinforcement continuity, Public Access preparation, Handler education, and long-term team stability.

Handlers are expected to attend scheduled training sessions, Evaluations, workshops, Public Access outings, and program activities appropriate to their stage of training.

Participation requirements apply to in-person, remote, and hybrid instructional formats where applicable.

Because Service Dog development depends upon consistent practice and guided Progression, Handlers are generally expected to participate in approximately 90 percent of scheduled program

activities unless disability-related accommodations, approved absences, or program modifications apply.

Repeated absences, chronic cancellations, prolonged inactivity, lack of participation, or failure to maintain engagement in assigned training activities may result in delayed Progression, reassessment of team readiness, temporary program holds, modification of training plans, or delayed Graduation eligibility where appropriate.

Attendance alone does not guarantee advancement or Graduation eligibility. Progression and Graduation decisions are based upon demonstrated behavioural reliability, task competency, Public Access readiness, Handler engagement, and overall team stability.

Where temporary interruptions occur due to medical circumstances, disability-related accommodations, welfare concerns, environmental changes, or other significant factors, individualized participation adjustments may be considered at the discretion of the Training Director.

10.8 Attendance and Program Engagement

Consistent attendance and active program engagement are required throughout all stages of the Service Dog training program. Regular participation supports skill development, reinforcement continuity, Public Access preparation, Handler education, and long-term team stability.

Handlers are expected to attend scheduled training sessions, Evaluations, workshops, Public Access outings, and program activities appropriate to their stage of training. Participation requirements apply to in-person, remote, and hybrid instructional formats where applicable.

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Repeated absences, chronic cancellations, prolonged inactivity, lack of participation, or failure to maintain engagement in assigned training activities may result in delayed Progression, reassessment of team readiness, temporary program holds, modification of training plans, or delayed Graduation eligibility where appropriate.

Attendance alone does not guarantee advancement or Graduation eligibility. Progression and Graduation decisions are based upon demonstrated behavioural reliability, task competency, Public Access readiness, Handler engagement, and overall team stability. Where temporary interruptions occur due to medical circumstances, disability-related accommodations, welfare concerns, environmental changes, or other significant factors, individualized participation adjustments may be considered at the discretion of the Training Director.

10.9 Household and Secondary Handler Consistency

Handlers are responsible for maintaining consistent behavioural expectations, reinforcement practices, and household management standards within the home environment throughout all stages of training and following Graduation.

Individuals who regularly interact with the Service Dog, including family members, caregivers, roommates, secondary Handlers, or support persons, are expected to support program standards by maintaining consistent handling practices, respecting working boundaries, avoiding reinforcement of unwanted behaviours, and following guidance provided by the Training Director or designated instructor where applicable.

Handlers must not permit inconsistent household rules, unmanaged interactions, unauthorized cueing, rough handling, uncontrolled play, or conflicting training practices that may interfere with behavioural reliability, task performance, emotional stability, Public Access readiness, or overall working stability.

Handlers are strongly encouraged to identify at least one appropriate emergency support person capable of temporarily caring for the Service Dog in situations involving illness, hospitalization, emergency circumstances, or temporary inability to provide appropriate care. Where household instability, inconsistent handling practices, unsafe environmental conditions, or insufficient support systems significantly affect the welfare of the dog, training Progression, placement suitability, Graduation eligibility, or long-term team stability, continued participation in the program may be reassessed.

Consistent household management, appropriate support systems, and unified handling practices contribute significantly to long-term Service Dog welfare, behavioural stability, task reliability, and successful team functioning.

10.10 Emergency Care and Support Planning

Handlers are required to maintain an appropriate emergency care and contingency plan for the Service Dog throughout all stages of training and following Graduation.

This plan must include at least one identified individual, boarding provider, veterinary facility, kennel, in-home caregiver, family member, or other suitable support person capable of temporarily providing appropriate care for the dog in situations involving illness, hospitalization, emergency circumstances, travel limitations, housing instability, or temporary inability to provide direct care.

Emergency care arrangements must be appropriate to the dog's behavioural, medical, and training needs and must support the continued welfare, safety, and stability of the dog during periods in which the Handler is unable to provide care directly.

Handlers remain responsible for ensuring that emergency caregivers understand any relevant management requirements, behavioural considerations, feeding routines, medication protocols, safety precautions, and working restrictions applicable to the dog.

Failure to maintain appropriate emergency support arrangements may result in reassessment of training Progression, placement suitability, Graduation eligibility, or continued participation in the program where the welfare or stability of the dog may be compromised.

10.11 Ethical and Legal Responsibilities

Handlers are required to conduct themselves in a lawful, responsible, and ethical manner throughout all stages of training and following Graduation.

Participation in the program requires adherence to applicable federal, provincial, municipal, and facility-specific laws, regulations, policies, and Public Access requirements relating to Service Dogs, animal welfare, public behaviour, transportation, housing, and health and safety standards.

Handlers must accurately represent the training status, abilities, behavioural reliability, and Public Access readiness of the Service Dog at all times. Misrepresentation of a dog's training level, qualifications, task performance, Certification status, or suitability for Public Access is prohibited.

Handlers are expected to maintain humane training practices and appropriate standards of care that support the physical welfare, emotional stability, behavioural safety, and long-term working ability of the dog.

Harsh handling, intimidation, neglect, abusive practices, or the use of training methods inconsistent with program standards may result in reassessment, Suspension, or Removal from the program.

Handlers are responsible for maintaining appropriate control of the dog in public and private settings and for taking reasonable steps to prevent unsafe, disruptive, aggressive, or inappropriate behaviour that may negatively affect the welfare of the dog, public safety, or the reputation and integrity of the program.

Participation in the program may be suspended, modified, or terminated where ethical concerns, legal violations, welfare concerns, repeated policy non-compliance, or conduct inconsistent with program standards significantly affect team suitability, public safety, or program integrity.

10.12 Program Modification, Suspension, and Release Criteria

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. reserves the right to modify training plans, adjust program expectations, restrict training activities, temporarily suspend participation, recommend alternative placement outcomes, or release a dog or Handler from the program where necessary to protect canine welfare, public safety, program integrity, or long-term team success.

Program modifications may occur where a dog or Handler demonstrates limitations affecting training Progression, task development, public-access readiness, behavioural stability, physical capability, emotional suitability, Handler coordination, or long-term working reliability.

Modifications may include adjusted training timelines, alternative task development, modified public-access expectations, reduced working demands, medical reassessment requirements, temporary training restrictions, environmental management strategies, or transition toward alternative working or companion outcomes where appropriate.

Temporary restriction or Suspension of training activities, public-access participation, or overall program involvement may occur where behavioural concerns, safety risks, medical concerns,

welfare concerns, Handler non-compliance, inconsistent training practices, environmental instability, or other significant factors interfere with safe and appropriate Progression within the program.

A dog or Handler may be released from the program where continued participation is determined to be unsuitable or inconsistent with canine welfare, public safety, behavioural stability, training capability, public-access reliability, Handler participation requirements, or the long-term success and stability of the team. Program release may be temporary or permanent depending upon the nature, severity, stability, and long-term implications of the concerns identified.

Release decisions may occur for reasons including, but not limited to: * persistent behavioural instability;

- aggression or unsafe behaviour;
- inability to safely perform required work;
- significant medical, structural, or orthopaedic limitations;
- chronic stress or compromised welfare indicators;
- inability to meet handling, participation, or program compliance requirements;
- repeated policy non-compliance; or
- circumstances that substantially interfere with appropriate training Progression, placement suitability, or long-term working stability.

Release from the program does not constitute disciplinary action or personal failure and may include recommendations for alternative training pathways, sport participation, companion placement, career redirection, retirement, or other welfare-appropriate outcomes where applicable.

All modification, restriction, Suspension, and release decisions are made at the discretion of the Training Director or designated program authority, with consideration given to canine welfare, Handler needs, public safety, training integrity, and the long-term success, safety, and stability of the team.

10.13 Training Suspension and Reinstatement Policy

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. maintains the authority to temporarily suspend training participation, Public Access activities, or program advancement when concerns arise regarding safety, welfare, behavioural stability, Handler capacity, training suitability, or overall program readiness.

Training Suspension is a protective and corrective measure intended to support safe and appropriate outcomes for the dog, Handler, public, and training program. Suspension does not automatically constitute program failure and may be implemented as part of normal reassessment, modified training Progression, welfare intervention, or pathway adjustment processes where additional support or stabilization is required.

Training participation may be temporarily suspended where concerns arise involving:

- aggressive or threatening behaviour;
- repeated public shutdown responses;
- reduced task reliability affecting functional safety;
- Public Access instability;
- Handler management concerns affecting team safety;
- equipment misuse inconsistent with program policy;
- welfare concerns affecting the dog;
- significant changes in Handler capacity affecting participation;
- failure to follow program training or representation expectations; or
- other factors significantly affecting safe and appropriate Progression within the program.
- During a Suspension period, the Training Director may recommend:
 - regression to an earlier training stage;
 - targeted remedial skill development;
 - environmental access restrictions;
 - structured welfare monitoring;
 - consultation with veterinary or qualified professional support where appropriate;
 - modification of training expectations;
 - reassessment of team readiness, or
 - transition to alternative training pathways where applicable.

Where appropriate, teams may resume participation once identified readiness criteria have been met. Reinstatement decisions are based upon demonstrated behavioural stability, restoration of safe Public Access readiness, improved task reliability, appropriate Handler management skills, and confirmation that relevant welfare or safety concerns have been appropriately addressed.

Where concerns cannot be resolved within a reasonable training timeframe or where continued participation is determined to be unsuitable, the Training Director may recommend transition out of the Service Dog training stream.

All Suspension and reinstatement determinations are made in accordance with program safety standards, welfare priorities, training integrity, and long-term partnership suitability expectations.

The Training Director retains final authority regarding Suspension and reinstatement decisions.

10.14 Administrative Review and Appeals Policy

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. is committed to maintaining fair, transparent, consistent, and welfare-focused decision-making processes throughout all stages of program participation.

