

Participant and Evaluator Guide

AKC's Canine Good Citizen Program



September 2024

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Part I. General Information



About the Canine Good Citizen® Program

Welcome to the American Kennel Club® Canine Good Citizen® program. We would like to thank you for participating in CGC classes, taking your dog through the CGC test, or serving as an AKC Approved CGC Evaluator for the CGC Test.

The CGC Program is a two-part program that is designed to: 1) teach responsible dog ownership to owners, and 2) certify dogs that have the training and behaviors needed to be reliable, well-behaved members of their families and communities.

Dogs who pass the CGC test should be under good control and be safe around people and other dogs. The purpose of the CGC Program is to ensure that our favorite companion, the dog, can be a respected member of the community because it has been trained to be well behaved in the home, in public places, and in the presence of other dogs.

The CGC Program welcomes both purebred and mixed breed dogs. The CGC Test is noncompetitive, and dogs are not required to perform with the same precision required in formal obedience.

Dogs that pass all 10 items of the CGC test, including purebreds and mixed breeds, are listed in the CGC records at the American Kennel Club. Owners of dogs that pass all 10 items of the CGC test may order an official CGC certificate from the American Kennel Club, or if their dog has an AKC, PAL, or AKC Canine Partners number, the dog can be awarded an official title. Titles are listed on the dog's title record and the suffix "CGC" may be used after the dog's name.

AKC Approved Canine Good Citizen Evaluators assume responsibility for conducting the test according to the AKC protocol. Evaluators should ensure that each participant has an experience that is positive, educational, and fun. Handlers may talk to their dogs throughout the test and the atmosphere should be relaxed. Praise should be given to dogs throughout the test, and evaluators may remind handlers who are nervous to reassure their dogs with praise, smiles, hugs, and petting.

The way in which CGC Evaluators conduct a CGC test and interact with participants may determine if a dog owner will become involved in dog training and activities in the future.

To CGC class and test participants and CGC Evaluators, thank you very much for helping us assure that dogs will always be welcome and respected members of our communities.

Before and After CGC

There are three other programs that are directly related to Canine Good Citizen.

These are: 1) AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy[®], 2) AKC Community Canine[™], and 3) AKC Urban CGC[™].

AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy

AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy is the puppy level of the CGC program. "S.T.A.R." stands for Socialization, Training, Activity, and a Responsible owner, all the things every puppy needs.

AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy is not a one-time test like CGC which can be a one-time test. In AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy, puppies and their owners must attend a class lasting at least 6 weeks. One of the classes may be an Introduction class without puppies present, and one may be graduation. Make-up classes may be given for puppies who miss a class.

Dogs can take the CGC test without completing AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy. AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy skills are a step-down from CGC skills. Dogs do not need an AKC, PAL, or AKC Canine Partners number to earn the STAR award. For more information on AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy, visit www.akc.org/starpuppy

AKC Community Canine and AKC Urban CGC

AKC Community Canine (CGCA) and Urban CGC (CGCU) are official titles that are both considered advanced CGC titles. Both require CGC as a prerequisite, and either one can be tested before the other.

CGC, AKC Community Canine and Urban CGC can be tested on the same day if the Evaluator has time. If tested on the same day, the test forms should be sent to AKC together. AKC will enter the CGC first.

Once the dog earns CGCA or CGCU, the CGC will no longer show on the dog's record. This is because it is known that once the dog has the more advanced titles, it has the CGC.

For more information on AKC Community Canine, see:

<https://www.akc.org/products-services/training-programs/canine-good-citizen/akc-community-canine/>

For more information on AKC Urban CGC, see:

<https://www.akc.org/products-services/training-programs/canine-good-citizen/akc-urban-canine-good-citizen/test-items-for-akc-urban-cgc/>

Age Requirements for Dogs

There is no age limit for dogs taking the CGC test. Because we support dog owners who wish to socialize and introduce their dogs to training as early as possible, dogs are welcome to participate in CGC tests when they are old enough to have completed all vaccinations. Owners who bring young dogs to CGC tests become acquainted with qualified trainers and the CGC test can be used to identify future training goals.

There are several exceptions to having no age limit at a CGC test. The Match Regulations of the American Kennel Club (Chapter 2) impose minimum age requirements of at least 6 months for A, OA and OB sanctioned matches and at least 3 months at B matches. When CGC tests are given in conjunction with AKC events, clubs enforce the regulations for all activities.

Another exception to having no age limit for dogs taking the CGC test is when the test is specifically designed to evaluate dogs for use in therapy work. In this case, some test-giving agencies, at the direction of a therapy dog group, might require that dogs be at least 1 year of age to be evaluated.

