

Autism Support & Regulation Service Dog Program

Task Specifications

TASK 1. ALERT TASKS

The service dog is trained to recognize and respond to behavioural, physiological, or environmental indicators associated with the handler's disability. Upon detecting these indicators, the dog provides a clear trained alert to notify the handler that intervention strategies may be required.

Alert tasks may include:

- Dysregulation Alert
- Sensory Overload Alert
- Transition Support

The service dog's alert training in application will:

- Increase awareness of developing symptoms
- Support earlier intervention and self-regulation
- Reduce severity and duration of disability-related events
- Improve safety and independence in daily life
- Allow timely implementation of coping strategies

TASK 2. TACTILE GROUNDING TASKS

Tactile grounding tasks may include Deep Pressure Therapy (DPT), Chin Rest, Lap Pressure, Body Contact, Nose Nudge, Paw Target, and Sustained Physical Contact.

These tasks provide sensory input intended to assist the handler in maintaining awareness of the present environment while supporting emotional and physiological regulation.

The service dog's tactile grounding training in application will:

- Promote nervous system regulation
- Improve body awareness and grounding
- Support emotional co-regulation
- Reduce intensity of sensory overload
- Improve recovery from dysregulation events
- Enhance overall safety and stability

TASK 3. INTERRUPTION TASKS

Interruption tasks may include repetitive behaviour interruption, escalating behaviour interruption, self-stimulatory behaviour redirection, emotional escalation interruption, and attention redirection.

The dog may interrupt behaviours through physical contact, nudging, persistent engagement, tactile stimulation, or other trained behaviours designed to redirect the handler's attention and support self-regulation.

The service dog's interruption training in application will:

- Disrupt escalating behaviour patterns
- Redirect attention to the present environment
- Improve responsiveness to coping strategies
- Support emotional regulation
- Increase functional independence

TASK 4. REGULATION TASKS

Regulation tasks may include calming contact, grounding behaviours, pressure-based support, co-regulation behaviours, and relaxation support.

These tasks are designed to assist the handler in achieving and maintaining emotional and physiological regulation.

The service dog's regulation training in application will:

- Promote emotional regulation
- Support self-regulation skills
- Reduce stress and anxiety
- Improve resilience during challenging situations
- Enhance overall quality of life

TASK 5. TRANSITION SUPPORT TASKS

The service dog is trained to assist the handler during changes in environment, activity, routine, or expectations.

Transition support tasks may include:

- Transition Preparation
- Environmental Entry Support
- Environmental Scanning
- Guided Movement
- Routine Transition Assistance

The service dog's transition support training in application will:

- Reduce anxiety related to change
- Improve adaptability during transitions
- Increase confidence in unfamiliar environments
- Support successful participation in daily activities

TASK 6. ROUTINE SUPPORT TASKS

The service dog is trained to assist the handler with maintaining routines, completing daily activities, and navigating expected transitions throughout the day.

Routine support tasks may include:

- Routine Reminder Behaviours
- Wake-Up Assistance
- Bedtime Routine Support
- Activity Transition Support
- Location-Based Cueing
- Schedule Support Behaviours

The service dog's routine support training in application will:

- Improve consistency in daily routines
- Reduce stress associated with task initiation
- Support successful transitions between activities
- Increase independence in daily living
- Enhance participation in school, work, and community environments

TASK 7. NAVIGATION TASKS

The service dog is trained to assist the handler with safe movement through challenging environments that may contribute to sensory overload, anxiety, or dysregulation.

Navigation tasks may include:

- Lead Through Crowds
- Find Exit
- Find Designated Person
- Room Search

The service dog's navigation training in application will:

- Improve confidence in public environments
- Reduce environmental stress and uncertainty
- Assist with safe movement through crowded areas
- Increase independence during community access

TASK 8. SAFETY TASKS

The service dog is trained to perform behaviours that enhance the handler's physical and psychological sense of safety.

Safety tasks may include:

- Buffering
- Boundary Maintenance
- Find Caregiver
- Find Safe Space
- Retrieve Emergency Kit

The service dog's safety task training in application will:

- Increase feelings of security
- Improve personal-space management
- Reduce environmental overwhelm
- Support independence in public settings
- Improve safety during disability-related events

TASK 9. RETRIEVAL & ASSISTANCE TASKS

The service dog is trained to retrieve, carry, locate, and manipulate commonly used items required by the handler.

Tasks may include:

- Retrieve Daily Items
- Locate Items
- Retrieve Dropped Items
- Carry Small Items
- Open Doors
- Close Doors

The service dog's retrieval and assistance training in application will:

- Improve daily independence
- Reduce physical and cognitive demands
- Increase efficiency in daily activities
- Provide practical assistance during periods of dysregulation

TASK 10. RESPONSE SEQUENCES

The service dog is trained to perform multi-step response chains that combine grounding, interruption, regulation, navigation, safety, and retrieval tasks into a coordinated response.

Response sequences may include:

- Sensory Overload Response Sequence
- Transition Support Response Sequence
- Recovery & Regulation Sequence

These integrated task chains are customized to the handler's disability-related needs and provide comprehensive support during disability-related events.

The service dog's response sequence training in application will:

- Provide structured support during challenging situations
- Reduce recovery time
- Improve handler safety
- Increase independence in public and private settings
- Enhance overall task reliability and effectiveness