Handlers may request administrative review of certain program decisions where clarification, reconsideration, additional information, or reassessment may support continued participation, modified Progression, or alternative training planning.

Requests for review may be submitted in response to decisions involving:

- training Suspension;
- restriction or Removal from Public Access participation;
- regression to an earlier training stage;
- discontinuation from the Service Dog training stream;
- placement suitability determinations;
- Graduation or Certification readiness outcomes;
- representation status restrictions; or
- other significant participation or Progression decisions made within the program framework.

Requests for review must be submitted in writing within a reasonable timeframe following notification of the original decision and should include any relevant supporting information, updated documentation, contextual clarification, or additional materials the Handler wishes the program to consider.

Upon receipt of a review request, the Training Director may review:

- original Evaluation findings;
- training records and supporting documentation;
- behavioural and welfare observations;

- public safety considerations;
- task reliability expectations;
- applicable program policies; and
- any newly submitted information relevant to the review process.

Additional reassessment sessions, behavioural Evaluations, consultation support, or skill verification exercises may be recommended where appropriate to support objective review and decision-making.

Administrative reviews are conducted to determine whether relevant circumstances, readiness indicators, safety considerations, welfare concerns, policy compliance factors, or supporting information materially affect the original determination.

Submission of a review request does not guarantee modification or reversal of the original decision.

Review outcomes may include:

- confirmation of the original determination;
- modification of training recommendations;
- continuation with additional conditions or restrictions;
- reinstatement of participation privileges;
- implementation of remedial training requirements;
- transition to an alternative training pathway; or
- other program modifications considered appropriate based on the circumstances of the review.

All final participation determinations following review remain the authority of the Training Director and are made in accordance with program safety standards, welfare priorities, training integrity, and long-term partnership suitability expectations.

The administrative review process is intended to support fairness, transparency, consistency, and objective decision-making while maintaining the integrity of program standards and public safety expectations.

10.15 Handler Responsibility Acknowledgement

Participation in the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program indicates acknowledgement and acceptance of the responsibilities, standards, policies, welfare requirements, training

expectations, and participation requirements outlined within this manual and associated program documentation.

Handlers are responsible for reviewing program materials, maintaining On-going compliance with program standards, communicating significant changes affecting the team, and participating in training in a manner that supports the welfare, safety, behavioural stability, Public Access reliability, and long-term success of the Service Dog Team.

Handlers acknowledge that successful participation and Graduation are dependent upon On-going adherence to program expectations, appropriate handling practices, humane training standards, consistent participation, and maintenance of the dog's physical, emotional, and behavioural welfare throughout all stages of training and following Graduation.

Failure to comply with program requirements, welfare standards, behavioural expectations, ethical obligations, or participation policies may result in program modification, reassessment, Suspension, or release in accordance with applicable program policies.

Additional signed acknowledgements, participation agreements, waivers, veterinary documentation, training records, or supporting materials may be required as part of intake, training Progression, placement consideration, Public Access advancement, or Graduation processes.

11 Record Keeping and Documentation Policy

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. maintains structured documentation for all participating teams to support training integrity, ethical oversight, program transparency, welfare monitoring, and objective readiness assessment throughout all stages of participation.

Records are maintained throughout the duration of the program and may include documentation relating to admission, eligibility, training Progression, behavioural development, task training, Public Access readiness, welfare monitoring, Handler participation, veterinary information, and Graduation or Certification requirements where applicable.

Documentation practices are intended to support objective decision-making, maintain program consistency, monitor team Progression, and ensure that advancement within the program is based upon demonstrated reliability, stability, and skill development rather than time-based Progression alone.

11.1 Admission Documentation

Admission documentation is collected prior to entry into structured Service Dog training to assess suitability for participation and confirm compliance with applicable program requirements.

Admission records may include:

- completed program application materials;
- intake interview notes where applicable;
- confirmation of disability-related need for a Service Dog;
- self-declaration or supporting documentation where appropriate;
- veterinary confirmation of health status and vaccination records;
- behavioural suitability screening observations;
- confirmation of Handler authority to train or work with the dog;
- signed program intake agreements;
- signed ethics and welfare acknowledgements;
- acknowledgement of equipment policies; and
- acknowledgement of Public Access training standards.

Where eligibility concerns, behavioural concerns, welfare concerns, or suitability questions are identified, additional screening procedures, reassessment periods, probationary participation, or supplementary documentation may be required prior to full program admission.

Admission documentation forms part of the permanent team training record and may be reviewed throughout participation in the program.

11.2 Training Progress Records

Training progress records are maintained throughout all stages of participation and reflect measurable development of both Handler skills and dog reliability.

Training documentation may include:

- session summaries;
- structured skill-tracking checklists;
- disability-mitigating task development notes;
- Handler timing and reinforcement observations;
- distraction exposure Progression;
- environmental generalization tracking;
- equipment transition readiness indicators;
- behavioural stability observations;
- instructor recommendations;
- online training participation records; and
- stage advancement determinations.

Training progress may be documented through written instructor records, submitted Handler training logs, video review submissions, structured skill verification checklists, online coursework participation, virtual training sessions, and live training observations where applicable.

Advancement between training stages requires documented demonstration of reliability, consistency, behavioural stability, and Handler competency rather than Progression based solely on elapsed training time.

Where regression, inconsistency, behavioural concerns, or skill deterioration are identified, additional reassessment checkpoints, remedial training recommendations, or modified Progression plans may be added to the training record.

11.3 Public Representation Monitoring

Because Service Dogs operate within Public Environments, Handlers and teams are expected to represent the program responsibly throughout all stages of training and following Graduation where applicable.

Public representation monitoring documentation may include:

- observations regarding appropriate vesting and equipment use;
- Handler adherence to Public Access expectations;
- reports of loss-of-control incidents;
- reports of disruptive, unsafe, or inappropriate public behaviour;
- verified third-party concerns or complaints;
- misrepresentation of Service Dog training or working status;
- inappropriate Public Access attempts; and
- reliance upon equipment management in place of demonstrated training reliability.

Documentation may also include observations relating to Handler conduct, public professionalism, management of the dog within Public Environments, and adherence to program representation standards.

Where concerns are identified, documentation may result in remedial training recommendations, temporary restriction or Suspension of Public Access activities, equipment review, behavioural reassessment, additional skill verification requirements, or participation review prior to continued advancement within the program.

Public representation monitoring supports public safety, training integrity, responsible Service Dog representation, program credibility, and community trust.

11.4 Welfare Monitoring Documentation

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. maintains On-going welfare documentation throughout all stages of program participation to ensure that ethical training practices, humane handling standards, and appropriate workload expectations are consistently maintained.

Welfare monitoring documentation may include:

- workload suitability observations;
- fatigue indicators;

- stress-related behavioural signals;
- avoidance behaviours;
- Handler capacity concerns affecting training consistency or welfare;
- environmental suitability considerations;
- pace-of-training adjustments;
- task suitability reassessment;
- behavioural stability observations; and
- equipment-related welfare concerns.

Where welfare concerns are identified, documentation may support temporary reduction of training expectations, modified task selection, environmental restrictions, adjusted training schedules, rest periods, behavioural reassessment, or referral to veterinary or other qualified professional support where appropriate.

Where welfare concerns persist or significantly affect the physical welfare, emotional stability, behavioural safety, or long-term working suitability of the dog, participation may be temporarily paused pending reassessment and review by the Training Director.

Welfare documentation supports objective decision-making and helps ensure that training Progression prioritizes the long-term sustainability, wellbeing, and stability of the working partnership.

11.5 Graduation Readiness Records

Graduation readiness documentation is maintained to confirm that teams meet applicable program performance expectations prior to Certification, Graduation, or advancement to fully working Service Dog status where applicable.

Graduation readiness records may include documented confirmation of:

- reliable performance of a minimum of three disability-mitigating tasks;
- Handler cue clarity and timing consistency;
- stable and appropriate Public Access behaviour;
- neutrality to environmental distractions;
- appropriate recovery from unexpected stimuli;

- safe and controlled behaviour around people, animals, mobility equipment, and Public Environmental challenges;
- Handler ability to appropriately advocate for and manage the Service Dog;
- appropriate equipment transition readiness where applicable; and
- demonstrated consistency across multiple environments and training contexts.

Graduation readiness documentation may include structured Evaluation checklists, instructor observation summaries, video-based verification where appropriate, simulated Public Access scenarios, task performance verification exercises, behavioural assessments, and Handler skills Evaluations.

Certification, Graduation, and advancement decisions are based upon demonstrated reliability, behavioural stability, Handler competency, and consistency across environments rather than performance within a single Evaluation setting or isolated training scenario.

Where readiness criteria are not yet met, additional training objectives, reassessment requirements, remedial skill development plans, or modified Progression timelines may be documented prior to reassessment.

11.6 Confidentiality and Record Storage

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. maintains participant records in accordance with confidentiality requirements, ethical training standards, and applicable Canadian privacy principles and administrative standards.

Program records are stored using secure, password-protected digital systems and are accessible only to authorized program personnel where access is necessary for training oversight, welfare monitoring, program administration, or operational review purposes.

Participant records are not released without appropriate participant consent unless required by law, necessary to protect public safety or animal welfare, or otherwise permitted under applicable legal or administrative requirements.

Program records may be reviewed internally for quality assurance, instructor oversight, program consistency, risk management, accreditation preparation, or administrative review purposes.

De-identified or anonymized information may be used for program development, educational improvement, statistical tracking, or operational Evaluation where appropriate.

Where video submissions, live session recordings, or training review footage are utilized for instructional or assessment purposes, recordings remain part of the confidential training record and will not be publicly distributed without written participant permission unless otherwise required by law.

Records are retained for a minimum of seven years following Graduation, Withdrawal, Dismissal, or release from the program.

Archived records may be retained for longer periods where necessary for program integrity documentation, insurance requirements, Certification verification support, legal protection, or future accreditation and compliance review purposes.