We would like to stress that when a dog is tested and passes the CGC test as a puppy, it is important for the owners to have the dog re-tested as an adult. This is because behavior and temperament can change over time. Further, the responsible owner will have dogs re-evaluated on CGC skills periodically (e.g., every 2 years) to demonstrate that training and good manners are maintained. Retesting is not an AKC requirement; it is something for the dog owner to consider. Some therapy dog organizations and insurance companies will require retesting periodically (e.g., every 2 years).

If dogs are re-tested, owners may choose to order an updated certificate, or they may simply keep their old certificate along with updated CGC test paperwork showing more recent proof of passing the test.

Biting or Growling Incidents

The majority of dogs who take the CGC Test are friendly, happy animals and the job of the Evaluator is extremely rewarding. There are some exceptions to every rule, and if an Evaluator encounters a situation where a dog might show some signs of aggression, there are some things to keep in mind.

Any dog that growls or snaps at, bites, attacks, or attempts to attack another person or another dog is not a good citizen and must be dismissed from the test. If an Evaluator observes any signs of aggression (biting, snapping, growling, attempting to attack) the test should not be continued.

Further, if any of these behaviors are observed in the immediate testing area prior to or after testing, the Evaluator should send a written report to the AKC CGC Department. If an Evaluator witnesses a dog engaging in an aggressive incident after passing the test, the Evaluator should notify AKC.

ON THE GROUNDS OF AN AKC SHOW: If there is an aggressive incident (biting, growling, snapping) in the CGC ring and the test is held in conjunction with an AKC event, the Evaluator should dismiss the dog from the test and notify the Show Superintendent and AKC Field Representative immediately!! The Show Superintendent will need the information on your CGC registration form. Evaluators should use good judgment when a dog shows signs of aggression. Do not attempt to work through an aggression problem in a CGC test. If the dog engages in any aggression, testing should stop.

As an Evaluator, if you are having a difficult time reading the dog and you feel uncomfortable, you should instruct the owner to handle the dog in a manner that ensures your safety. For example, it is acceptable for Evaluators to ask owners to lift the dog's leg for you so that you may handle the foot. Evaluators can instruct owners to steady a dog's head or provide the dog with reassurance during the exam and grooming exercises. If the dog is making the Evaluator feel so uncomfortable that he or she feels unsafe, the dog should not pass the CGC test.

AKC Conformation judges have provided some of our CGC Evaluators with good tips on how to approach difficult-to-read dogs. Some of these tips include: approach the dog from the front at a slight angle rather than directly head-on, avoid staring at the dog, talk in a reassuring, confident voice, and give the handler specific, direct instructions for test items such as, "I need to check the feet, could you help me by lifting each leg?"

Checklist of Test Equipment

CANINE GOOD CITIZEN TEST

Minimum Materials Required

- Test forms (from the AKC)
- Pens for evaluators
- Dog brushes (at least one) 15-20 ft. leash
- Stop watch or clock with second hand for #10
- Distraction items (pan to drop, etc.)
- Clean up supplies (plastic bags or pooper scoopers, paper towels, liquid cleaner for urine)

Recommended Additional Materials

- Clipboards for evaluators
- AKC literature (brochure – “Getting Started in Obedience, Agility” (Part # GOU001)
- CGC written materials (brochures, etc.)
- List of clubs and obedience classes in the area
- Cash box and change when money is charged
- Water/pans for dogs (at public events; dog show folks provide this on their own)
- Sign-up sheets for getting more info (public events)
- Hospitality for Evaluators (water, lunch and parking passes)
- Signage at each of the 10 test stations (“#3-Appearance and Grooming”)

Making It First Class

- AKC educational materials (for public events)
- Collar tags or other incentives for participants
- Camera and film
- Script for announcer (large events)

Minimum Staffing Recommended: Standard Sized Event

- Five people (one for registration, one main evaluator, one for #10, at least 2 more for crowd and distracters).
- Dogs: at least one distraction dog per test (if dogs are well-behaved, Dog #1 can meet Dog #2)

CGC Certificates

In April 2001, the American Kennel Club began issuing the CGC certificates from the AKC office. This change was implemented at the request of numerous participants who requested a frameable certificate that was not hand-written. Further, participants would frequently call to say they had not received the certificate from the evaluator. Having individual test participants deal directly with the AKC allows us to quickly resolve any problems related to their dog's certificate. Evaluators should not send in test forms as a group.

Collar, Leashes and Equipment

Updated September 2024

All tests must be performed on leash. Dogs should wear well-fitting buckle or slip collars (including martingales). They may also wear body harnesses for the CGC test. Body harnesses should not restrict the movement of the dog. Special training equipment such as pinch collars, electronic collars, and head collars are not permitted. The leash should be made of either leather or fabric/nylon or biothane. Retractable leashes may not be used in the CGC test. The evaluator should have available a 20-ft. line for Test #6.

