

# AKC Community Canine<sup>SM</sup> Evaluator's Guide



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# **PART I**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

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### **About the AKC Community Canine<sup>SM</sup> Title**

AKC Community Canine is the advanced level of the AKC's Canine Good Citizen Program. Dogs who pass the AKC Community Canine test earn the official AKC Community Canine title that is designated by the letters "CGCA" (Advanced CGC) on the dog's title record.

Whereas Canine Good Citizen tests are most often tested in a ring and situations are simulated (e.g., 3 helpers serve as a "crowd"), the AKC Community Canine test is done in real situations including at shows, classes, and in the community.

AKC Approved CGC Evaluators administer the AKC Community Canine test.

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### **AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy<sup>®</sup> and Canine Good Citizen<sup>®</sup>**

AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy is the puppy level of the CGC program. "S.T.A.R." stands for Socialization, Training, Activity and a Responsible owner, all the things every puppy needs. To earn the AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy award, puppies and their owners must attend a class lasting at least 6 weeks.

Unlike S.T.A.R., if they have the skills, dogs may take the AKC Community Canine and Canine Good Citizen tests without completing classes.

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### **Age Requirements for Dogs**

There is no age limit for dogs taking the AKC Community Canine test. However, before taking the test, dogs must have a Canine Good Citizen test on record at AKC.

There are several exceptions to having no age limit at an AKC Community Canine test. When AKC Community Canine tests are given in conjunction with AKC events, clubs enforce the regulations for all activities.

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## **Biting or Growling Incidents**

By the time dogs have passed the Canine Good Citizen test and are ready to be evaluated for AKC Community Canine, the vast majority of dogs who take the test will be friendly, happy animals. However, there are some exceptions to every rule, and if you should ever encounter a situation where a dog might show some signs of aggression, there are some things to keep in mind.

Any dog that growls or snaps at, bites, attacks, or attempts to attack another person or another dog is not a good citizen and must be dismissed from the test. If an Evaluator observes any signs of aggression (biting, snapping, growling, attempting to attack) the test should not be continued.

Further, if any of these behaviors are observed in the immediate testing area prior to or after testing, the Evaluator should send a written report to the AKC CGC Department. If you witness a dog engaging in an aggressive incident after passing the test, you should NOTIFY THE AKC when sending in your Test Summary Form.

**ON THE GROUNDS OF AN AKC SHOW:** If there is an aggressive incident (biting, growling, snapping) and the test is held in conjunction with an AKC event, dismiss the dog from the test and notify the Show Superintendent and AKC Field Representative immediately! If the dog engages in any aggression, testing should stop.

As an Evaluator, if you are having a difficult time reading the dog and/or you feel uncomfortable, you may tell the owner your concerns and stop the test.

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## **Checklist of Test Equipment for the AKC Community Canine Test**

### **Minimum Materials Required**

- Test forms (from the AKC)
- Pens for evaluators
- 15-20 ft. leash
- Food for "Leave it" (optional: Rally style wire covered food dish)
- Distraction items (something to carry-computer case, etc.)
- Clean up supplies (plastic bags or pooper scoopers, paper towels, liquid cleaner for urine)

### **Recommended Additional Materials**

- Clipboards for evaluators
- Cash box and change when money is charged

- ( ) Water/pans for dogs (at public events; dog show folks provide this on their own)
- ( ) Sign-up sheets for getting more info (public events)
- ( ) Hospitality for Evaluators (water, lunch and parking passes)

### **Making It First Class**

- ( ) AKC educational materials (for public events)
- ( ) Camera and film

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## **Certificates**

Prior to testing, the Evaluators should have an AKC Community Canine test kit. Test kits include the forms dog owners need to send to AKC to request their AKC Community Canine titles. Having dog owners interact directly with the AKC allows us to quickly resolve any problems related to their dog's certificate. Evaluators should not send in test forms as a group.