Participants may request access to their training records in accordance with reasonable administrative timelines and applicable program procedures.

11.7 Incident Reporting and Corrective Action Documentation

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. maintains structured documentation of training-related incidents to support participant safety, canine welfare, public trust, program integrity, and objective decision-making throughout all stages of program participation. An incident record may be created where events occur that affect training suitability, public representation, Handler safety, canine welfare, behavioural stability, public-access reliability, or continued participation within the program.

Incidents that may require documentation include:

- loss of behavioural control within Public Environments;
- aggressive or unsafe behaviour toward people or other animals;
- repeated disruption of public-access environments;
- unsafe handling practices;
- misuse or misrepresentation of Service Dog status;
- equipment misuse affecting safety or welfare;
- indicators of excessive stress, fatigue, or behavioural deterioration;
- Handler conduct inconsistent with program ethics or participation policies;
- violations of program requirements;
- significant regression in trained task reliability or public-access behaviour; or
- injury to the dog, Handler, or third parties during training or public-access activities.

Incident documentation may include instructor observations, Handler self-reports, submitted training logs, video review, verified third-party reports where appropriate, environmental context descriptions, behavioural observations, welfare considerations, and corrective recommendations or implemented action plans.

Where concerns are identified, the program may document corrective measures, training recommendations, participation conditions, reassessment requirements, or other Progression-related actions appropriate to the nature and severity of the incident.

All documented incidents and corrective actions are maintained within the applicable team training record where appropriate, and participants may be informed of required corrective measures prior to advancement within the training Progression framework. Incident documentation supports fair, transparent, evidence-based, and welfare-focused decision-making across all participating teams.

11.8 Privacy, Confidentiality, and Information Protection Statement.

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. maintains participant documentation in accordance with applicable Canadian privacy legislation, including the Personal Information Protection Act where applicable.

Personal, behavioural, veterinary, and disability-related information collected through program participation is limited to documentation reasonably necessary for eligibility confirmation, training oversight, welfare monitoring, program administration, risk management, and Certification or Graduation decision-making processes.

Access to confidential participant records is restricted to authorized individuals involved in program instruction, administration, welfare oversight, or operational support where access is reasonably necessary for program-related purposes.

Confidential information will not be disclosed to third parties without appropriate participant consent unless disclosure is required or permitted by law, necessary to protect public safety or animal welfare, or otherwise authorized under applicable legal requirements.

Reasonable administrative and digital safeguards are maintained to support secure record storage, confidentiality protection, and responsible handling of participant information throughout all stages of program participation.

11.9 Incident Response and Risk Management Policy

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. maintains structured procedures for responding to behavioural, welfare, safety, and public-access incidents occurring during training activities, program participation, or public-access work.

Incidents requiring formal review, intervention, or risk-management response may include:

- aggressive or unsafe behaviour;
- repeated environmental shutdown responses;
- significant stress or behavioural deterioration;
- public complaints or verified third-party concerns;
- loss-of-control incidents;
- Handler management failures affecting public-access reliability;
- injury to the dog, Handler, or third parties; or

- situations that significantly affect safety, welfare, training suitability, or public trust.

Where safety, welfare, behavioural, or public-access concerns arise, the Training Director or designated program authority may temporarily restrict training activities, suspend public-access participation, modify training expectations, implement environmental limitations, require reassessment, or impose Progression conditions prior to continued participation within the program.

Corrective response planning may include remedial training objectives, regression to earlier training stages, structured welfare monitoring, consultation with veterinary or qualified professional support where appropriate, equipment reassessment, temporary Withdrawal from public-access environments, participation probation, or Removal from the Service Dog training stream where continued participation is determined to be unsuitable.

Incident response and risk-management procedures are intended to support fair, consistent, evidence-based, and welfare-focused decision-making while prioritizing public safety, humane training practices, program integrity, and the long-term stability of the working team.

12 Program Integrity Policies

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. maintains structured decision-making standards intended to support ethical training practices, protect Service Dog welfare, promote public safety, and maintain the integrity of the program throughout all stages of participation.

Program decisions are guided by documented training standards, behavioural reliability, welfare considerations, Handler competency, Public Access safety expectations, and long-term team suitability rather than Progression based solely upon time, financial participation, or subjective preference.

Decisions relating to admission, training Progression, Public Access readiness, pathway modification, Graduation eligibility, and continued participation are made using objective training observations, documented performance indicators, behavioural assessment information, and welfare-focused considerations where appropriate.

Program integrity policies are intended to support fair, transparent, evidence-based, and consistent decision-making across all participating teams while maintaining humane training standards and responsible public representation of Service Dogs.

12.1 Admission Decision Standards

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. maintains structured decision-making standards intended to support ethical training practices, protect Service Dog welfare, promote public safety, and maintain the integrity of the program throughout all stages of participation.

Program decisions are guided by documented training standards, behavioural reliability, welfare considerations, Handler competency, Public Access safety expectations, and long-term team suitability rather than Progression based solely upon time, financial participation, or subjective preference.

Decisions relating to admission, training Progression, Public Access readiness, pathway modification, Graduation eligibility, and continued participation are made using objective training observations, documented performance indicators, behavioural assessment information, and welfare-focused considerations where appropriate.

Program integrity policies are intended to support fair, transparent, evidence-based, and consistent decision-making across all participating teams while maintaining humane training standards and responsible public representation of Service Dogs.

12.2 Progression Decision Standards

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. maintains structured decision-making standards intended to support ethical training practices, protect Service Dog welfare, promote public safety, and maintain the integrity of the program throughout all stages of participation.

Program decisions are guided by documented training standards, behavioural reliability, welfare considerations, Handler competency, Public Access safety expectations, and long-term team

suitability rather than Progression based solely upon time, financial participation, or subjective preference.

Decisions relating to admission, training Progression, Public Access readiness, pathway modification, Graduation eligibility, and continued participation are made using objective training observations, documented performance indicators, behavioural assessment information, and welfare-focused considerations where appropriate.

Program integrity policies are intended to support fair, transparent, evidence-based, and consistent decision-making across all participating teams while maintaining humane training standards and responsible public representation of Service Dogs.

12.3 Service Training Stream Removal Decision Standards

Removal decision standards for the Service Dog training stream are intended to support Handler safety, dog welfare, Public Access safety, ethical training practices, and long-term partnership success. Removal from the Service Dog training stream may be considered when continuation would compromise these standards or when the team is unable to safely or appropriately progress within the program.

Reasons supporting Removal consideration may include persistent behavioural concerns affecting Public Access readiness, stress responses incompatible with service work demands, medical or physical limitations affecting working capacity, inability to safely maintain required equipment handling or independence standards, Handler-dog interaction patterns that reduce communication clarity or welfare, environmental limitations preventing appropriate training exposure, inability to meet participation or follow-through expectations, or changes in caregiver, household, or support structures affecting placement safety or long-term stability.

Removal from the Service Dog training stream does not represent failure and does not automatically prevent participation in alternative training pathways, companion training programs, sport or enrichment activities, or other appropriate services where suitable.

All Removal decisions are made with consideration for humane outcomes, ethical training practices, public safety, program integrity, and the long-term welfare and success of both the Handler and the dog.

12.4 Alternative Training Pathway Redirection

Alternative training pathway redirection standards are intended to support ethical training outcomes, preserve existing training progress where appropriate, maintain realistic service work expectations, and prioritize long-term Handler and dog welfare. Alternative pathways may be considered where a team is not currently suited for continued Progression within the Service Dog training stream but may continue to benefit from other structured training services or developmental pathways.

Alternative pathways may include advanced companion training, disability-related support skills outside Public Access expectations, sport or enrichment-focused training, Handler skill

development programs, stage-readiness preparation prior to re-entry into service training, or caregiver-supported handling pathways for youth or dependent Handlers.

Redirection decisions are intended to preserve existing training progress, support positive Handler outcomes, maintain realistic and ethical training expectations, and prioritize dog welfare. Teams may reenter the Service Dog training stream at a later stage where readiness criteria, welfare standards, participation expectations, and Progression requirements are consistently met.

12.5 Appeals and Decision Review Process

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. recognizes that admission, Progression, pathway redirection, and service training stream Removal decisions may have significant impact on Handler-dog teams.

A structured review process is available to support consistent, transparent, and fair application of program standards. Handlers and/or caregivers may request a review of program decisions related to admission outcomes, Progression stage determinations, service training stream Removal, alternative pathway redirection, supervision requirements affecting participation, or placement readiness determinations.

Requests for review should be submitted within a reasonable timeframe following notification of the decision and should include any relevant information that may support reconsideration.

Decision reviews may consider documented training observations, Handler participation and follow-through patterns, behavioural readiness indicators, Public Access suitability considerations, Service Dog welfare standards, safety concerns, and consultation-informed recommendations where appropriate.

Program decisions are made in accordance with established training standards, ethical practices, and safeguarding policies.

Review outcomes may confirm the original decision, modify placement or training recommendations, establish conditions for reassessment, or identify readiness goals for future participation.

The review process is intended to support transparent decision-making while maintaining responsibility for program integrity, Handler safety, public safety, and Service Dog welfare.

12.6 Complaint and Appeal Procedures

Handlers and/or caregivers may submit written requests for review of program decisions affecting admission, Progression status, Certification eligibility, supervision requirements, pathway redirection, or Removal from the Service Dog training stream. Requests for review should be submitted within a reasonable timeframe following notification of the decision and should include any relevant information supporting reconsideration or clarification.

Training Director or authorized program leadership may request additional documentation, consultation input, behavioural reassessment, training records, or further observation prior to issuing a final determination.

Where concerns involve program conduct, communication, procedural fairness, or application of program standards, complaints may be reviewed in accordance with established safeguarding, ethics, and program integrity policies.

Final determinations are communicated in writing and documented within the program record-keeping system.

Decisions are made with consideration for Handler safety, public safety, Service Dog welfare, and the integrity of the training program.

