

# **THERAPY DOGS INCORPORATED RULES AND REGULATIONS**

## **Part I**

### **2011 GOVERNING MEMBER GUIDELINES**

#### **Failure to adhere to the Therapy Dogs Inc. Governing Member Guidelines, Code of Ethics or Policies will jeopardize your membership in 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. All requests to use the registered TDInc. name, logo, slogan or 501(c)(3) Tax Identification Number must be submitted in writing to the President. The request will be evaluated by the Board of Directors and the requestor will be notified in writing whether permission is granted.
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 four (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 (T/O). Handlers must carry a current membership card, and dogs must wear the official red heart-shaped TDInc. identification tag when representing TDInc. on visits or events. 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. Prospective members, 12 to 16 years old, must apply and be approved through the Exceptions Committee. Children under the age of 16 years, unless an approved handler, are not allowed on TDInc. visits. A prospective member aged 12 to 16 may accompany a T/O on one visit before being tested. A TDInc. member, with or without a dog, must accompany a 12 to 16 year old member and a parent/guardian on all visits. If the parent/guardian is the TDInc. member, he or she may not bring an additional dog, but may alternately handle the junior member's dog if also registered with that dog. Upon reaching the age of 18, the handler is required to contact the office and sign a release of claims for the TDInc. member files. Anyone accompanying a TDInc. registered team on a visit (e.g., family member, spouse, friend) must not require assistance from the handler.
5. TDInc. provides liability 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 while on a TDInc. sponsored visit or an event. 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. During such times the dog should not display any official TDInc. identification.
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 by their veterinarian. Veterinary reports of titer levels are acceptable when state and local laws allow titers in lieu of rabies shots. If titers are not allowed, you will not be covered under TDInc. insurance.

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 who have any fresh wounds, recent surgery, other injuries, infections or any condition which may inhibit the ability to handle their dog safely may not do pet therapy visits until recovered and healed. A handler must be able to act quickly enough to remove themselves and their dog without assistance from a facility in the event of an emergency. 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. on a visit or event. The visit or event begins as soon as you reach the facility parking lot. If safe conditions exist, dogs may be taken off leash when performing obedience/trick demonstrations or when posing for photos. Use of a traffic leash is recommended for large dogs. **Equipment that is not allowed includes clickers, retractable and chain leashes, pinch, prong, spiked or electronic collars.** Collars, including slip, buckle, quick release, martingale, limited slip, or any other smooth collars made of chain, nylon or leather, are acceptable. Head halters and body halters/harnesses made of fabric webbing or leather with metal or plastic buckles are acceptable when the dog is also wearing an approved collar. Body halters/harnesses fastened with Velcro® or metal clothing snaps are not allowed. Dogs wearing a body halter/harness or a head halter must also wear an approved collar.
10. Liability considerations require any special situations (exceptions) to be submitted in writing to TDInc. Each handler may handle only one dog at a time while participating in any TDInc. visit and/or activities. All exceptions require a cover letter from the handler explaining the reason for the exception. If requesting special equipment, a picture is required of the dog in the equipment (e.g., stroller, cart, etc.). 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.). Obtain the appropriate information from the corporate office. Exceptions to these TDInc. Member Guidelines include, but are not limited to:
  - One handler with more than one dog
  - Handler under the age of 16
  - 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. Therapy dogs are not allowed onto any occupied bed, chair or wheelchair unless that practice is allowed by the facility and the resident/patient has given permission. Only with this permission, may

the handler lift the dog onto and remove it from the bed, chair or wheelchair in the same fashion without injury to the resident/patient. The handler must also control the dog's head while in this position. The handler must know and strictly adhere to the facility policy concerning dogs on any furniture. If another person wants to walk the dog, two leashes must be used. One leash must be held by the handler and used to maintain control of the dog, and the other is to be held by the second person.

13. 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. 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.
15. Member/handlers must not make or receive calls or text messages 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.
16. 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.
17. TDInc. members may not provide information to others in regard to whether expenses resulting from volunteer activities are tax deductible. Anyone having questions about whether certain expenses are tax deductible should be told to seek the advice of their tax preparer or the Internal Revenue Service, not other TDInc. members, the Board of Directors or the TDInc. office.
18. 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.
19. **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 4 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.**