We recognize that special training collars may be valuable equipment in the beginning stages of dog training, however, we feel that dogs are ready to be tested after they have been transitioned to a slip or buckle collar, or body harness. If an evaluator is teaching classes and does not feel comfortable with one of the AKC permitted collars, students may be required to take the test in the type of collar used in class (as long as it is permitted by AKC for testing). If the CGC test is advertised for the general public, all of the permitted collar types and body harnesses should be allowed in the test.

Conduct — Professional Behavior for Evaluators

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Canine Good Citizen Evaluators represent the AKC and one of its activities. Evaluators should maintain a professional demeanor when conducting CGC tests. Professionalism applies to presenting the CGC Program in a positive manner by being organized, dressing appropriately for public events, maintaining high ethical standards, using good social skills when dealing with participants and the public, and using good judgment when assessing dogs.

Professionalism for CGC Evaluators extends beyond CGC testing. AKC Approved CGC Evaluators should be professional at all times, including on social media. Name-calling and making claims about other evaluators that cannot be substantiated are not professional behaviors.

Conflict of Interest

Canine Good Citizen Evaluators should avoid any situations that appear to be a conflict of interest. Evaluators may not test dogs they own in the CGC test. Furthermore, if any dog is handled extensively by the Evaluator during a class, the Evaluator should not "meet and greet" the dog in the exercises involving a friendly stranger.

Corrections

The Canine Good Citizen Program is a program that encourages owners to have fun with their dogs. Harsh corrections are not permitted in the test and are grounds for dismissal.

Throughout the CGC test, Evaluators can encourage handlers to PRAISE and interact with their dogs. If beginning handlers are nervous, they may need to be reminded about the importance of communicating with the dog.

Disabilities – Dogs

Dogs with disabilities such as the loss of a leg, deafness, or blindness in one eye are welcome in the Canine Good Citizen Test. Dogs must perform all 10 test items to pass the test, however, handlers may use hand signals, gestures, or other cues to which the dog has been trained to respond. There are no breed-specific exceptions to the test requirements (e.g., dogs may not skip the sit exercise because “this breed doesn’t like to sit.”)

Disabilities – Handlers

Handlers with disabilities are encouraged to participate in the Canine Good Citizen Test. Sometimes, it may be necessary to make minor changes to standard procedures to accommodate handlers with disabilities. In cases where Evaluators have questions, call the Canine Good Citizen Department for assistance. Evaluators who do not know in advance that they will be testing a handler with disabilities should use their best judgment to handle the situation and call the AKC for guidance as soon as possible.

Eliminating (urinating/defecating) During Testing

Any dog that eliminates during testing should not pass the test. The only exceptions to this are that elimination is allowed between exercises when the test is outdoors (e.g., the dog urinates on a bush as he is being walked to the next test station) and in Test 10 when the test is held outdoors. Evaluators should choose a CGC test location carefully if the test is held outdoors to prevent problems with dogs eliminating during testing.

Feedback to Participants

As a CGC Evaluator, it will be your job to give each participant some feedback at the end of his or her CGC Test. If the participant's dog passed all 10 items of the test, giving the feedback will be easy. A big smile and "Congratulations, your dog passed all 10 items," is the favorite message of most evaluators. But what should you say if the dog didn't pass all 10 items on the test? The CGC test form used to have columns marked "Pass" and "Fail." The most recent versions of the form say "Pass" and "Needs More Training." This is because so many evaluators would get to the end of the test and say to the participant, "YOU FAILED," or, "YOUR DOG FAILED." Any person who has taken the time and made the effort to bring their dog to the Canine Good Citizen Test should be commended.

To tell a person that the dog needs more training, try something like this. "Your dog did a great job. She passed all of the items except Test 6 when she refused to lie down. She could learn this in a few sessions. I really hope you'll try the test again. She's a wonderful dog."

In a case where the dog is not close to passing the test, you could try something like the following: "This is really a nice dog. He is so full of energy and it's clear he loves you. But on these test items, it looks like he needs a little more training... Have you been to any obedience classes?... Most of these behaviors are skills that could be taught in a matter of weeks. I'm so glad you brought your dog today. I hope you'll work on this and try again. I can tell by the way this dog watches every move you make, he'd do well in training."

Feedback should be given to each participant as testing for his or her dog is completed. We discourage having participants sit and wait until all testing is completed to hear who passed the CGC.

Fees

Test-giving organizations and individual evaluators may charge a fee for conducting a Canine Good Citizen test. Fees are used to cover the costs of test kits, mailing, copying, and advertising related to the test. Private trainers sometimes charge a fee for a testing session that is commensurate with their hourly rate of service.

