

## **THERAPY DOGS INCORPORATED GOVERNING MEMBER GUIDELINES**

1. Therapy Dogs Inc. is a non-profit, all volunteer organization. We do not accept monetary reimbursement for any of the services our members provide; however donations may be accepted.
2. Dogs must be at least one year of age to be registered with Therapy Dogs Inc.
3. Dogs must have an annual physical examination by a veterinarian, including a stool check. Dogs must be current on all vaccinations, including rabies, DHLPP, corona-virus, and Bordatella, or as advised by their veterinarian. An annual heart worm test and preventative medication are encouraged in areas where advised by their veterinarian.
4. Participating dogs must be clean, parasite-free (internal & external), and in good overall health. Dogs that have recently had surgery, or any fresh wounds, etc. should be excused from doing pet therapy visits until rested and healed. Dogs must be well groomed, including trimmed, filed toenails, and clean teeth. Female dogs “in season” will not participate in therapy visits.
5. Handlers must be clean, well groomed, and without influence of alcohol and/or drugs that may impair safety or judgment while participating in Therapy Dogs Inc. visits.
6. Therapy Dogs Inc. provides insurance that protects the people you visit, in the event of injury or illness; as a result of contact with your dog. This coverage does not protect you or your dog from injury or illness as a result of participation in this program. The coverage applies to TDInc. registered “Volunteer” dog/handler teams. Members who take their dogs to work with them and use them in their job, such as but not limited to teachers, therapists, doctors, or psychologists, are not covered by this policy. Due to liability considerations, a Therapy Dogs Inc. approved Tester/Observer shall have the prospective member read and sign the “Release of Claims for Accidental Injury” **prior to performing the required Therapy Dogs Inc. test**. In order to assess the appropriateness of registration with Therapy Dogs Inc., the Tester/Observer must test each dog/handler team by performing the **required approved Therapy Dogs Inc. test**. The Tester/Observer must then **accompany** the team for a required minimum of three observations at a facility. These observation dates should not be the same, unless approved by the Exceptions Committee. If the Tester/Observer feels it is appropriate, more observations may be scheduled within a six-month period of the test date. The Tester/Observer must complete and sign the appropriate section on the RELEASE and TEST. Final decision on membership rests solely with Therapy Dogs Inc.
7. Therapy Dogs Inc. membership minimum age requirement is 16. The Exceptions Committee must approve all exceptions to this requirement. At least one parent or guardian will accompany a maximum of 2 handler/dog teams under the age of 16 while participating in any Therapy Dogs Inc. visits and/or activities. The purpose of the parent or guardian is to supervise, not handle a dog.
8. Due to liability considerations, each handler may handle only one dog at a time while participating in any Therapy Dogs Inc. visit and/or activities. Exceptions must be submitted in writing to the office of Therapy Dogs Inc.
9. Dogs must be kept on a 4’ or shorter leash at all times when in any facility, except when doing a formal obedience or trick demonstrations. We suggest using a traffic lead with larger dogs. **Retractable and chain leads are not allowed. No pinch, prong, spiked or electronic collars are allowed.** Only slip or buckle collars (chain, nylon, or leather) or the use of a head halter are accepted by Therapy Dogs Inc.

10. Handlers must carry a current membership card as proof of current membership in good standing. Dogs must wear the red heart-shaped Therapy Dogs Inc. identification tag while representing Therapy Dogs Inc. Identification from other independently insured organizations is prohibited while representing Therapy Dogs Inc.
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 to you.
12. Therapy dogs are not allowed to jump onto a bed of any resident, nor should they be placed in an occupied chair or wheelchair unless that **resident and a facility staff member have given permission.**
13. For health reasons, handlers will not make or receive calls using a cell phone inside a facility. If you need to use a phone for any reason, please excuse yourself from your visit and go OUTSIDE the facility. Pagers and cell phones shall be set on vibrate while inside a facility.
14. If an injury to an employee, resident, or attendee in the facility occurs during a Therapy Dogs Inc. sponsored visit:
  - a) Immediately contact the facility's supervisor on duty
  - b) Document the incident on all required forms for the facility
  - c) Immediately contact Therapy Dogs Inc. office and report the incident
15. **Any** exception to these Governing Member Guidelines, including but not limited to; using carts, strollers, harnesses, etc., shall be submitted in writing to the office of Therapy Dogs Inc. Certain requests may need to have letters of reference from those directly involved or those who will need to be aware of these exceptions (e.g. a facility, hospital, etc.).
16. Your renewal date is based on the following:  
If you *initially* enroll October – April, your renewal date is 1 January. If you *initially* enroll May – September, your renewal date is 1 July. There is one renewal date per household. **Your membership expires after your renewal date. If your membership expires, you must retest and reapply. This applies to your T/O status as well.**
17. **At the discretion of the Board of Directors of Therapy Dogs Inc. a handler and dog may be asked to temporarily or permanently refrain from further visits under the name of Therapy Dogs Inc. if the above guidelines fail to be strictly adhered to. Should this action be necessary, a handler shall immediately relinquish ownership of the Therapy Dogs Inc. identification tag and membership card to the main office of Therapy Dogs Inc.**

**“CHANGE TEARS TO SMILES AND HELP THE FORGOTTEN TO LAUGH”**

**THERAPY DOGS INCORPORATED**

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