12.7 Conflict of Interest and Professional Impartiality Standards

Training, Progression, placement, and Service Dog suitability decisions are made using established program standards intended to support fairness, consistency, safety, and Service Dog welfare.

Decisions are based on observed training performance, behavioural readiness, Handler participation, Public Access suitability, and welfare considerations rather than personal relationships or external influence.

The Training Director or authorized program Evaluator is expected to maintain professional objectivity when making determinations related to admissions, Progression, Public Access readiness, Certification eligibility, pathway redirection, or Removal from the Service Dog training stream.

Where appropriate, additional consultation, secondary review, reassessment, or Evaluator input may be used to support transparent and consistent decision-making.

Prior client relationships, financial participation in training services, social familiarity, caregiver involvement, or emotional investment do not guarantee advancement, Certification eligibility, placement approval, or continued participation within the Service Dog training stream.

Program integrity policies are intended to support ethical training practices, transparent Evaluation standards, public safety, Handler safety, and humane outcomes for both Handlers and dogs.

12.8 Evaluation Oversight and Decision Authority

Program Evaluations may be conducted by the Training Director, primary Program Trainer, approved program Evaluator, or designated apprentice Evaluator operating under supervision. CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. recognizes that, within smaller owner-operated training programs, the trainer responsible for instruction may also participate in Evaluation and Progression assessments.

In such circumstances, Evaluations shall be conducted using standardized program criteria, documented performance standards, behavioural observations, and objective assessment procedures intended to support fairness, consistency, safety, and program integrity.

Where additional Evaluators, apprentices, assistants, or supervised training personnel participate in assessment activities, final Progression, Certification, Suspension, Dismissal, or Graduation decisions remain subject to review and approval by the Training Director or designated program authority.

12.9 Temporary Program Participation Suspension Standards

Temporary program participation Suspension standards are intended to support Handler safety, public safety, Service Dog welfare, training stability, and effective participation within the program. Temporary Suspension from active participation in the Service Dog training stream may be considered where continued involvement would compromise these standards or where additional stabilization, reassessment, or supportive intervention is necessary prior to further Progression decisions.

Reasons supporting temporary Suspension consideration may include medical concerns affecting the Handler or dog, behavioural regression impacting Public Access readiness, elevated stress responses, environmental instability limiting appropriate training exposure, inability to maintain participation or follow-through expectations, safety concerns requiring reassessment, caregiver or support structure disruptions, or other circumstances affecting safe and effective team development.

During a Suspension period, the Training Director or authorized program Evaluator may recommend modified training goals, skill maintenance activities, environmental management strategies, consultation-informed supports, caregiver-assisted participation, or alternative training pathways appropriate to the team's current needs, abilities, and welfare considerations.

Temporary Suspension does not automatically result in Removal from the Service Dog training stream and does not represent failure. Teams may resume active participation where readiness criteria, safety considerations, welfare standards, participation expectations, and Progression requirements are consistently demonstrated.

Suspension decisions, reassessment outcomes, and participation recommendations are documented within the program record-keeping system in accordance with program integrity, safeguarding, and documentation policies.

12.10 Misrepresentation of Training Status

Handlers, caregivers, and Program Participants may not knowingly misrepresent a dog's training level, Public Access readiness, Certification status, task reliability, or participation standing within the Service Dog training program.

Dogs may not be represented as fully trained, public-access ready, certified, graduated, or approved for service work where established program standards have not been met or where participation status has been suspended, restricted, redirected, or removed.

Misrepresentation may include inaccurate verbal claims, misuse of training designations, unauthorized use of program identification materials, misleading social media representation, alteration of training records or Certification documents, or representation of limited-access training activities as full Public Access approval.

Handlers, caregivers and Program Participants are expected to follow program guidance regarding appropriate use of equipment, identification materials, training terminology, Certification representation and public representation of training status.

Where misrepresentation creates safety concerns, welfare concerns, Public Access disruption, or compromise to program integrity, the Training Director or authorized program Evaluator may implement corrective action, reassessment requirements, Suspension, pathway redirection, or Removal from the Service Dog training stream as appropriate.

These policies are intended to support ethical representation of Service Dogs in training, maintain public trust, protect Handler and dog welfare, and preserve the integrity of program standards established by CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc.

13 Participant Agreements and Acknowledgment Statements

The following agreements outline the expectations, responsibilities, and participation standards for Handlers and caregivers participating in the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog Training Program.

These agreements are intended to support program integrity, ethical training practices, canine welfare, public safety, and consistent training standards throughout all stages of Service Dog development.

Participation in the program indicates acknowledgement and acceptance of the policies, standards, and participation expectations outlined within this section as a condition of continued enrollment and program participation.

13.1 Handler Responsibilities Agreement.

Handlers entering the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog Training Program acknowledge and agree to actively participate in the development, training, handling, and On-going maintenance of their Service Dog candidate.

Handlers acknowledge and agree to:

- attend scheduled training sessions, Evaluations, and consultations as required;
- practice assigned training exercises and handling skills between sessions;
- maintain training records or progress documentation where requested;
- communicate promptly regarding behavioural, environmental, medical, or household changes affecting the dog or training process;
- provide appropriate veterinary care, nutrition, rest, enrichment, and humane management practices;
- follow all program equipment, welfare, training, and Public Access policies;
- represent the Service Dog candidate appropriately and ethically in public settings; and
- maintain realistic expectations regarding training Progression, Public Access readiness, and Service Dog outcomes.

Handlers understand that successful Progression depends upon both dog suitability and consistent Handler participation.

Failure to meet participation expectations may result in delayed Progression, reassessment, participation adjustment, Suspension, or redirection to an alternative training pathway where appropriate.

13.2 Equipment Policy Agreement.

Handlers agree to use only equipment approved or authorized by CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. while participating in the Service Dog Training Program.

This includes:

- using properly fitted collars, harnesses, leashes, and training equipment appropriate to the dog's age, stage of development, and training needs;
- avoiding unapproved corrective equipment or handling tools unless specifically recommended by the Training Director or authorized program Evaluator;
- maintaining Service Dog identification items, training equipment, and public-access materials in clean, safe, and professional condition; and
- ensuring all equipment supports safe, humane, ethical, and effective handling practices.

Handlers acknowledge that equipment recommendations are based on canine welfare, Handler safety, behavioural clarity, Public Access readiness, and professional representation standards.

Use of unapproved equipment may result in reassessment, temporary restriction from public training activities, participation adjustment, or Suspension until compliance with program standards has been restored.

13.3 Public Representation Agreement.

Handlers participating in the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog Training Program agree to represent themselves and their Service Dog candidate in a professional, responsible, and ethical manner within Public Environments.

Handlers acknowledge that Service Dogs in training must demonstrate behaviour appropriate to their stage of development and training exposure. Dogs displaying unsafe, disruptive, uncontrolled, or significant stress-related behaviours may be removed from public training environments until readiness, welfare, and safety standards can be reassessed.

Service Dog identification items, training equipment, or program participation do not independently grant Public Access rights.

Public Access participation remains subject to applicable federal, provincial, and local legislation, as well as behavioural and welfare standards established by the program.

Handlers further agree not to represent their dog as certified, graduated, fully trained, or public-access ready until formal program Graduation and readiness criteria have been successfully met.

These expectations are intended to protect canine welfare, Handler credibility, public safety, and the integrity of the Service Dog community.

13.4 Welfare-Based Participation Adjustment Policy.

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. prioritizes canine welfare throughout all stages of Service Dog development and training.

Training Progression or participation may be temporarily paused or adjusted where continued exposure would compromise canine welfare, Handler safety, public safety, or long-term training success.

Training pauses or participation adjustments may occur where a dog demonstrates sustained stress signals, avoidance behaviours, reduced working engagement, behavioural regression, medical concerns affecting performance, environmental sensitivities beyond current readiness levels, or other indicators suggesting the need for reassessment or modified training exposure.

A training pause or participation adjustment may include temporary Suspension of Public Access training, modification of task expectations, environmental management strategies, reduced training exposure, referral for veterinary or behavioural consultation, caregiver-supported handling adjustments, or transition to an alternative training pathway where appropriate.

Handlers acknowledge that welfare-based training pauses and participation adjustments are protective measures intended to support humane training practices, long-term development, and sustainable working outcomes rather than indicators of failure.

13.5 Graduation Clarification Statement

Enrollment in the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog Training Program does not guarantee Service Dog Certification, Public Access approval, or program Graduation. Graduation is granted only where established program standards have been successfully met.

Graduation criteria may include:

- demonstration of Public Access behaviours appropriate for working Service Dogs;
- reliable performance of a minimum of three disability-mitigating tasks;
- behavioural stability across environments and levels of distraction;
- demonstration of Handler competency and safe handling practices; and
- confirmation that service work remains appropriate for the dog's long-term welfare and working suitability.

Some dogs may be redirected to companion roles, sport or enrichment pathways, alternative working roles, modified participation pathways, or extended training timelines where appropriate.

Final Graduation and placement decisions are made in consideration of Handler safety, public safety, canine welfare, long-term team success, and established program standards.

Handlers acknowledge that decisions regarding Progression, Public Access readiness, task development, welfare-based training pauses, pathway redirection, Graduation eligibility, and program participation remain under the professional authority of the Training Director or authorized program Evaluator and are made in accordance with established program standards and ethical training practices.

13.6 Informed Participation Acknowledgement

Handlers and caregivers participating in the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog Training Program acknowledge that Service Dog development is an individualized process influenced by canine temperament, behavioural stability, health, environmental exposure, Handler participation, disability-related needs, and welfare considerations.

Participants understand and acknowledge that training timelines, Progression rates, Public Access readiness, task reliability, and Graduation outcomes may vary significantly between teams and cannot be guaranteed.

Participation in the program does not guarantee Certification, Public Access approval, placement suitability, or successful Graduation as a working Service Dog Team.

Handlers acknowledge that some dogs may require extended timelines, modified participation pathways, welfare-based training pauses, reassessment, redirection to alternative training pathways, or Withdrawal from service work where continuation would compromise welfare, safety, or long-term success.