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## **Collars, Leashes and Equipment**

All tests must be performed on leash. Dogs should wear well-fitting buckle or slip collars (including martingales) or body harnesses. Body harnesses should not restrict the movement of the dog. Special training equipment such as pinch collars and head collars are not permitted. The leash should be made of either leather or fabric. Retractable leashes may not be used in the test.

We recognize that special training collars may be valuable equipment in the beginning stages of dog training, however, we feel that dogs are ready to be tested after they have been transitioned to a slip or buckle collar (body harnesses are also acceptable). If an evaluator is teaching classes and does not feel comfortable with one of the permitted collars, students may be required to take the test in the type of collar used in class (as long as it is permitted by AKC for testing). If the test is advertised for the general public, all of the permitted collar types and body harnesses should be allowed in the test.

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## **Conflict of Interest**

AKC Approved Canine Good Citizen Evaluators should avoid any situations that appear to be a conflict of interest. Evaluators may not test dogs they own (or that live in their households) in the AKC Community Canine test.

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## **Corrections**

AKC Community Canine, like CGC, is a program that encourages owners to have fun with their dogs. Harsh corrections are not permitted in the test and are grounds for dismissal. Throughout the test, dog owners may PRAISE and interact with their dogs.

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## **Disabilities – Dogs**

Dogs with disabilities such as the loss of a leg, deafness, or blindness in one eye are welcome in the AKC Community Canine test and they may earn the official title. Dog owners may use hand signals, gestures, or other cues to which the dog has been trained to respond. There are no breed specific exceptions to the test requirements (e.g., dogs may not skip the sit exercise because “this breed doesn’t like to sit.”)

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## **Disabilities – Handlers**

Evaluators may make changes to standard procedures to accommodate handlers with disabilities. In cases where there are questions, call the Canine Good Citizen Department for assistance.

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## **Eliminating (Urinating/Defecating) During Test**

Any dog that eliminates during one of the test items should not pass the test. Evaluators should choose a CGC test location carefully if the test is held outdoors in order to prevent problems with dogs eliminating during testing. If the test is conducted outdoors (e.g., at a park), dogs are not penalized for eliminating between test items when they are not working.

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## **Feedback to Participants**

To tell a person that the dog needs more training, try something like this. “Your dog did a great job. She passed all of the items except Test 9 when she didn’t come when called. She could learn this in a few sessions. I really hope you’ll work on this and try the test again. She’s a wonderful dog.”

In a case where the dog is not close to passing the test, you could try something like the following:

“This is really a nice dog. He is so full of energy and it’s clear he loves you. But on these test items, it looks like he needs a little more training... Have you been to any obedience classes? Most of these behaviors are skills that could be taught in a matter of weeks. I’m so glad you brought your dog today. I hope you’ll work on this and try again. I can tell by the way this dog watches every move you make, he’d do well in training.”

Feedback should be given to each participant as testing for his or her dog is completed. We discourage having participants sit and wait until all testing is completed to hear who passed the CGC.

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## **Fees**

Test-giving organizations and individual evaluators may charge a fee for conducting an AKC Community Canine test. Fees are used to cover the costs of test kits, mailing, copying, and advertising related to the test. Private trainers sometimes charge a fee for a testing session that is commensurate with their hourly rate of service. There is a \$20.00 processing fee that the dog owner will pay to the AKC for the AKC Community Canine title.

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## **Food**

Handlers are not permitted to use food as a reward during the AKC Community Canine Test. While we recognize that food can be effectively used as a reinforcer during training, it should not be used in the test. As with CGC, the purpose of the AKC Community Canine test is to determine if the dog relates to the owner and if it can be controlled without food.

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## **Locations**

AKC Community Canine tests may be held in the community provided that the setting is public or the evaluator has permission to use the setting (such as a business). Tests may also be held at dog shows or at dog training classes. When held at a training class, the AKC Community Canine test should be as “real” as possible. For example, rather than walking through a simulated crowd in a ring, the owner and dog (with the Evaluator) would walk through people who are waiting for class, in the lobby, etc. Tests may not be conducted at the dog owner’s home or yard.