Evaluators may decide the fee depending on what is appropriate in the given community. Sometimes fees are higher when proceeds will be donated to a good cause such as a Police K-9 unit, animal shelter, etc.

In addition to the fee the Evaluator or club charges for testing, there is an additional fee that the participant will pay to the AKC when ordering the CGC certificate. The current price of the fee paid to AKC for the certificate/title will be on the test form given to the dog owner by the Evaluator.

Follow-up Training and Testing

Ideally, the dog owners we see in the CGC Test will go on to participate in other training activities with their dogs. Evaluators can inform participants at community events where they can go for additional training or future CGC tests for dogs that did not pass the test.

Food

Handlers are not permitted to use food as a reward during the CGC Test. While we recognize that food can be effectively used as a reinforcer during training, it is considered a training aid and should not be used in the CGC test. The purpose of the CGC Test is to determine if the dog has learned all of the skills on the test and if the dog can be controlled by the handler if no special incentives are offered.

Instructions to Participants

At the beginning of the CGC Test, the Evaluator should give the participants some general instructions. Participants should be reminded that dogs are not required to perform with the precision required in formal obedience. Multiple prompts (two or three commands) are acceptable, talking to the dog throughout the test is acceptable, and body language on the part of the handler is fine.

Handlers should be encouraged to praise their dogs when it has successfully performed one of the test items. Nervous beginning handlers may need to be reminded to communicate with the dog (e.g., "Tell him what you want him to do"). The Canine Good Citizen experience should be fun for the handler and the dog.

Liability for Evaluators

We occasionally receive calls from Evaluators or clubs who are worried about the implications of certifying a dog as a Canine Good Citizen. "Will I get sued if the dog I pass later bites someone?" is the question asked. When an evaluator signs a dog's CGC test, the evaluator is essentially attesting that the dog was observed to perform all of the skills at a specific test. Although we can try our very best to be responsible, there are no guarantees for the future behavior of animals or humans.

Locations

CGC tests can be held as a graduation for classes, at dog shows, and at community events. In the case where an individual dog is tested (e.g., for therapy work) dogs must be tested in a public setting. Evaluators may not test dogs at the dog's/owner's home or yard. In all cases, a distraction dog and "crowd" must be present.

Number of Evaluators

In a class situation, one instructor can evaluate the test items with each dog. However, at formal CGC events, where the public is invited, more Evaluators are usually needed to ensure that the CGC test flows smoothly and efficiently. Having enough help maintains spectator appeal and prevents any participant from waiting for an unreasonable amount of time.

For most events where the public will be invited, a minimum of three people will be needed. One person will sit at a table and take registrations. A second person serves as the main Evaluator. A third person can be used to hold the dog's leash in Item #10. The evaluator will also need at least two people to simulate a "crowd." This brings the total number of people involved in testing to five. However, spectators can be asked to come into the ring and provide the crowd.

For very large events, testing agencies/clubs may decide to run more than one CGC ring.

Number of Participants

As a general rule, 7 to 10 dogs can be tested per hour. Unless multiple rings are used for the CGC, a four-hour period would result in about 40 dogs being tested if the test was run efficiently.

The CGC Test is the first experience many owners have with dog training. Testing agencies/clubs should not attempt to run as many dogs through the test as fast as possible. Each handler deserves the time and attention of the evaluator and tests should not be rushed.

Dogs should not be tested as a group.

Paperwork Requirements

Test Summary Form

After each AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy, CGC, AKC Community Canine, or Urban CGC test, Evaluators should send in a TEST SUMMARY FORM to AKC. This short, 1-page form summarizes the number of dogs tested, how many passed/failed, etc. This also documents the testing that you have done. The TEST SUMMARY FORM should be sent to AKC whether there was one dog in the test or 50 dogs.

The ONLINE Test Summary is at: <http://www.akc.org/products-services/training-programs/canine-good-citizen/evaluator-test-summary-form/>

Test Registration Forms (the actual test form)

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The Test Registration Forms for AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy, CGC, AKC Community Canine, and Urban CGC are the forms that evaluators score at the test. Each test item is checked “pass” or “needs more training” and if the dog passes, this is the form the owner sends to AKC to request the certificate and/or title.

CGC Test Registration forms should be entered online (in the secure portal) so the owner gets a message that the form was received, and it can be tracked. This method is faster than sending paper via the regular mail.

Here is the link:

<https://www.apps.akc.org/title-application-portal/>

The Evaluator should keep the yellow copy of the 3-part form for one year. If an owner loses his or her paperwork and needs proof of passing the test, the Evaluator may be contacted.

The dog owner receives 1) the original copy of the test form to send to AKC for the certificate, and 2) the back copy with test items for his or her records.

If an owner waits longer than a year to send paperwork to AKC, the dog will need to be retested.