Participants further acknowledge that successful Service Dog development requires On-going Handler participation, consistent training implementation, appropriate environmental exposure, humane management practices, and adherence to established program standards and policies. By continuing participation within the program, Handlers and caregivers acknowledge understanding of these factors and accept that training, placement, Progression, and Graduation decisions are made according to established program standards, welfare considerations, public safety responsibilities, and the professional judgement of the Training Director or authorized program Evaluator.

13.7 Media, Recording, and Educational Use Consent

Handlers and caregivers participating in the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog Training Program acknowledge that training sessions, working demonstrations, public training activities, online classes, workshops, Evaluations, and educational events may be photographed, audio recorded, or video recorded for training, educational, program review, safety, promotional, or professional development purposes.

Participants consent to the use of training-related photographs, video footage, audio recordings, written feedback, or demonstration materials involving themselves, their Service Dog candidate, or caregiver-supported participation activities for educational, instructional, program development, advertising, social media, website, or professional training purposes.

Reasonable efforts will be made to protect participant privacy and confidentiality where appropriate. Where recordings involve minors or vulnerable participants, identifying information

may be limited, obscured, cropped, blurred, anonymized, or otherwise protected in accordance with safeguarding and privacy practices considered appropriate by the program.

Participants acknowledge that recordings created within group classes, online environments, public training settings, or educational events may incidentally include other participants, Handlers, caregivers, or Service Dog Teams.

Participants agree not to distribute, reproduce, or publicly share recordings of other participants without consent where privacy considerations reasonably apply.

Participation in recorded training activities is voluntary where reasonable accommodations can be provided; however, certain educational, safety review, behavioural assessment, or program documentation activities may require recording as part of normal program operation and quality assurance practices.

13.8 Program Standards Acknowledgement

Handlers and caregivers participating in the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. Service Dog Training Program acknowledge that they have received access to, reviewed, and accepted the program's standards, policies, participation expectations, welfare requirements, and training guidelines as outlined within this manual and related program documentation.

Participants acknowledge that program standards are intended to support ethical training practices, canine welfare, Handler safety, public safety, responsible Public Access participation, and consistent Service Dog development practices. Handlers and caregivers further acknowledge that continued participation within the program requires On-going adherence to established policies regarding training participation, public representation, equipment use, welfare considerations, Handler responsibilities, and behavioural expectations.

Participants understand that program standards and policies may be updated, revised, clarified, or expanded periodically in response to evolving training practices, welfare considerations, legal requirements, Public Access standards, safeguarding considerations, or operational needs.

Reasonable efforts will be made to communicate significant policy changes affecting active participants. By participating in the program, Handlers and caregivers acknowledge that failure to comply with established program standards or policies may result in reassessment, participation adjustment, Suspension, pathway redirection, or Removal from the Service Dog training stream where appropriate.

This acknowledgement is intended to support transparent participation expectations, professional accountability, program integrity, humane training practices, and consistent standards within the Service Dog training program.

14 Team Classification Definitions

Service Dog Teams participating in the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. training program progress through defined training and participation classifications that reflect each team's stage of development, readiness, welfare considerations, training objectives, and program participation status. Team classification definitions are intended to support consistent training expectations, Public Access guidance, welfare-based decision-making, equipment and vesting eligibility determinations, participation permissions, supervision requirements, Progression planning, and Evaluation standards throughout all stages of Service Dog development.

Classification status may be adjusted, paused, advanced, redirected, or withdrawn based on behavioural stability, welfare considerations, public safety, training Progression, Handler participation, medical considerations, or program integrity standards as determined appropriate by the program and Training Director oversight.

14.1 Applicant Team: A Handler and dog, or prospective Handler seeking a dog, who has initiated contact with the program or submitted materials for consideration but has not yet completed formal admission Evaluation or acceptance into the program.

14.2 Candidate Dog: A dog undergoing initial suitability assessment to determine appropriateness for participation within the Service Dog training program based on behavioural, environmental, structural, welfare, and training considerations.

14.3 Prospect Dog: A dog identified as having potential for future Service Dog development but that has not yet demonstrated the full stability, maturity, training Progression, or environmental readiness required for advanced service training participation.

14.4 Placement Dog: A dog being considered, matched, or prepared for partnership with a specific Handler based on training suitability, task potential, welfare compatibility, and functional support needs.

14.5 Preparatory Training Team: A Handler and dog partnership participating in foundational training, behavioural development, relationship building, or stabilization work prior to entering advanced Public Access or task-training stages.

14.6 Active Training Team: A Handler and dog partnership actively engaged in structured Service Dog training Progression under program guidance, including Public Access preparation, task development, environmental exposure, and Handler integration work.

14.7 Public Access Training Team: A Handler and dog partnership approved to participate in structured Public Access training activities while continuing to develop behavioural reliability, neutrality, environmental stability, and Handler responsiveness.

14.8 Public Access Ready Team: A Handler and dog partnership that has demonstrated sufficient behavioural stability, environmental readiness, Handler control, and safety standards to participate consistently in Public Access environments under program expectations.

14.9 Graduation Eligible Team: A Handler and dog partnership that has successfully completed the required stages of training Progression and is eligible to undergo final Graduation, Certification, or readiness Evaluation procedures.

14.10 Graduated Service Dog Team: A Handler and Service Dog partnership that has successfully met the program's stated Graduation standards related to task performance, behavioural stability, Public Access conduct, Handler integration, and welfare suitability.

14.11 Dog in Training Pause Status: A temporary classification applied to a dog or team whose training Progression, Public Access participation, or advancement activities have been paused due to welfare, behavioural, medical, environmental, administrative, or Handler-related considerations.

14.12 Career Change Dog: A dog determined to be unsuitable for continued Service Dog Progression or working placement but considered appropriate for alternative roles, companion placement, sport participation, breeding Evaluation, or non-service working activities consistent with welfare considerations.

14.13 Withdrawn Team: A Handler and dog partnership that has voluntarily exited, been administratively removed from, or otherwise discontinued participation within the program prior to Graduation completion.

14.14 Caregiver-Supported Team: A Service Dog Team in which aspects of handling, management, care, prompting, supervision, or training participation may involve an additional caregiver, support person, parent, guardian, or authorized assistant as appropriate to the Handler's needs and program standards.

15.1 Purpose of Program Exit and Withdrawal Decisions

The CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program is committed to supporting the development of safe, effective, and welfare-centred Service Dog Teams.

Withdrawal and Dismissal decisions are made when continued participation is no longer appropriate for the dog, the Handler, the trainer, or the integrity of the program. These decisions are guided by considerations of canine welfare, Handler readiness, trainer suitability, safety, ethical training practices, and adherence to established program standards.

Program exit procedures are intended to:

- Protect the physical and emotional welfare of dogs participating in training;
- Maintain public safety and responsible handling standards;
- Preserve the integrity, consistency, and ethical operation of the program;
- Ensure that participation decisions remain objective, fair, and welfare-focused;
- Provide clear procedures for voluntary Withdrawal, Suspension, redirection, or Dismissal from training pathways;
- Support appropriate transition planning where continued Service Dog training is not recommended; and
- Ensure that all decisions are documented in accordance with program record-keeping and integrity policies.

Program exit decisions may occur at any stage of training and may apply to Handlers, dogs, trainers, volunteers, or participating teams where On-going participation no longer aligns with program requirements or welfare standards.

Whenever appropriate, the program may recommend alternative training pathways, behavioural support services, companion-only placement, or temporary participation Suspension prior to permanent Dismissal.

15.2 Voluntary Withdrawal by Handler

Handlers may voluntarily withdraw from the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program at any time by providing written notice to the Training Director.

Reasons for voluntary Withdrawal may include, but are not limited to, changes in Handler health status, financial constraints, relocation, scheduling limitations, changes in disability-related needs, retirement of the dog from service work, inability to continue meeting program participation requirements, or a decision to pursue an alternative training pathway or Service Dog program.

Voluntary Withdrawal does not automatically prevent future participation in the program. Teams that withdraw voluntarily may request re-entry at a later date. Re-entry requests are subject to program capacity, updated suitability and stability review, review of any previous participation concerns, and trainer approval.

Where appropriate, the program may require updated veterinary documentation, behavioural Evaluation, Public Access assessment, or Handler participation review prior to re-entry approval.

15.3 Program-Directed Removal or Dismissal

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. reserves the right to remove or dismiss a Handler, dog, trainer, volunteer, Evaluator, or working team from participation within the program when continued involvement is no longer appropriate, safe, ethical, or consistent with established program standards.

Program-directed Removal or Dismissal decisions are made with consideration for:

- Public safety;
- Canine welfare;
- Handler suitability and participation capacity;
- Training progress and consistency;
- Compliance with program policies and ethical standards;
- Environmental stability affecting training success; and
- The overall integrity, credibility, and operational standards of the Service Dog program.
- Program-directed Removal or Dismissal may occur immediately where continued participation presents a risk to:
 - The safety of the public;
 - The safety or welfare of the dog;
 - The Handler, caregiver, or household members;
 - Other participants, trainers, volunteers, or Evaluators; or
 - The integrity, reputation, or ethical operation of the program.

Where appropriate, the program may provide corrective guidance, temporary participation Suspension, remediation planning, behavioural support recommendations, alternative training pathways, companion-only placement recommendations, or referral to other suitable services prior to permanent Removal or Dismissal.

Immediate Dismissal may occur without prior corrective action where significant safety, welfare, fraud, aggression, abuse, neglect, harassment, deception, or policy concerns are identified.

15.3.1 Dog-Related Factors

Program-directed Removal may occur when a dog demonstrates behavioural, medical, genetic, orthopedic, neurological, sensory, or developmental characteristics that significantly limit suitability for continued Service Dog training or Public Access work.

