

THERAPY DOGS INCORPORATED RULES AND REGULATIONS

Part I

2009 GOVERNING MEMBER GUIDELINES

Failure to adhere to the Therapy Dogs Inc. Governing Member Guidelines, Policies or Code of Ethics will jeopardize your membership of Therapy Dogs Inc.

1. Therapy Dogs Inc. (TDInc.) is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization. We do not accept monetary reimbursement for any of the services our members provide. Donations are welcome.
2. TDInc. registers only dog/handler teams. For insurance reasons, we cannot register wolves or wolf-hybrids, coyotes or coyote-hybrids. Membership is open to handlers with all breeds of dogs.
3. TDInc. requires a minimum of 4 visits per year. If a team fails to make four visits in one year, they must be observed at least one time by a TDInc. Tester/Observer. Handlers must carry a current membership card, and dogs must wear the official red heart-shaped TDInc. identification tag when representing TDInc. Identification from other independently insured organizations is prohibited when representing TDInc. Members must have written proof of their dogs' vaccinations readily available at each visit.
4. The minimum age requirement for TDInc. membership is 16 years. Any exception to this rule must be approved by the Exceptions Committee. A TDInc. member, with or without a dog, must accompany a 12-16 year old member and his or her parent/guardian on all visits. If the parent/guardian is a TDInc. member and only that person accompanies the child, that person may not bring a dog. The purpose of the parent/guardian is to supervise the team, not handle any dogs. Note: Children under the age of 16 years are not allowed on TDInc. visits. A prospective member aged between 12 and 16 years may accompany a T/O on one observational visit.
5. TDInc. provides insurance that protects you from claims of others for injury or illness, and property damage, resulting from therapeutic visitation with your dog. This coverage does not protect you or your dog from injury or illness as a result of participation in this program. Coverage applies to TDInc. registered volunteer dog/handler teams. Members who take their dogs to work with them and/or use them in their jobs such as, but not limited to, teachers, therapists, doctors or psychologists are not covered by TDInc. insurance when functioning as employees.
6. Dogs must be retired when they show signs of physical and/or mental distress during visits. Dogs must have an annual physical examination, including a fecal check, by a veterinarian. They must be current on all vaccinations, specifically rabies and any others as advised and attested by their veterinarian. Veterinary reports of titer levels are acceptable.
7. Participating dogs must be clean and well groomed, have trimmed/filed nails, clean teeth, be free of internal and external parasites, and in good general health. Dogs or handlers that have any fresh wounds, recent surgery, other injuries or infections may not do pet therapy visits until recovered and are healed. Bitches "in season" will not participate in therapy visits. Maternity leave is required for pregnant bitches from 30 days prior to whelping date to 60 days after whelping.
8. While participating in therapy visits, handlers must be clean, well groomed, and without influence of alcohol and/or drugs that would impair safety or judgment. Skimpy or tight-fitting attire including short shorts, tank tops, and bare midriffs are not allowed. Wear sensible, safe walking shoes (no flip-flops, high heels, spike heels or shoes without backs). Dogs must also be free of any drugs or substances that might affect performance. All visited facilities must be informed of any medical conditions that would affect the team's ability to perform volunteer duties.

9. Members/handlers must never leave their dog alone with staff, patients, or visitors. Dogs must be kept on a 4 foot or shorter leash (held only by the member/handler) and at least two feet from other dogs and animals at all times while representing TDInc. If safe conditions exist, dogs may be taken off leash when performing obedience or trick demonstrations. Use of a traffic lead is recommended for large dogs. **Equipment that is not allowed includes retractable and chain leads as well as pinch, prong, spiked or electronic collars.** Head halters and collars -- slip, buckle-types, martingale, quick release, limited slip or any other smooth collars made of chain, nylon or leather -- are acceptable.
10. Liability considerations require any special situations (exceptions) to be submitted in writing to TDInc. Obtain the appropriate information from the corporate office. Certain requests may require letters of reference from those directly involved or those who will need to be aware of these exceptions or situations (e.g., a facility, hospital, etc.). This includes, but is not limited to:
 - One handler with more than one dog
 - Use of a body harness/halter for control, in addition to an accepted collar.
 - Special equipment or devices, such as carts and dog strollers, etc.
 - The owner of any dog that develops a disability during its career must notify the TDInc. office and may need to be retested/observed and/or go through the Exceptions Committee.
11. Therapy dog teams must strictly adhere to all rules and regulations in each facility. If these rules are unclear, ask a staff member or activities director to explain them. Read and obey all warning signs on room doors, such as "ISOLATION" or "INFECTIOUS, DO NOT ENTER." Handlers must stay alert to their surroundings at all times. If any facility rules conflict directly with TDInc. Rules and Regulations, please contact the TDInc. corporate office.
12. Dogs may not precede handlers down the hall, around a corner, at doorways, or doors at stairways. Stand back while waiting for an elevator door to open. When the door opens, wait to assure safe exit of passengers. If the elevator is occupied, the handler must ask permission to enter with the dog.
13. Therapy dogs are not allowed to jump onto any occupied bed, chair or wheelchair unless that resident and/or a facility staff member have given permission. TDInc. members will not provide chemical substances or apply them to their dog. Substances include, but are not limited to, hand sanitizers, hand wipes, or lotions, unless authorized by the facility. Do not give food, water, or assistance to a patient or resident even if asked. Notify a staff member that help is needed.
14. Member/handlers must not make or receive calls using a cell phone inside a facility. Pagers and cell phones must be set on vibrate while inside a facility. If the use of a phone becomes necessary, handlers must excuse themselves temporarily and complete the call outside the facility.
15. Observe all rules of privacy and confidentiality as required by HIPAA. Never discuss a patient's health or personal issues with the patient or anyone else. Photos may not be taken without prior written permission of the subject (or guardian) and a representative of the facility.
16. If an incident or injury to an employee, resident, or visitor in the facility occurs while representing TDInc.:
 - Immediately contact the facility's supervisor on duty.
 - Document the incident on all required forms for the facility.
 - Immediately contact the TDInc. office and report the incident.
17. **At the discretion of the Board of Directors of TDInc., a handler/dog team will be asked to temporarily or permanently refrain from further visits under the name of TDInc. if they fail to comply strictly with these Rules and Regulations (or) as provided by Article III Section 3 of the TDInc. By-Laws. Should this action be necessary, the handler will be requested to return the TDInc. identification tag and membership card to the corporate office of TDInc.**

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