

Therapy Dog Manual

7. PRE-EVALUATION SEMINAR

A. Purpose

The purpose of the Pre-evaluation Seminar is to provide an orientation session for dog handlers who wish to join the Therapy Dog Program. It introduces the new member to St. John Ambulance, the Therapy Dog Program itself, and what is expected of them as a member. It is mandatory for all new members to attend the Pre-evaluation Seminar before their handler/dog team is evaluated for suitability in the Program. If a member has already been part of a handler/dog team, but

wishes to participate with a different dog, they do not need to attend the Pre-evaluation Seminar a second time.

Attendance at the Pre-evaluation Seminar will also provide an opportunity for both Coordinators and Evaluators to meet and get to know new dog handlers, to collect forms and to check paperwork. In addition, ideas of where new members may wish to visit can be explored.

B. Recruitment - Before the Seminar



When someone indicates their interest in joining the St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program, they should be provided with a clear explanation of what the program entails, as well as some written materials about St. John Ambulance as well as the Therapy Dog Program itself. If they are interested in joining, they should be provided with a letter outlining how to register for a Pre-evaluation Seminar, and what they are required to bring with them to it:

New recruits should be notified that it is mandatory to attend the Pre-evaluation Seminar before they will be allowed to be evaluated with their dog as a Therapy Dog Team. They should also be requested to bring the following with them to the Pre-evaluation Seminar:

- a. completed *Volunteer Application Form* (Appendix 2 to Annex A, StJCI 2-9-2,) and completed *Authorization for Police Records Check* (Appendix 3 to Annex A, StJCI 2-9-2);
- b. two photocopies of identification (e.g. driver's license, birth certificate, passport, SIN card, health card, etc.);
- c. three references (at least 2 must not be friends or relatives). Their names are required on the *Volunteer Application Form* above;
- d. a copy of their dog's inoculation and vaccination certificate from their veterinarian;
- e. administrative fee (if applicable in their Council); and
- f. the name, address, contact name and phone number of a particular facility which they may wish to visit.

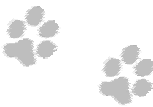
C. Arranging a Pre-Evaluation Seminar

The Unit Therapy Dog Coordinator is responsible for arranging the Pre-evaluation Seminar. Pre-evaluation Seminars should be set up on a regular basis, dependent on the number and frequency of people seeking entry into the program. It is most effective if new applicants are provided a date, time and place when they apply. Be sure to phone them a few days before the Pre-evaluation Seminar to confirm their attendance.

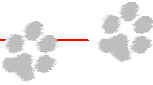
The Pre-evaluation Seminar can be set up for any time of the day, to best suit the Coordinator and the applicants. The Seminar normally takes 2½ hours, so be sure to allow enough time. You may wish to hold one larger Pre-evaluation Seminar, with two or more Therapy Dog Team Evaluations set up from the Pre-evaluation Seminar attendees. Note that Therapy Dog Team Evaluations require a minimum of four handler/dog teams.

D. Agenda

A typical agenda follows (as set up for an evening Seminar):



7:00 – 7:05	Introduction of instructor and assistants Explanation of session and why it is needed
7:05 – 7:10	Self introduction of applicants, their backgrounds and details of their dogs
7:10 – 7:45	Background, history and needs of St. John Ambulance The Brigade and what it does The Branch's role and how the Therapy Dog Unit is included
7:45 – 8:00	Background information on the Therapy Dog Program Where the handler/dog teams visit and how to arrange visits Awards, uniform requirements and other details
8:00 – 8:45	The basics of visiting Demonstration by handler/dog team(s) Handout – <i>Therapy Dog Manual</i>
8:45 – 9:00	Collection of application forms and fees (where applicable) * <i>Chance for a cup of coffee while waiting</i>
9:00 – 9:15	Questions and Answers
9:15 – 9:30	Announcement of Evaluation date(s) and sign-up
9:30	Seminar adjournment and thanks for attending
**	During the Seminar, try to find time to show the video <i>Crusade for Life</i> , available from your local Branch

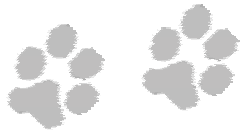


E. Sample Materials and Handouts

Applicants should be provided with a copy of the *Therapy Dog Manual*. They should be directed to specific parts of it during the Pre-evaluation Seminar, to help them become familiar with it and to assist in answering questions about the program. The *Evaluator's Handbook* is not for general distribution, but only for use by certified Evaluators.

Other materials or handouts can include promotional materials (brochures, flyers, posters) about St. John Ambulance and the Therapy Dog Program itself, copies of pertinent newspaper clippings, and samples of the Therapy Dog uniforms for both handler and dog.

It is important to ensure that a qualified handler/dog team is at the seminar for demonstration purposes.



F. Collection of Forms

It is essential that all forms outlined in section B above be collected at the Pre-evaluation Seminar. It should be stressed at the Seminar that no handler/dog team will be evaluated until all paperwork has been finalized, including a opportunity to check on applicants' references.