Qualifications of Evaluators

CGC Evaluators are not called “certified Evaluators.” They are referred to as “AKC Approved CGC Evaluators.”

CGC Evaluators go through the AKC Canine College to apply to become an AKC Approved CGC Evaluator. Prospective evaluators will complete learning modules, take tests, and submit an application. CGC Evaluators are required to have 2 year’s experience working with other people and their dogs. This experience must be with the general public as opposed to with one’s family and friends. Most CGC Evaluators teach classes at an AKC club or they have their own training businesses.

CGC Evaluators can be trainers and instructors, judges, private trainers, veterinarians, veterinary technicians, animal control officers, kennel operators, and canine 4-H leaders.

In addition to being able to determine if the dog performed specific tasks on the CGC Test, an Evaluator should be able to make good decisions regarding whether a dog is safe and under the control of the handler.

Evaluators must:

1. Be at least 18 years old
2. Have at least 2 years’ experience working with others and their dogs (e.g., classes)
3. Have worked with a variety of breeds/types of mixes (size, shape, etc.).
4. Be in good standing with AKC (not suspended).

Retesting

Evaluators may choose to allow dogs who have only missed one test item to take the test again at the end of the day’s testing.

Service Dogs

Service dogs help people with disabilities. Dogs are not service dogs simply because they passed the CGC test and they do not have special access rights in public places (stores, restaurants, planes, etc.). Service dogs must also be trained on tasks specifically related to the person’s disability.

CGC are also not automatically therapy dogs because they passed the CGC test. See Therapy Dogs.

Test Formats

Organizations holding CGC tests have a considerable amount of flexibility in deciding the order in which to give the tests. Some test items naturally go together, and it makes sense to have one Evaluator score these items to maximize efficiency. An example of this is Items # 1, #2, and #3. If test items are set up at different stations, the test will flow more smoothly if participants enter the area and proceed in a square or circular direction. Having participants going back and forth across an area is confusing and it takes up valuable time.

HOWEVER, TESTING SHOULD NOT BE DONE AS A GROUP. DOGS SHOULD BE TESTED INDIVIDUALLY.

Having helpers that are ready when needed helps things move along more quickly. For example, the main Evaluator should not have to call for a crowd each time a new participant is ready to do Item #5. Ideally, the crowd helpers will be in place and ready as soon as the Evaluator finishes the previous test item.

For tests where there is a large entry, the main Evaluator can start with one dog and begin the test. As that dog moves out of the first area, a second Evaluator can begin testing another dog. Another option is that there are several evaluators each assigned to stations. The first dog comes in and does the first few test items. When the dog moves to the next area, the next dog enters and begins the test.

To prevent a backlog of participants waiting to take the CGC Test, some clubs assign appointment times about 10 minutes apart. This can be handled by using a pre-registration process. Experiment with different formats to determine the procedures preferred by your CGC testing team.

At a CGC test where there are several assistants, only the main Evaluator is required to complete the approval process and obtain a CGC Evaluator number. Evaluators may combine items such as providing distractions (#9) with the crowd (#5).

Testing Your Own Dog

See Conflict of Interest (page 10).

Testing Materials

Test kits, complete with posters and other helpful information, are available for purchase from the AKC. For prices or to order test kits by check or credit card, contact:

American Kennel Club (919) 233-9767. At www.akc.org, go to the Online Store:
<https://shop.akc.org/collections/akc-expertise-training-certifications-star-puppy>

Therapy Dogs

While some therapy dog groups require passing the CGC test as a first step, AKC does not certify or register therapy dogs.

Several of this country's largest therapy dog organizations use the CGC Test as a partial screening tool for therapy dogs. In most cases, for therapy dog screening, the CGC Test is given with some additional testing. For example, in the test item involving a crowd, therapy dog groups might require that someone in the crowd use health care equipment such as a walker, cane, or crutches. Additional paperwork is provided by and submitted to the therapy dog group. Some therapy dog groups also require that their evaluators be certified through the therapy dog organization.

Title – Is CGC a Title?

From the time the CGC Program began in 1989 until 2012, CGC was not an official title. It was considered an award. However, due to frequent, ongoing requests from proud dog owners, Canine Good Citizen became an official AKC title in January 2013. This means that CGC is listed on the dog's title record and owners may use the suffix, "CGC" after the dog's name. For the dog to get the official CGC title, it must have an AKC, PAL or Canine Partners number. Otherwise the dog may get the CGC certificate only which is not a title listed on the dogs Title Record.

Vaccines and Licenses

The CGC test does not require proof of vaccines. Owners sign the Responsible Dog Owner's Pledge to attest that their dogs are in the care of a qualified veterinarian.