Factors that may result in Removal from the program include, but are not limited to:

- Persistent environmental instability or inability to recover appropriately from stress;
- Reactivity, defensive behaviour, or aggression toward people or animals;
- Chronic stress indicators or deterioration of welfare in training or working environments;
- Inability to safely function in Public Access settings;
- Insufficient engagement, responsiveness, or working relationship with the Handler;
- Inability to achieve or maintain task reliability expectations;
- Repeated inability to meet Progression or Public Access standards;
- Orthopedic, structural, neurological, sensory, or medical limitations affecting working capacity;
- Chronic pain, illness, or medical conditions incompatible with service work demands; or
- Other behavioural or health-related concerns identified through trainer, veterinary, or program assessment.

Removal decisions involving dog suitability are made with primary consideration for canine welfare, public safety, long-term quality of life, and the realistic ability of the dog to perform service-related responsibilities safely and consistently.

Where appropriate, the program may recommend retirement from service work, transition to companion status, alternative sport or working pathways, medical consultation, behavioural support services, or continued participation in non-service-related activities.

15.3.2 Handler-Related Factors

Program-directed Removal or Dismissal may occur when a Handler is unable or unwilling to meet the participation, safety, welfare, or training requirements necessary for the development and maintenance of a safe, effective, and ethical Service Dog Team.

Handler-related factors that may result in Removal or Dismissal include, but are not limited to:

- Inconsistent training participation or follow-through;
- Repeated failure to complete assigned training responsibilities or Progression requirements;
- Unsafe handling practices or inability to maintain reasonable control of the dog;

- Failure to attend scheduled sessions, Evaluations, or required program activities without appropriate communication;
- Repeated cancellation patterns that significantly interfere with training Progression;
- Misrepresentation or misuse of Service Dog identification, Public Access privileges, or program affiliation;
- Refusal to follow welfare-based training recommendations, safety requirements, veterinary guidance, or program policies;
- Use of training methods or equipment inconsistent with humane training practices or program standards;
- Behaviour toward staff, volunteers, clients, or members of the public that compromises safety or program integrity;
- Failure to maintain an environment reasonably supportive of the dog's welfare or training stability; or
- Other conduct determined to significantly interfere with safe and effective participation within the program.

Whenever appropriate, the program may provide corrective guidance, temporary participation Suspension, additional education, remediation planning, or modified training recommendations prior to Removal.

Immediate Dismissal may occur where behaviour, safety concerns, policy violations, fraud, harassment, aggression, or ethical concerns are considered significant.

15.3.3 Training Progression Factors

Program-directed Removal may occur when a Handler-dog team is unable to achieve established training, behavioural, task, or Public Access benchmarks within a reasonable developmental timeframe despite structured instruction, coaching, and support provided by the program.

Training Progression factors that may result in Removal include, but are not limited to:

- Inability to generalize trained behaviours or disability-mitigating tasks across environments;
- Inability to maintain behavioural neutrality, safety, or working stability in public settings;
- Failure to meet Progression benchmarks outlined within the Training Stage Progression Framework;
- Persistent regression in previously established skills;
- Inability to maintain task reliability or consistency necessary for safe service work;
- On-going difficulty with Public Access readiness despite training intervention;

- Inability of the Handler and dog to function together effectively as a working team;
- Extended lack of measurable progress despite reasonable accommodations and structured support; or
- Repeated failure to meet Evaluation, reassessment, or remediation requirements established by the program.

Training Progression decisions are evaluated on an individual basis with consideration for the dog's developmental stage, welfare, training history, Handler participation, environmental factors, disability-related needs, and overall suitability for continued service work.

Where appropriate, the Training Director or authorized facilitator may recommend additional remediation, temporary participation Suspension, transition to an alternative training pathway, companion-only placement, career change consideration, or retirement from service training prior to permanent Removal.

15.3.4 Welfare-Based Factors

The welfare of the dog remains a primary consideration throughout all stages of training, Evaluation, placement, and Public Access preparation within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program. Program-directed Removal may occur when continued participation in Service Dog training or working environments is determined to be inconsistent with the physical, emotional, behavioural, or developmental welfare needs of the dog.

Welfare-based factors that may result in Removal include, but are not limited to:

- Chronic or escalating stress indicators associated with training or working environments;
- Developmental immaturity affecting coping ability, emotional stability, or training readiness;
- Workload demands exceeding the dog's physical, behavioural, or emotional capacity;
- Behavioural deterioration or regression associated with service work expectations;
- Reduced confidence, environmental resilience, or recovery ability over time;
- Persistent avoidance behaviours, shutdown responses, or conflict-related behaviours;
- Declining enthusiasm, engagement, or quality of life associated with working demands;
- Medical, orthopedic, neurological, sensory, or pain-related concerns affecting welfare;
- Environmental sensitivity incompatible with reasonable Public Access expectations; or
- Other indicators suggesting that service work is not in the best interest of the individual dog.

Welfare-based Removal decisions are made with priority given to humane training principles, long-term quality of life, realistic working suitability, and the ethical responsibility to prevent unnecessary stress or compromise to the dog's well-being.

Removal for welfare-related reasons is not considered punitive and does not reflect failure on the part of the dog or Handler. Where appropriate, the program may recommend retirement from service work, companion placement, modified activity expectations, alternative sport or working pathways, or continued participation in non-service-related training activities.

15.3.5 Policy Compliance Factors

Program-directed Removal or Dismissal may occur when Handlers, trainers, volunteers, Evaluators, or participating teams fail to comply with established policies, ethical standards, safety requirements, or participation expectations within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program.

Policy compliance concerns that may result in Removal or Dismissal include, but are not limited to:

- Misrepresentation of the dog's training level, task reliability, Certification status, or Public Access readiness;
- Misuse of Service Dog identification, vesting privileges, training status representation, or program affiliation;
- Unsafe or inappropriate Public Access decisions that place the dog, Handler, public, or program at risk;
- Falsification, alteration, or intentional misrepresentation of training records, Evaluations, veterinary documentation, or program materials;
- Failure to follow established safety protocols, welfare standards, or equipment policies;
- Use of training methods, corrective practices, or equipment inconsistent with humane and ethical program standards;
- Breaches of confidentiality, professional conduct, or program integrity expectations;
- Harassment, intimidation, threatening behaviour, or conduct creating an unsafe training environment;
- Fraudulent representation of disability-related need, training status, or program participation; or
- Other conduct determined to compromise the safety, ethical operation, credibility, or integrity of the program.

Where appropriate, corrective education, remediation requirements, temporary participation Suspension, or policy review may be provided prior to Removal or Dismissal.

Immediate Dismissal may occur where violations involve significant safety concerns, fraud, intentional deception, animal welfare concerns, abuse, aggression, harassment, or conduct that substantially compromises the integrity or public trust of the program.

15.3.6 Immediate Safety-Based Removal or Dismissal Authority

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. reserves the right to immediately suspend, remove, or dismiss a Handler, dog, Evaluator, volunteer, trainer, or working team from participation when a situation is determined to present an immediate or significant safety, welfare, legal, behavioural, or ethical concern. Immediate Suspension, Removal, or Dismissal may occur without prior warning, remediation, or progressive corrective action when continued participation is considered unsafe, unethical, or otherwise inappropriate.

Circumstances that may result in immediate Suspension, Removal, or Dismissal include, but are not limited to:

- Aggressive behaviour or credible threat of aggression toward people or animals;
- Dangerous loss of Handler control in public or training environments;
- Significant public safety concerns;
- Animal abuse, neglect, unsafe handling, or serious welfare violations;
- Fraudulent representation of Service Dog status, Certification, or training level;
- Intentional falsification of records, Evaluations, veterinary information, or program documentation;
- Use of prohibited, abusive, or unsafe training methods;
- Harassment, intimidation, threatening conduct, or violence directed toward staff, Evaluators, volunteers, participants, or members of the public;
- Severe policy violations compromising program integrity or public trust;
- Medical, behavioural, or environmental concerns creating immediate risk to the dog or others; or
- Any circumstance determined by the program or Training Director to require urgent intervention to protect safety, welfare, or ethical program operation.

Immediate Suspension may be temporary pending review, reassessment, investigation, veterinary consultation, behavioural Evaluation, or administrative decision-making.

The program and Training Director reserve the right to impose participation restrictions, require reassessment, deny Public Access participation, revoke vesting privileges, restrict Progression activities, or proceed directly to permanent Removal or Dismissal where appropriate.

All immediate Suspension, Removal, or Dismissal decisions will be documented in accordance with program record-keeping, safety, and integrity policies.

15.4 Training Pause Prior to Withdrawal

Where appropriate, the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program may implement a temporary training pause prior to permanent Withdrawal from the program. Training pauses are intended to provide an opportunity for reassessment, skill stabilization, welfare recovery, medical Evaluation, environmental adjustment, or remediation before determining whether continued participation remains appropriate.

Training pauses may be initiated by the Handler, recommended by the Training Director, or implemented by the program due to concerns relating to:

- Canine welfare or stress-related indicators;
- Medical, orthopedic, developmental, or behavioural concerns;
- Handler health, stability, or participation limitations;
- Developmental plateaus or regression in training progress;
- Environmental instability affecting team success;
- Public Access readiness concerns;
- Safety or policy compliance issues requiring reassessment; or
- Other circumstances affecting the safe and effective Progression of the team.

During a training pause, participation requirements, Public Access expectations, vesting privileges, or Progression activities may be temporarily modified, restricted, or suspended pending reassessment.

Resumption of active training Progression is subject to Training Director approval and may require updated Evaluation, veterinary clearance, behavioural reassessment, skill review, remediation planning, or demonstration of readiness to safely continue participation in the program.

15.5 Career Change and Alternative Placement Determinations

A career change dog is a dog that initially participated in Service Dog training but is later determined to be better suited to an alternative role, lifestyle, or placement outside of active service work expectations. Within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program, career change determinations are not considered training failures. These decisions reflect an individualized, welfare-based assessment of the dog's behavioural, developmental, environmental, medical, emotional, or working suitability and are made in consideration of the dog's long-term quality of life and overall wellbeing.

