

John Rogerson's Suggestions for the Public Access Good Citizen Test

1. **Exam by the owners vet** - this will need to be carried out to give the dog a clean bill of health for public access anyway and will take the form of an exam and signed certificate of health which will need to be presented at the time of the test.
2. **Walk along the road plus walk in a shopping area.** The road walk with the dog walking on a loose lead and sitting to cross the road etc. has to be done in an area where there is traffic. In the shopping area it is a controlled walk amongst people, some of them with other dogs. Each part of the walking on a loose lead test should not be less than fifteen minutes in duration. At various times on the command of "heel, close," etc. the dog should walk for a short distance paying close attention to the handler. This is to ensure that the handler can get the dog's full attention when passing a distraction such as children playing with a ball.
3. **Stay for 5 minutes** while the dogs lead is handed to the examiner/assistant while the owner goes into a shop. The dog is not required to actually hold a sit or down but must remain quiet, under control on a loose lead and confident at being held. This is responsible ownership - we should not really recommend that stays are carried out in public either off the lead or with the lead dropped alongside the dog!
4. **Stay for 60 minutes** in the sit and/or down position which duplicates the requirement for a dog to be with its owner in a beer garden, (a great place for the examiner to conduct the test!) outside a café etc. Dog should hold the position - preferably a down without excessive commands although one or two extra commands should be tolerated to remind the dog of what it is supposed to be doing.
5. **Food refusal** - this test to take place at the same time as the stay for 60 minutes. Food dropped from the table must not be consumed - commands of leave allowed but it should be obvious within a minute whether the dog understand not to touch the food!
6. **Recall in a public park.** This would include several recalls under a variety of conditions but would not be 'set up'. The dog would not be aware that it was going to be recalled (i.e. not held or left in a stay or the owner running away). For the test the owner would be stationary and the dog should recall instantly including away from distractions such as other dogs, people and children playing with a ball, people having a picnic etc.
7. Bowel elimination during any part of the test would result in failure as would urination in any area other than a public park. Territorial marking would also fail the test in any area.
8. **Behaviour in the home.** Dog should be under control when visitors enter the house and should go to bed and remain there when instructed.
9. **Food test in the home.** The dog should be non-aggressive when approached when eating a bowl of food/ a bone/ a rawhide chew etc.
10. **Isolation test.** This is designed to simulate the dog staying in a Travelodge etc. and the test should be carried out in a environment such as the examiners own house. The dog should be left by itself in a room for a period of around thirty minutes to ascertain if the dog is well behaved and settled. The owner can supply a crate for this part of the test if desired.

What do you think?

Is there anything that you would add or remove? If a public access test is feasible then it will need the backing of dog trainers and organisations who will actively promote it and campaign for public access for dogs that pass the test.

Your input is important for this to have any chance of success.

Best wishes, John