Part II

Scoring Specific Test Items

General instructions: The test protocol as set forth in this Evaluator Guide should be followed. Handlers may talk to their dogs throughout the test. Evaluators should encourage the test to be fun and, if necessary, handlers should be reminded to praise their dogs. Evaluators can remind handlers to communicate with their dogs (e.g., “Tell him what you want him to do”) during the test.

Evaluators should not make the test easier by eliminating test items, nor should they require the participant to perform at a higher level than the test requires in order to pass. For example, an evaluator should not, in the name of “having high standards” require during testing that the dogs complete the exercise off-lead in order to pass the CGC test. However, instructors may choose to give the test at any point and may require that students have a higher level of training before the test is given.

Item 1: Accepting a Friendly Stranger

This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to approach it and speak to the handler in a natural, everyday situation.

The Evaluator walks up to the dog and handler and greets the handler in a friendly manner, ignoring the dog. The test begins with the dog seated at the handler’s side.

The Evaluator and handler do a pretend handshake (with hands about 12 inches apart) and exchange pleasantries (e.g., “Hello, it’s good to see you again,” as they pretend to shake hands). In this test, the Evaluator does not interact with the dog.

- The dog must show no sign of resentment, aggression or shyness.
- The dog may not jump on or rush to the Evaluator to initiate contact. The dog may not lunge forward to greet the Evaluator.
- The dog should be under control throughout the exercise. If the handler must use excessive corrections (e.g., trying to hold the dog to prevent jumping) to control the dog, the dog should not pass the exercise.

The pretend handshake replaced a real handshake during Covid. We all became more sensitive about germs, viruses, etc., during the pandemic, and the pretend handshake will remain in the test.

Item 2: Sitting Politely for Petting

This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to touch it while it is out with its handler. With the dog sitting at the handler's side, (either side is permissible) to begin the test, the Evaluator approaches and asks, "May I pet your dog?" The Evaluator then pets the dog on the head and body. The handler may talk to his or her dog throughout the exercise.

After petting the dog, the Evaluator may circle the dog, or simply back away to begin the next test.

- The dog must show no signs of shyness or resentment.
- As the Evaluator begins to pet the dog, the dog may stand to receive petting.
- The dog may not struggle and pull away to avoid petting.
- The dog may move slightly forward to receive petting but should not lunge at the Evaluator or rush or jump forward.
- The dog may appear to be happy about the contact with the Evaluator and may have some body movements.
- The dog should appear to be under control throughout the exercise.

Item 3: Appearance and Grooming

This practical test demonstrates that the dog will welcome being groomed and examined and will permit a stranger, such as a veterinarian, groomer, or friend of the owner, to do so. This test also demonstrates the owner's care, concern, and sense of responsibility.

The Evaluator inspects the dog to determine if it is clean and groomed. The dog must appear to be in healthy condition (i.e., proper weight, clean, healthy, and alert). The handler should supply the comb or brush commonly used on the dog. The Evaluator softly combs or brushes the dog and, in a natural manner, lightly examines the ears and gently picks up each front foot.

- It is not necessary for the dog to hold a specific position during the examination, and the handler may talk to the dog, praise it and give encouragement throughout.
- The Evaluator may give the handler specific instructions for handling the dog in a manner that ensures safety. For example, when the feet are to be handled, the Evaluator may request that the handler lift each leg. The Evaluator may request that the handler steady the dog's head for checking the ears.
- Another technique the Evaluator may use is to hold the dog's head away with one hand and use the other hand to lift the foot.
- While the handler may be asked to steady the dog's head, lift a leg, etc., any dog requiring restraining so it can be examined should not pass the test. The key question for this test is, "Could a veterinarian or groomer easily examine the dog?"
- Some dogs will wiggle or squirm when they are excited. Some squirming is acceptable, however, this should not be so excessive that the dog cannot be brushed.
- The dog should not struggle (pull away with intensity) to avoid the brushing.

Item 4: Out For A Walk (Walking on a Loose Leash)

This test demonstrates that the handler is in control of the dog. The dog may be on either side of the handler, whichever the handler prefers. (NOTE: The left side position is required in all AKC obedience competitions).

The Evaluator may use a preplanned course or may direct the handler by calling out instructions (e.g., “right turn”). Whichever format is used, there must be a right turn, left turn, and about turn, with at least one stop in between and one at the end.

The handler may talk to the dog throughout the “walk” to encourage it and may give praise. The handler may also give the dog a command to sit at the stop, if desired.

- The dog’s position should leave no doubt that the dog is attentive to the handler and is responding to the handler’s movements and changes of direction.
- The dog need not be perfectly aligned with the handler and need not sit at the stops.
- The dog should not be constantly straining at the leash so that the leash is pulled tight. The Evaluator may instruct the handler to loosen (put more slack in) the leash. An occasional tight leash may be permitted.
- Excessive sniffing of the floor or ground, such that the dog will not walk along with the owner, should result in the dog not passing the test.
- If the dog is totally inattentive to the handler (e.g., does not change directions), it should not be passed.