Career change determinations may occur for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to:

- Environmental sensitivity or reduced Public Access suitability;
- Stress-related concerns associated with working expectations;

- Developmental or maturity-related factors;
- Medical, orthopedic, or neurological limitations;
- Insufficient task reliability or working consistency;
- Preference for lower-demand environments;
- Changes in Handler needs or placement suitability; or
- Other factors affecting long-term service work appropriateness.

Depending on the individual dog, alternative pathways or placements may include:

- Companion placement;
- Continued participation in recreational or enrichment-based training;
- Sport or activity-based training;
- Therapy dog preparation where appropriate;
- Detection, hunting, or alternative working roles where suitable;
- Support participation without Public Access expectations; or
- Other placements determined to align with the dog's welfare, temperament, and abilities.

Career change and placement decisions are made on an individual basis and may involve behavioural assessment, veterinary consultation, developmental review, and Evaluation of the dog's long-term welfare needs. The program reserves the right to restrict or prohibit continued representation of a career change dog as a Service Dog where service work suitability standards are no longer met.

15.6 Re-Entry and Re-Assessment Considerations.

Teams that voluntarily withdraw from the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program may apply for re-entry at a later date. Re-entry is not guaranteed and remains subject to program capacity, Training Director approval, updated suitability assessment, and confirmation that On-going program participation requirements can be safely and consistently met.

Re-entry and reassessment considerations may include, but are not limited to:

- Current behavioural and Public Access suitability of the dog;
- Handler readiness and participation capacity;
- Review of previous training history and Withdrawal circumstances;
- Demonstrated ability to comply with program standards and welfare expectations;

- Updated medical, veterinary, or behavioural information where relevant;
- Current task training goals and disability-related needs;
- Environmental stability affecting training success;
- Time elapsed since Withdrawal and any significant changes in team circumstances; and
- Overall suitability for continued participation within the program framework.

The program may require updated Evaluations, veterinary clearance, behavioural assessment, Public Access reassessment, remediation planning, or repeat Progression stages prior to approving re-entry. Previous training status, Progression level, vesting privileges, or Public Access participation are not automatically reinstated upon re-entry approval.

Teams previously removed for significant safety concerns, welfare violations, fraud, abusive training practices, intentional policy violations, or conduct compromising program integrity may be denied re-entry at the discretion of the Training Director.

15.7 Relationship to Program Integrity Policies

All Withdrawal, Suspension, career change, reassessment, and program exit decisions within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program are made in accordance with established program integrity, safety, welfare, ethics, and documentation standards.

Program exit decisions are intended to support:

- Ethical and humane treatment of dogs;
- Responsible Public Access participation;
- Accurate representation of Service Dog training status;
- Consistent application of program standards;
- Protection of public safety and Handler wellbeing;
- Objective and defensible decision-making processes; and
- Preservation of the credibility and integrity of the program.

Withdrawal or Dismissal decisions may involve review of training records, behavioural observations, veterinary information, Public Access Evaluations, Progression assessments, incident documentation, policy compliance history, and other relevant program records. Where applicable, Handlers may request review of administrative or Progression-related decisions through the program's established appeals and decision review procedures.

The existence of a review or appeal process does not prevent the program or Training Director from implementing immediate safety-based restrictions, Suspensions, or Withdrawals where necessary to protect canine welfare, public safety, or program integrity.

All records relating to Withdrawal, Suspension, reassessment, appeals, and placement determinations will be maintained in accordance with the program's documentation, confidentiality, and record-keeping policies.

15.8 Exit Documentation and Record Retention

All Withdrawal, Suspension, reassessment, career change, Dismissal, and program exit decisions within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program will be documented in accordance with established record-keeping, confidentiality, and program integrity policies.

Documentation may include:

- Training Progression records;
- Behavioural or Public Access Evaluations;
- Veterinary or welfare-related information where relevant;
- Incident or safety reports;
- Communication regarding Withdrawal or reassessment decisions;
- Appeals or review documentation; and
- Final placement or program outcome determinations.

Records relating to program exit decisions will be retained in accordance with the program's Record Keeping and Documentation Policy and applicable legal or operational requirements.

15.9 Post-Program Representation and Identification Expectations

Upon Withdrawal, Dismissal, career change determination, retirement from service work, or other program exit, Handlers may no longer represent the dog as actively participating in, certified by, endorsed by, or affiliated with the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program unless written authorization is provided by the Training Director.

The program reserves the right to revoke or restrict use of:

- Program-issued identification materials;
- Vesting or representation privileges associated with training status;
- Certification references;
- Program branding or affiliation claims; and
- Public representation suggesting active program approval or endorsement.

Handlers remain responsible for complying with applicable laws, Public Access requirements, and ethical representation standards following program exit. Career change, withdrawn, dismissed, retired, or non-approved dogs may not be represented as program-certified Service Dogs when Certification or active participation standards are no longer met.

15.10 Ownership and On-going Responsibility

Following Program Exit Unless otherwise specified through separate written agreement, ownership and On-going care responsibility for the dog remain with the legal owner or Handler following Withdrawal, Dismissal, retirement, career change determination, or other program exit from the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program.

Following program exit, the Handler or legal owner remains responsible for:

- Daily care, supervision, and welfare of the dog;
- Veterinary care and medical decision-making;
- Behavioural management and public safety;
- Compliance with applicable laws, bylaws, and Public Access regulations;
- Ethical representation of the dog's training and working status; and
- Appropriate use or discontinuation of service-related equipment, identification, or representation privileges.

Program Withdrawal, career change determination, retirement, or Dismissal does not transfer responsibility for the dog to the program unless a separate written placement, surrender, foster, or ownership agreement has been formally established.

Where appropriate, the program may provide recommendations regarding retirement, companion placement, behavioural support, welfare management, alternative activities, or referral to additional training or veterinary resources following program exit.

15.11 Emergency Interruption, Operational Suspension, and Force Majeure

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. reserves the right to temporarily modify, postpone, suspend, limit, or discontinue program operations, Evaluations, training activities, Public Access outings, travel activities, in-person services, online services, scheduling timelines, or participation requirements where circumstances arise that reasonably interfere with safe, ethical, practical, or lawful program operation.

Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- natural disasters;

- severe weather events;
- wildfire conditions;
- public health emergencies;
- infectious disease outbreaks;
- veterinary disease outbreaks;
- transportation interruptions;
- facility limitations;
- utility failures;
- technological failures;
- internet or communication disruptions;
- governmental restrictions;
- civil emergencies;
- labour disruptions;
- safety threats;
- instructor illness or incapacity;
- animal welfare emergencies;
- or other events beyond the reasonable control of the organization.

During periods of operational interruption, CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. may adjust program timelines, modify instructional delivery methods, temporarily suspend Progression requirements, reschedule Evaluations, transition services to remote delivery where appropriate, implement temporary safety restrictions, or place participation activities on hold until safe continuation becomes reasonably possible.

The organization shall not be held responsible for delays, cancellations, interruptions, temporary service limitations, or inability to fulfill projected timelines resulting from circumstances outside reasonable organizational control.

Where feasible, reasonable efforts shall be made to communicate operational changes, revised expectations, scheduling modifications, safety procedures, or temporary program adjustments to affected participants in a timely manner.

16.0 Program-Owned Placement Dogs

This section establishes policies governing the placement, transition, ownership, management, welfare protection, reassignment, and long-term oversight of dogs owned, bred, raised, developed, or trained by CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. for structured Service Dog, working dog, companion, sport, or specialty placement purposes.

Program-owned placement dogs may include dogs bred, purchased, raised, retained, developed, trained, or otherwise maintained by CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. for future placement into working, Service Dog, sport, companion, breeding, or alternate structured roles.

Placement policies are intended to support:

- long-term canine welfare;
- public safety;
- ethical placement practices;
- appropriate matching between dogs and placement participants;
- preservation of training integrity;
- responsible ownership transfer practices; and
- long-term placement stability.

All placement, transition, reassignment, and ownership decisions remain subject to the authority of the Training Director or designated program authority.

16.1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this section is to establish structured policies governing the selection, evaluation, placement, transition, oversight, and protection of program-owned or protected-placement dogs within the CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. program framework.

Placement policies apply to:

- Service Dogs;
- Service Dogs in training;
- sport dogs;
- working dogs;
- companion placements;

- breeding prospects;
- retired working dogs;
- alternate placement candidates; and
- dogs temporarily retained under program ownership during transitional placement stages.

This section applies whether the dog is:

- fully owned by CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc.;
- co-owned;
- protected under return-contract agreements;
- conditionally transferred;
- retained under breeder protection terms; or
- subject to structured placement oversight requirements.

16.2 Placement Eligibility and Candidate Selection

Prospective placement participants may undergo screening to determine suitability for placement participation.

Placement suitability considerations may include:

- lifestyle compatibility;
- household stability;
- environmental suitability;
- physical handling ability;
- emotional readiness;
- behavioural predictability;
- training participation capability;
- prior dog ownership experience;
- financial readiness;

- access to veterinary care;
- long-term housing stability;
- work and travel schedules;
- support systems;
- emergency care planning;
- ability to maintain welfare standards;
- capacity to safely manage the dog in public and private settings; and
- ability to comply with program expectations and placement agreements.

Where appropriate, the program may consider:

- caregiver involvement;
- secondary Handler participation;
- child supervision requirements;
- disability-related accommodation needs;
- household composition;
- presence of other animals;
- environmental stressors; and
- long-term placement sustainability factors.

Placement approval remains at the discretion of the Training Director. Approval for participation does not guarantee final placement approval or ownership transfer.

16.3 Compatibility Assessment Procedures

Prior to placement approval, prospective placement participants may be required to complete:

- compatibility evaluations;
- supervised interactions;
- structured handling sessions;

- environmental exposure sessions;
- lifestyle observations;
- public-access participation observations;
- household integration assessments;
- training participation sessions;
- field observations; and/or
- other structured assessment procedures.

Compatibility assessments may occur across multiple sessions, environments, and exposure levels before progression to transitional placement stages.

