

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Provincial/Territorial/Area Therapy Dog Coordinators

1. Provincial/Territorial/Area Therapy Dog Coordinators are senior volunteers responsible to the Provincial/Territorial/Area Commissioner for the efficient implementation, administration and operational support of the Therapy Dog Program within their physical jurisdiction. Councils are responsible for providing appropriate resources to support the operation of Therapy Dog Coordinators.
2. Provincial/Territorial/Area Therapy Dog Coordinators are responsible for ensuring the continuity of the Therapy Dog Program within their jurisdiction. This includes overseeing operational matters within their jurisdiction, coordination of meetings and work groups, development of reports as requested, and liaison with the Chief Evaluator and other Coordinators.
3. By liaising with Therapy Dog Units on a regular basis, the Provincial/Territorial/Area Therapy Dog Coordinators assist Brigade Units with:
 - a. identification of community needs and resources as they relate to the program;
 - b. assistance and advice on the policies and procedures for establishing new Therapy Dog Programs;
 - c. assessment and acquisition of Therapy Dog training/testing resources including the assessment and training of evaluators;
 - d. development and implementation of community relations initiatives as they relate to the program;
 - e. coordination of evaluator activities.

B. Unit Therapy Dog Coordinators

4. The Unit Therapy Dog Coordinator is responsible for the overall organization, administration, and training of the Unit. Unit Therapy Dog Coordinators work closely in cooperation with their Provincial and Area counterparts and local Branches to ensure the smooth, efficient operation of the program.
5. Responsibilities of the Unit Therapy Dog Coordinator include:
 - a. ensuring that members/dogs are fully qualified and that every member has the opportunity to obtain St. John Ambulance Brigade and Therapy Dog training as required;
 - b. liaising with the local Branch or Council on relevant administrative support issues such as financial management, fundraising and service territory;

- c. liaising with and arranging scheduled visits to hospitals, nursing homes, etc, in their region;
- d. monitoring new handlers with and without their dogs on first visits, and new dogs with their handlers on first visits;
- e. assisting in the coordination of Therapy Dog testing, workshops and seminars;
- f. coordinating and/or assisting with public relations initiatives;
- g. scheduling and chairing semi-annual unit meetings;
- h. ensuring that members have access to adequate resources;
- i. identifying community needs and resources as they relate to the program;
- j. providing uniforms and dog tags to appropriate volunteers in a timely fashion;
- k. orientating members to program policies and procedures;
- l. coordinating, tracking and reporting all honours and awards; and
- m. ensuring that all records and reports are completed accurately and submitted on time to the appropriate level in accordance with StJCI 2-8.

C. Evaluators and Assistant Evaluators

6. Evaluators are individuals who are qualified to provide St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog testing to members and their dogs. They are responsible for ensuring that all certification records and reports are completed accurately and submitted to the Chief Evaluator within 14 days of testing. Evaluators are required to up-date their qualifications by attending seminars as required, and must recertify annually.
7. Evaluator prerequisites include:
 - a. considerable experience with a variety of breeds of dogs;
 - b. a good understanding of basic dog behaviour (theory and practice); and
 - c. attendance at an initial training seminar.
8. Evaluators are often qualified Canadian Kennel Club Judges, Obedience School Trainers, groomers or other people with extensive hands-on canine experience
9. It is recommended that all Evaluators enter the program as Assistant Evaluators, graduating to full Evaluator status after a minimum period of one year in which they are active visitors in the Therapy Dog Program and have acquired a strong knowledge of the program and the testing procedure.
10. Assistant Evaluator is the first level of training to be obtained when entering the program. A résumé of their qualifications and canine experience must be sent to the Chief Evaluator.

11. Assistant Evaluators are expected to attend training sessions and seminars, assist Evaluators, assist local Coordinators and be recertified annually.
12. Potential evaluators must complete an application to be a Therapy Dog Evaluator (see Annex C).

D. Chief Evaluators

13. The Chief Evaluator is appointed by the Provincial Commissioner on the advice of the National Therapy Dog Coordinator, and is ultimately responsible for all decisions in relation to Evaluators.
14. The Chief Evaluator is responsible for:
 - a. ensuring conformity to national Therapy Dog standards;
 - b. supervising testing for Assistant Evaluators and Evaluators;
 - c. scheduling all Evaluator tests, seminars and recertifications;
 - d. assisting and advising local Coordinators on the policies and procedures for establishing a new Therapy Dog Program, in conjunction with the Provincial Coordinator; and
 - e. overseeing Evaluator procedures.

E. Dog and Member (Handler)

15. Therapy Dog Program members and their dogs provide companionship to those who are lonely and ill through regular visits to hospitals and nursing homes.
16. Any individual and their dog may join the program provided:
 - a. the individual is successfully screened according to the policy in StJCI 2-9-2, and meets the requirements for Brigade membership as outlined in StJCI 2-3-1. Note that Standard First Aid certification is not required for membership as a St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog volunteer, however such certification is encouraged.
 - b. the dog is of sound temperament (assessed through St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog testing).
17. New members are accompanied by a qualified Therapy Dog Evaluator or Coordinator without the dog for one visit to ensure that they are comfortable with the environment they are visiting. The dog is then introduced on the next two accompanied visits. If these visits are successful, a regular visitation schedule is established.

F. Auxiliary Members

18. Auxiliary members are invited to assist as "actors" in evaluation scenarios, and may be attached to local Therapy Dog units or other Brigade units.