Item 5: Walking Through a Crowd

This test demonstrates that the dog can move about politely in pedestrian traffic and is under control in public places.

The dog and handler walk around and pass close to several (at least three) people. The Evaluator can be counted as one of the three people in the crowd. Children may act as members of the crowd, however, when children participate in the test, they must be instructed on their role and be supervised by an adult. Some of the members of the crowd may be standing still; however, some crowd members should be moving about. This test simulates settings such as busy sidewalks or walking through a crowd at a dog show or public event.

If the CGC is being given for therapy dog certification (which is not an AKC activity), most national therapy dog groups require that at least one person in the crowd use some health-care equipment such as walkers, canes, wheelchairs, etc. There may be one dog in the crowd, but the dog must be on-leash, well mannered, and not attempt to initiate contact with dogs that are being tested.

- In this test, the dog may show some interest in the strangers but should continue to walk with the handler, without evidence of over exuberance, shyness, or resentment.
- The dog may show mild interest in members of the crowd. The dog may sniff a person in the crowd briefly but must move on promptly.
- The dog may not jump on people in the crowd or attempt to go to them.
- The dog should not be straining at the leash.
- The dog should not be trying to hide behind the handler.

Item 6: Sit and Down on Cue/Staying in Place

This test demonstrates that the dog has training and will respond to the handler's cues to sit and down and will remain in the place as directed by the handler. The dog needs to 1) sit on cue, 2) and down on cue, 3) then, stay in a sit or down.

For the Stay in Place test, the handler may choose to leave the dog in a sit or down position.

So, it looks like this: "Show me your dog can sit on cue. Great! Now show me your dog will lie down on cue. Great! Now it's time for the Stay—you choose the position, sit or down, leave your dog and walk out to the end of this line."

Prior to this test, the dog's leash is removed and replaced with a 20-ft. line (or a 15-ft. line attached to the dog's leash). The handler may take a reasonable amount of time and use more than one cue to make the dog sit and then down. The Evaluator must determine if the dog has responded to the handler's cues. The handler may not use excessive force to put the dog into either position but may touch the dog to offer gentle guidance.

When instructed by the Evaluator, the handler tells the dog to stay and walks to the end of the 20-ft. line, turns, and returns immediately to the dog at a normal pace, at which time the Evaluator instructs the handler to release the dog. The dog must remain in the place it was left (it may change position such as stand up) until the Evaluator instructs the handler to release the dog. The dog may be released from the front or side.

- The 20-ft. line is used for safety. If the CGC test is indoors in a secure area, the Evaluator may choose to have the dog drag the leash or work off-lead in this exercise.
- There are no breed specific exceptions for sitting.
- Pulling the dog's front legs out from a sit position (so that the dog automatically drops into a down) is beyond gentle guidance and the dog should not be passed.
- To prevent beginning handlers from tugging on the 20-ft. line as they leave the dog and pulling the dog out of the stay, Evaluators can do the following: 1) lay the 20 ft. line stretched out on the floor, 2) instruct the handler to attach the line to the dog's collar, 3) after the handler attaches the line, give the handle end of the line to the handler and 4) instruct the handler to walk to the end of the 20-ft. line (holding on to the end).
- The dog is left for the stay in a sit or down. As the handler returns, if the dog simply stands but does not leave the place it was left, the dog passes the test.
- Dogs who do not sit or down after a reasonable period of time should not be passed.
- Handlers should not go to the end of the line and call the dog; they should return to the dog.

Item 7: Coming When Called

This test demonstrates that the dog will come when called by the handler. With the dog still on the 20-ft. line from Item 6, the handler will walk 10 feet from the dog, turn to face the dog, and will call the dog. The handler may use body language and encouragement when calling the dog.

Handlers may tell the dog to “stay” or “wait” (or another similar command) or they may simply walk away. The dog may be left in the sit, down, or standing position. If a dog attempts to follow the handler, the Evaluator may distract the dog (e.g., petting) until the handler is 10 feet away. This exercise does not test “stay”; this exercise tests whether or not the dog will come when called.

The test is complete when the dog comes to the handler and the handler attaches the dog’s own leash.

- Dogs who attempt to follow the handler may pass the test. The Evaluator should distract the dog. The test begins when the handler calls the dog.
- The handler can bend down to call the dog, pat his or her legs, and make encouraging sounds.
- Handlers may call the dog more than once (two or three attempts) but if many, repeated prompts are required, the dog should not be passed.
- Dogs should not be passed if handlers have used the long line to “reel in” the dog. Dogs should come on their own when called. The Evaluator who sees that a handler is starting to reel the dog in may stop the exercise, give instructions to the handler, and start over.