Assessment considerations may include:

- behavioural compatibility;
- Handler communication style;
- emotional regulation;
- environmental management ability;
- household dynamics;
- reinforcement consistency;
- canine comfort and engagement;
- public handling stability;
- stress-response patterns;
- welfare indicators; and
- overall long-term placement suitability.

Compatibility approval does not guarantee final placement transfer.

16.4 Transitional Placement Process

Placement transitions may occur progressively and may include:

- structured training sessions;
- supervised handling sessions;
- temporary possession arrangements;
- trial placement periods;
- supported integration stages;
- overnight evaluations;
- supervised public outings;
- field observations;
- remote follow-up monitoring; and/or
- staged transfer protocols.

During transitional placement periods:

- ownership of the dog may remain with CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc.;
- the dog may remain subject to program restrictions;
- placement participants may be required to follow temporary handling protocols;
- the organization may modify or suspend placement progression at any stage; and
- the dog may be recalled where concerns arise regarding welfare, safety, suitability, or placement stability.

Transition stages are intended to evaluate:

- long-term compatibility;
- environmental suitability;
- behavioural stability;
- public safety;

- Handler readiness;
- welfare outcomes; and
- sustainable integration potential.

16.5 Trial Placement and Temporary Possession

Where appropriate, trial placement periods may be implemented to evaluate:

- long-term compatibility;
- behavioural stability;
- environmental suitability;
- placement sustainability;
- Handler consistency;
- welfare outcomes; and
- overall integration success.

Temporary possession during transitional placement does not constitute ownership transfer unless explicitly authorized in writing by CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc.

Program participants may be required to:

- return the dog upon request;
- comply with temporary handling restrictions;
- participate in follow-up evaluations;
- provide progress updates;
- submit behavioural observations;
- attend scheduled training sessions; and
- return the dog by a specified return date during transitional stages.

Failure to comply with temporary possession requirements may result in immediate termination of placement participation.

16.6 Final Placement Approval

Final placement approval occurs only after completion of all required:

- compatibility assessments;
- transition stages;
- welfare reviews;
- behavioural evaluations;
- handling assessments;
- training participation requirements; and
- placement suitability determinations.

Final placement approval remains solely at the discretion of the Training Director.

Placement approval may be:

- denied;
- delayed;
- modified;
- suspended; or
- withdrawn where behavioural concerns, welfare concerns, safety concerns, instability concerns, incompatibility concerns, environmental concerns, legal concerns, or program compliance concerns are identified.

No participant is guaranteed placement approval.

16.7 Ownership Protection and Transfer

Restrictions Dogs placed through CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. may not be:

- sold;
- transferred;
- leased;
- gifted;

- surrendered;
- rehomed;
- abandoned;
- bred;
- used for unauthorized breeding purposes;
- euthanized outside emergency veterinary necessity; or
- otherwise disposed of without prior written authorization from CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc.

Unauthorized transfer, sale, breeding, disposal, concealment, or relocation of a protected-placement dog may result in:

- mandatory return requirements;
- repossession proceedings;
- reacquisition actions;
- revocation of placement privileges;
- liquidated damages claims;
- recovery of legal expenses;
- recovery of transportation and retrieval expenses;
- injunctive relief; and/or
- additional legal remedies permitted under applicable law.

Program participants acknowledge that placement protections exist to preserve:

- canine welfare;
- behavioural stability;
- ethical breeding protections;
- training integrity;

- public safety; and
- long-term placement accountability.

16.8 Right of First Refusal and Mandatory Return

If a placement participant becomes unable or unwilling to retain the dog, the dog must first be returned to CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. or formally offered back to the organization before alternate placement may occur.

Participants must not independently:

- rehome;
- surrender;
- transfer;
- gift;
- foster;
- sell; or
- place the dog with:
 - rescues;
 - shelters;
 - breeders;
 - private individuals;
 - third parties; or
 - other organizations without written authorization.

The organization retains right of first refusal for all protected-placement dogs. Failure to comply with mandatory return requirements may result in enforcement action.

16.9 Welfare Protection and Reacquisition Authority.

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. reserves the right to recommend:

- reassessment;

- temporary removal;
- welfare intervention;
- structured decompression;
- placement modification;
- temporary suspension of working activity;
- behavioural reassessment;
- retraining;
- role modification;
- return-to-program status; or
- reacquisition where concerns arise involving:
- neglect;
- unsafe handling;
- abusive treatment;
- behavioural deterioration;
- fraudulent representation;
- chronic instability;
- unsafe living conditions;
- unmanaged aggression;
- significant welfare decline;
- environmental unsuitability;
- failure to maintain veterinary care;
- unsafe public participation; or
- substantial program violations.

All welfare-based decisions are made in consideration of:

- canine welfare;
- public safety;
- Handler safety;
- placement stability;
- long-term sustainability; and
- ethical training standards.

16.10 Placement Participant Responsibilities

Placement participants are responsible for maintaining:

- humane care;
- safe handling;
- appropriate housing;
- appropriate nutrition;
- routine veterinary care;
- behavioural management;
- training continuity;
- emotional welfare;
- physical welfare;
- environmental safety;
- exercise appropriate to the dog;
- structured rest and recovery;
- appropriate public behaviour standards; and
- compliance with all program expectations.

Participants are expected to:

- maintain training standards;

- comply with equipment policies;
- follow welfare expectations;
- maintain public safety standards;
- avoid unauthorized training methods;
- accurately represent the dog in public;
- report significant behavioural concerns;
- report injury or illness affecting function;
- participate in reassessment where required; and
- maintain long-term welfare stewardship.

16.11 Breeding and Reproductive Restrictions

Dogs placed through the program may be subject to:

- sterilization requirements;
- breeding restrictions;
- limited registration agreements;
- co-ownership arrangements;
- reproductive management conditions;
- breeding approval requirements; and/or
- breeding contract provisions.

Unauthorized breeding of a protected-placement dog may result in:

- repossession;
- revocation of placement privileges;
- mandatory sterilization requirements;
- liquidated damages claims;

- recovery of offspring;
- recovery of legal expenses; and/or
- additional legal remedies where permitted under applicable law.

Breeding decisions remain subject to the discretion of CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc.

16.12 Placement Failure, Return, and Reassignment

Return of a placement dog may occur where:

- compatibility concerns arise;
- welfare concerns emerge;
- environmental stability cannot be maintained;
- behavioural concerns develop;
- lifestyle changes interfere with placement success;
- public safety concerns arise; or
- long-term placement sustainability cannot be appropriately maintained.
- Return of a placement dog does not automatically constitute misconduct or failure.

Returned dogs may undergo:

- reassessment;
- decompression periods;
- retraining;
- welfare review;
- role modification;
- alternate placement consideration;
- retirement planning; or
- transition to companion placement where appropriate.

All reassignment decisions remain at the discretion of the Training Director.

16.13 Public Representation and Social Media Restrictions

Placement participants must accurately represent the dog's:

- training status;
- working status;
- Certification status;
- breeding status;
- ownership status; and
- placement relationship with the organization.

Participants must not:

- falsely represent the dog as fully trained when it is not;
- falsely claim Certification;
- misrepresent public-access rights;
- use the dog to promote fraudulent services;
- use the dog for unauthorized fundraising;
- use the dog in misleading advertising;
- create false affiliation claims; or
- publicly represent the dog in a manner inconsistent with program standards.

Social media content involving program dogs must not:

- promote unsafe handling;
- depict abusive practices;
- encourage misrepresentation;
- interfere with welfare standards; or
- damage program integrity.

The organization reserves the right to require correction or removal of content that substantially conflicts with program standards, welfare expectations, or public safety considerations.

16.14 Emergency Care and Contingency Planning.

Placement participants are required to maintain an emergency care plan appropriate to the dog's needs. Emergency planning may include:

- emergency caregiver identification;
- veterinary emergency planning;
- temporary housing arrangements;
- evacuation planning;
- medication instructions;
- feeding protocols;
- behavioural management instructions; and
- emergency transportation planning.

Participants remain responsible for ensuring emergency caregivers understand:

- handling requirements;
- safety considerations;
- behavioural management needs;
- working restrictions;
- welfare expectations; and
- medical requirements.

Failure to maintain appropriate emergency planning may result in reassessment of placement suitability.

16.15 Post-Placement Support and Monitoring

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. may provide:

- follow-up support;
- behavioural consultation;

- refresher training;
- maintenance coaching;
- public-access review;
- task maintenance support;
- transition guidance;
- welfare consultation;
- reassessment services; and/or
- structured follow-up evaluations.

Post-placement monitoring may be recommended to support:

- welfare stability;
- placement success;
- behavioural consistency;
- public safety;
- Handler integration;
- working reliability; and
- long-term placement sustainability.

Participants may be required to participate in reassessment where substantial concerns arise regarding:

- welfare;
- public safety;
- behavioural stability;
- training integrity; or
- program compliance.

16.16 Documentation and Placement Records

CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc. retains records related to:

- placement evaluations;
- compatibility assessments;
- transitional placement agreements;
- ownership status;
- behavioural observations;
- welfare concerns;
- reassessment findings;
- veterinary documentation;
- follow-up recommendations;
- training participation;
- placement outcomes; and
- enforcement actions in accordance with Section 11 — Record Keeping and Documentation Policy.

16.17 Program Authority and Final Decision-Making

All placement, reassignment, ownership transfer, breeding approval, return, reacquisition, welfare intervention, transition, and placement-related determinations remain at the discretion of the Training Director or designated program authority.

External recommendations may be considered where appropriate; however, final authority regarding:

- placement approval;
- placement continuation;
- ownership transfer;
- reassignment;
- reacquisition;
- breeding authorization;

- welfare intervention; and
- termination of placement participation remains exclusively with CanineSidekicks Service Dogs Inc.

All decisions are made in consideration of:

- canine welfare;
- public safety;
- program integrity;
- behavioural stability;
- ethical placement practices; and
- long-term sustainability of the dog and placement relationship.