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## Number of Participants

Testing agencies/clubs should not attempt to run as many dogs through the test as fast as possible. Each handler deserves the time and attention of the evaluator and tests should not be rushed. Remember that #5 requires there to be 3 other people with dogs, and for this reason, AKC Community Canine testing may not lend itself well to a private 1:1 class.

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## Paperwork Requirements

### 1. Test Summary Form

After each AKC Community Canine Test, Evaluators should send in a TEST SUMMARY FORM to AKC®. This short, 1-page form simply summarizes the number of dogs tested, how many passed/failed, etc. This also documents the testing that you have done. The TEST SUMMARY FORM should be sent to AKC whether there was one dog in the test or 50 dogs. We suggest and prefer that you use the ONLINE Test Summary at: [http://www.akc.org/events/cgc/evaluator\\_test\\_summary\\_form.cfm](http://www.akc.org/events/cgc/evaluator_test_summary_form.cfm).

When you use the Online Test Summary Form, you don't need to send in a paper form.

If you should lose the link, remember that all helpful links are posted at the bottom of your CGC Evaluator Newsletter every month. If you have to use the paper Test Summary Form, the bottom of the page is marked JK9GC1.

### 2. Test Registration Forms (the actual test form for the dog owner)

The Test Registration Forms are the forms that evaluators score at the test. Each test item is checked "pass" or "needs more training" and if the dog passes, **this is the form the owner sends to AKC to request the title and title certificate.**

The Evaluator should keep the yellow copy of the 3-part form for one year. If an owner loses his or her paperwork and needs proof of passing the test, the Evaluator may be contacted. The dog owner receives 1) the original copy of the test form to send to AKC for the certificate, and 2) the back copy with test items for his or her records.

If an owner waits longer than a year to send paperwork to AKC, the dog will need to be retested.

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## **Qualifications of Evaluators**

Evaluators who administer AKC Community Canine tests must be AKC Approved Canine Good Citizen evaluators.

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## **Retesting**

Evaluators may choose to allow dogs who have only missed one test item to take the test again. This may be at the end of the day's testing, or if there is time, before the next dog is tested.

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## **Service and Therapy Dogs**

Service dogs help people with disabilities. Dogs who pass the AKC Community Canine or AKC's Canine Good Citizen test are not service dogs and they do not have special access rights in public places (stores, restaurants, planes, etc.) Further, AKC Community Canine and AKC's Canine Good Citizen tests are not therapy dog tests. Therapy dogs volunteer with their owners to help others. Therapy dogs are tested and registered by therapy dog organizations.

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## **Test Formats**

Organizations holding AKC Community Canine tests have a considerable amount of flexibility in deciding the order in which to give the tests. To prevent a backlog of dogs waiting to take the test, some clubs assign appointment times about 10 minutes apart. This can be handled by using a pre-registration process. Experiment with different formats to determine the procedures preferred by your testing team.

At an AKC Community Canine test where there are several assistants, only the main evaluator is required to complete the approval process and obtain a CGC Evaluator number.

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## **Testing Your Own Dog**

See Conflict of Interest.

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## **Testing Materials**

For prices or to order test kits by check or credit card, contact:

The American Kennel Club at (919) 233-9767 or visit [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org) and go to the Online Store, or go directly to: [http://classic.akc.org/store/products/index.cfm?category\\_cde=CGC&product\\_view=thumb](http://classic.akc.org/store/products/index.cfm?category_cde=CGC&product_view=thumb).

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## **Witness Signature**

As with CGC test forms, AKC Community Canine also has a place for a witness signature on the test form. Witnesses may be other evaluators, instructors, helpers, or spectators. The same witness does not have to sign for every dog in the test. The witness is attesting to the fact that the dog and owner were present, the evaluator administered all items of the test, and there were no incidents of aggression (toward people or other dogs).