Item 8: Reaction to Another Dog

This test demonstrates that the dog can behave politely around other dogs. Two handlers and their dogs approach each other from a distance of about 15 feet, stop, pretend to shake hands and exchange pleasantries, and continue on.

- The dog should show no more than a casual interest in the distraction dog. If the dog attempts to go to or jump on the distraction dog, it should not pass the test.
- The dog may move slightly toward the other dog/handler, then stop. The dog must stay back from the other dog/handler.
- The dog can stretch its neck and sniff without moving forward to the other dog/handler.
- When the handlers stop to shake hands, the dog does not have to sit. It can remain standing beside the handler. If the dog remains standing, it should not cross over in front of the handler to go to the other dog.
- The conversation between the handlers can be brief, "Hi, good to see you again. Give me a call sometime."
- As the handler leaves, if the dog turns around and begins pulling as if to follow the other dog/handler, the dog should not pass the test.
- If the distraction dog causes a disruption, the dog can be tested again with a more appropriate distraction dog. The distraction dog should have been observed or evaluated before the test to ensure that it is reliable.

Item 9: Reaction to Distractions

This test demonstrates that the dog is always confident when faced with common distracting situations.

The Evaluator will select two distractions from among the following: (Since some dogs are sensitive to sound and others to visual distractions, it is preferable to choose one sound and one visual distraction.)

- A person using crutches, a wheelchair, or a walker (5 ft. away). • A sudden opening or closing of a door.
- Dropping a pan, folded chair, etc. no closer than 5 ft. from the dog. • A jogger running in front of the dog.
- A person pushing a cart or crate dolly passing no closer than 5 ft. away.
- A person on a bike no closer than 10 ft. away. A note about distractions: Distractions such as gunshot, the rapid opening of an umbrella close to the dog, walking on a metal grid, etc. are temperament test items that are typically seen on formal temperament tests. The CGC Test should not be confused with temperament testing. While instructors may use a variety of distractions (e.g., a person in scuba gear) in training classes, in the CGC test, distractions should be items that are common occurrences in the community.
- The dog may show casual interest and may appear slightly startled. The dog may jump slightly but should not panic and pull at the leash to get away.
- The dog may attempt to walk forward slightly to investigate the distraction.
- Dogs who become so frightened that they urinate (or defecate) should not pass.
- Dogs who growl or lunge at the distraction should not pass.
- An isolated (one) bark is acceptable. Dogs who continue to bark at the distraction should not pass.
- Handlers may talk to dogs and give encouragement and praise throughout the test. Dogs may be given instructions by the handler (“Sit... good boy... watch me...”)
- Several national therapy dog groups use the CGC as a part of their therapy dog evaluations. These groups specify which distractions should be used. Evaluators who conduct the test for therapy dog groups will have this information.
- The distraction cannot simply be noise in the background (dogs barking, cars). Distraction stimuli should be consistent for each dog.

Item 10: Supervised Separation

This test demonstrates that a dog can be left in the presence of a trusted person and will maintain its training and good manners. Evaluators are encouraged to say something like, “Would you like for me to watch your dog?”

An Evaluator will hold the leash of the dog while the owner goes out of sight for 3 minutes. In the early days of the CGC Program, evaluators were asked to not talk to the dog so that the testing of this skill could be standardized across evaluators. We realize that most owners would not leave their dogs with someone who did not talk to the dog. Evaluators may talk to and pet the dog but should refrain from giving the dog excessive attention, playing with the dog, etc.

- The dog does not have to stay in position.
- If the dog continually barks, whines, or howls, it should not be passed.
- The dog should not pace unnecessarily, should not show signs of agitation.
- A dog that simply walks back and forth and looks for the handler is passed. There should be no signs of extreme stress, including panting, breathing hard, etc.
- If a dog begins to look very upset or distressed (barking, whining, panting, pacing, pulling), the test should be terminated. The CGC test is an activity that should be fun. We do not want dogs or handlers to have a bad experience with the CGC. If a dog is extremely distressed, training is needed. (This training should not be done during testing.) This one incident of giving in to the dog’s insecure behavior is not enough to cause any lasting effect. The owner should be told nicely that separation is an issue for the dog and that some training would help the dog feel more secure.
- If the Evaluator for Item 10 is sitting in a chair and a small dog tries to climb into the Evaluator’s lap, the Evaluator should stand up.
- If a dog pulls on its leash (trying to get away) it should not be passed.
- Any dog that urinates or defecates during testing should not be passed. The exception to this is in Test 10 when the test is outdoors, or between exercises (e.g., the dog urinates on a bush while being walked to the next test station). Dogs should not stop to relieve themselves while they are working with the handler in the exercises.



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