

# Dog Handlers: How to handle your dog for each TC test station

## Overall Guidelines

- Be ready to go when it's your turn. Watch the order-of-go list to keep track of your turn.
- Don't hurry your dog. This is not a timed test.
- Keep your dog on a loose lead, but don't allow him/her to advance beyond leash length.
- Don't apply pressure on your dog's collar with sudden jerks.
- You can speak encouragingly to your dog but avoid issuing commands like "Sit" or "Down."
- Follow the evaluator's instructions at all times.

## Scoring criteria for all tests

In general, it's OK for dogs to startle or be surprised. The tests are more about whether they recover and investigate.

Each test is measured on the following criteria:

- STRONG no encouragement needed
- NORMAL some encouragement needed
- MILD requires encouragement
- NO RESPONSE
- SHY OR AGGRESSIVE / SHY NO RECOVERY (FAIL)

## STATION 1: BEHAVIOR TOWARD STRANGERS

Evaluator observes dog's reaction to strangers in non-threatening situations.

### Neutral stranger

Simulates a typical street situation where a neutral stranger carries on a conversation with you but makes no overtures to your dog.

1. Allow your dog to approach the neutral stranger on a loose lead.
2. Converse with the volunteer but don't encourage your dog to engage.

### Friendly stranger

A friendly stranger will make overtures to your dog and touch both you and the dog.

1. Allow your dog to approach the friendly stranger on a loose lead.
2. Allow the volunteer to pet your dog and shake hands with you.

## STATION 2: REACTION TO AURAL STIMULI (NOISE)

Evaluator observes dog's alertness to aural stimuli and degree of startle recovery and investigative behavior.

### Can-rattling

Volunteer will rattle a can full of rocks from behind some kind of blind.

1. When signaled by the evaluator, allow your dog to approach the blind and react or startle when they hear the can rattle.
2. Allow your dog to come around the blind to find the source of the noise and investigate the can.
3. The dog has 20 seconds to make contact with the can. You may offer encouragement using phrases like, "what's that?" or "find it."
4. Note: Do not allow male dogs to urinate on the blind.

### Clapper

Behind the dog's back, the volunteer will clap the clapper to simulate the sound of a gunshot.

1. When the can-rattling test is completed, proceed to the designated spot about 15 feet beyond the next volunteer and stop, facing away from the volunteer.
2. Your dog may be in a standing or seated position, but no commands are to be given.
3. When the clapper is sounded, allow your dog, on a loose leash, to react or startle. If your dog turns and moves toward the noise, you may follow.

### STATION 3: REACTION TO VISUAL STIMULI

Evaluator observes dog's reaction to visual stimuli and degree of startle recovery and investigative behavior.

#### Umbrella test

Volunteer will open an umbrella when an approaching dog is at the designated spot, no more than 3 feet away.

1. Allow your dog to approach the person with the umbrella while on a loose lead.
2. Once the umbrella is opened, allow your dog to startle, then approach and investigate the umbrella, ideally making contact with it.
3. You may offer encouragement with phrases like, "what's that?" or "find it."

### Why do a Temperament Test (TC) with your dog?

Here are 3 great reasons:

- Watch as an evaluator, who is very experienced in observing dog body language, "reads" your dog's responses to the tests.
- Learn about where your dog is on the different elements of the test to improve your handling and training.
- Re-test to see what progress your dog has made in responding to the different elements of the test.

### STATION 4: FOOTING TEST

Evaluator observes dog's reaction to unusual footing.

#### Polyethylene

1. Allow your dog to approach the polyethylene on the ground while on a loose lead.
2. Encourage your dog to walk or trot confidently across this material and proceed to the next footing test.

#### Wire mesh

1. Allow your dog to approach the wire mesh or x-pen on the ground while on a loose lead.
2. Encourage your dog to walk or trot confidently across this material.

### STATION 5: PROTECTIVE RESPONSE / WEIRD STRANGER

Evaluator observes dog's capacity to recognize a potential threat and react in an appropriate manner.

#### Appearance

1. Allow your dog to approach the designated spot on a loose lead.
2. Stop moving forward as soon as the weird stranger staggers into the dog's view.
3. Don't allow your dog to advance beyond leash length (no sudden jerks).

#### Approach

1. As the weird stranger turns toward your dog and advances, remain stationary.
2. Don't allow your dog to advance beyond the designated spot without jerking on the leash.
3. You may encourage your dog to stand his ground with phrases like "who's that?" but don't issue commands like "sit" or "Stay."

#### Threat

1. As the weird stranger becomes threatening, continue to remain stationary.
2. Allow your dog to challenge the stranger but don't allow him/her to advance beyond the designated spot without jerking on the leash.
3. You may encourage your dog to hold ground with phrases like "who's that?"