# **PART II**

## **SCORING SPECIFIC TEST ITEMS**

**General instructions:** The test protocol as set forth in this Evaluator Guide should be followed. Handlers may talk to their dogs and provide praise throughout the test. The test items should be in as natural, realistic format as possible. Evaluators should encourage the test to be fun.

Evaluators may remind handlers to communicate with their dogs. Evaluators should not make the test easier by eliminating test items, nor should they require a higher level of performance than the test requires. Of course, evaluators may choose to teach more advanced skills in their classes.

### **AKC COMMUNITY CANINE TEST**

#### **Advanced Canine Good Citizen (CGCA)**

To earn the CGCA title, the dog must be registered or listed with AKC (AKC number, PAL, or AKC Canine Partners number) and already have a Canine Good Citizen award/title on record. Dogs must pass all 10 items of the test to receive the CGCA title.

The reason dogs need a number to earn an official AKC title is that AKC adds titles to a dog's title record by attaching the titles to the dog's number. For Canine Good Citizen, the dog owner has a choice and may order a certificate only (no number required), or the dog owner may request CGC as an official title (number required, includes a certificate). By the time dogs advance to AKC Community Canine (CGCA), they earn official titles.

### **AKC COMMUNITY CANINE TEST ITEMS**

#### **1. Dog stands, sits or lies down and waits under control while the owner:**

- sits at the registration table and fills out paperwork.

OR

- if the test is done in the community, dog waits while the owner sits and has a snack or visits with another person (e.g., at a park).

*The length of time for this exercise should be about 3 minutes. It takes most dog owners about 3 minutes to fill out the Test Registration form. If this item is tested in the community, use 3 minutes as a guideline.*

## **2. Dog walks on a loose leash in a natural situation (not in a ring) and does not pull.**

- make a left turn
- make a right turn
- stop
- walk at a fast and slow pace

*The evaluator may call out the commands or say, “We’re going to take a walk. Follow me-- stop, turn, and change paces when I do.” The evaluator should choose a position (e.g., behind the handler, or beside the handler) so that the dog and handler can be observed throughout the exercise.*

## **3. Dog walks on a loose leash through a crowd**

- at a show or in class (not in a ring).
- in the community, dog walks on a sidewalk, through a crowd at a community fair, park, on a trail, through a busy hallway, etc.

*The evaluator and handler should pay close attention to dogs when walking through the crowd, particularly if there are other dogs in the crowd. When small dogs are being tested walking through a crowd, watch closely to ensure that they are safe. Choose a “safe” crowd.*

## **4. Dog walks past distraction and does not pull**

This item may be tested along with #3 if there are dogs in the crowd.

- at a show or class. Dog walks by dogs waiting in the crowd – dogs 2 ft. apart.
- in the community. Dog walks by other dogs on a trail, sidewalk, in a hallway, etc.

*This item may be tested separately or with #3. See notes for #3 above.*

**5. Sit-stay in small group (two other people with dogs, total of 3 people, 3 dogs in group).**

Owners and dogs are in an informal circle while owners have a conversation.

Dogs are all on the owner's left side, on leash, 3 ft. apart (at least 30 seconds).

*The purpose of this exercise is to test the dog's ability to be under control when in close proximity to other dogs. The exercise begins with the dog sitting at the handler's left side. As the owners engage in informal conversation, dogs are permitted to change position. They are not penalized for lying down or standing, as long as they remain under control and do not move to go to other dogs. This exercise simulates waiting for an elevator, getting together to plan a hike, debriefing after a therapy visit, etc. The sit-stay or down-stay are tested in #8. In classes, instructors may choose to practice having the dogs sit-stay throughout the entire exercise.*

**6. Dog allows person who is carrying something (backpack, computer bag, etc.) to approach and pet it.**

"May I pet your dog?" (Item is placed on floor/ground before the person pets the dog.)

*The item can be placed 2-3 ft. from the dog. Dogs should not shy away from the bag, nor should they lunge toward it and put their heads inside. As exercises in class, instructors can practice both putting the bag down (as in the test), and approaching the dog while holding the bag.*

**7. "Leave it." Dog walks by food and follows owner instructions, "Leave it."**

This can be food placed by the evaluator on the floor or ground in a food dish with a wire cover as in Rally.

*The food should be 2-3-ft. away from the dog. In class, instructors may practice with the dogs being walked closer to the food. Be aware if a food bowl/dish is used (that may look like the dog's own dish at home) and dogs*

*are walked straight to the dish, many dogs interpret this as a cue to eat from the dish.*

**8. Down or sit stay-distance (owner's choice).**

Dog is on 20-ft line, owner walks away with back to dog, picks up an item (shopping or training bag, clipboard, folder, etc.) placed on the floor, chair, or ground by the evaluator and returns to the dog.

*The handler returns to the dog and gives the item (bag, etc.) to the evaluator. The evaluator may put the item aside, or if it is large enough, (e.g., a large shopping bag) the evaluator may choose to use the item as a distraction in #9.*

**9. Recall with distractions present (coming when called). Handler goes out 20-ft. (off center) and calls dog.**

Dog is on the 20-ft. line from #8 above.

*Examples of distractions include another person (in class, instructors can have the person wear hats, coats, etc.), a stack of boxes, a chair with a shopping bag on it, etc. In classes, a wide variety of distractions can be used so that dogs are steady in the presence of any distractions. However, distractions for the test should not be designed to make dogs fail. An example of this would be teasing a dog with a ball, squeaky toy, or food.*

**10. Dog will sit or stand stay (owner's choice) while owner enters/exits a doorway or narrow passageway. Owner calls dog through door when ready. Owner may choose to send the dog through first and have the dog wait for the owner, or, the owner may choose to have the dog go through the doorway at the owner's side. Whichever method is used, the dog must not pull the owner and must be under good control. Think of the handler having the leash in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other.**

Doorway or gate can be real or simulated with ring gates, two chairs, or a natural passage way (e.g., entrance to trail) in the community.

*The passageway or doorway should be approximately 2-ft. wide. Whichever method is used, the dog must not pull the owner and must be under good control. Think of the handler having the leash in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other. The doorway can be real or simulated with ring gates, 2 chairs, or it can be a natural passage way (e.g., entrance to trail) in the community.*

*In class, the exercise can be practiced by 1) having the dog wait, 2) by having the owner send the dog through the doorway first, or 3) by having the dog and owner go through together. There are times when a dog owner may want to send a dog up the steps ahead of the owner, or into the house ahead of the owner. Other times, when it is not clear what is on the other side of the door, the dog owner may want the dog to wait, and then follow when called by the owner. Finally, there are times when the dog owner will simply want a dog to go through a doorway at the owner's side.*

## TEN OPTIONAL ITEMS

*Not required for AKC title; may be used in classes, etc.*

### **A. Car Safety**

1. Gets in crate, tolerates seat belt, etc. for ride in car
2. Unloads safely. Waits for handler cue, does not jump out on own.

### **B. Public Buildings (that allow dogs)**

3. Enters safely (automatic doors with handler)
4. Down stay in lobby or outdoor area
5. Walks under control (on leash) while in building
6. Elevator (enters, remains under control beside handler, exits)
7. Stairs (up, down, under control by handler)

### **C. Restaurants/Outdoor Cafes (that allow dogs)**

8. Remains under control under/beside table while owner has meal

### **D. Off Lead Skills**

9. Walking on leash by owner (practiced indoors, safe location)
10. Off lead recall (20 ft.) (practiced indoors, safe location)





## **American Kennel Club®**

The American Kennel Club is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its Registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. Founded in 1884, the AKC and its affiliated organizations advocate for the purebred dog as a family companion, advance canine health and well-being, work to protect the rights of all dog owners and promote responsible dog ownership.

### **American Kennel Club**

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