

Assistance Dog Task Requirements

When reviewing assistance dog task videos, we look for clear, reliable, and well trained behaviours. Each video must show the dog completing the task in a way that directly assists the handler's disability. We assess factors such as calmness, control, task accuracy, and consistency across environments.

It is essential that any videos you submit are recorded in **good lighting**, with **clear visibility** of both the handler and the dog. The camera should be **steady**, and the task should be filmed without unnecessary distractions or interruptions. Where appropriate, videos should include **close-up views** to ensure that the dog's actions can be properly assessed.

Tasks should be able to be performed in public settings, not just in the home environment.

Each video should:

1. Be at least **one minute** long
2. Include the cue (either verbal or gestured) and release cue if required
3. Include a brief description of the task, and any other relevant information (see below for what is required for each task)

Below are the task expectations and general video criteria.

PLEASE NOTE: Tasks are listed below once only, but some can be performed to help multiple subcategories of disability (for example, DPT can be used in psychiatric, autistic and medical episodes, but it is listed below under psychiatric only.)

Mobility Assistance Tasks

1. Retrieving dropped items

- **Videos must show:** Dog promptly notices when an item is dropped or responds to a cue to retrieve it. The dog must pick up the item gently without causing any damage, carry it carefully, and deliver it directly into the handler's hand or lap. The dog should not chew, damage or play with the item.

2. Opening and closing doors

- **Videos must show:** Dog reliably opens or closes a door using a tug rope or by pushing. The dog should approach the door confidently, interact with it

without hesitation, and complete the task calmly.

3. Helping handler undress (jacket, sleeves, etc.)

- **Videos must show:** Dog assists by gently pulling clothing such as jackets or sleeves off the handler. The dog must avoid pulling too forcefully or causing discomfort and should stop immediately once the clothing is removed or upon command.

4. Taking off shoes and socks

- **Videos must show:** Dog carefully removes shoes and socks from the handler without causing harm or discomfort. The dog should work methodically and avoid pulling too abruptly or causing imbalance.

5. Fetching specific items

- **Videos must show:** Dog reliably retrieves specific named items, such as a phone or water bottle. The dog must demonstrate the ability to distinguish between different objects if multiple options are present.

6. Pushing buttons

- **Videos must show:** Dog activates buttons such as automatic door openers, pedestrian crossing buttons, or emergency call systems using a targeted paw or nose push. The action must be deliberate and controlled, and the dog must respond to a verbal or physical cue.

Psychiatric Assistance Tasks

1. Interrupting self-harm

- **Videos must show:** The dog identifies behaviours indicating self-harm (e.g., hitting, scratching) and interrupts using a trained behaviour such as nudging, pawing, or blocking. The dog must act promptly and consistently, with minimal cueing.
- **Training criteria must be explained:** Detail how the dog was trained to recognise specific self-harm behaviours and how this task is cued.

2. Interrupting disassociations/flashbacks

- **Videos must show:** The dog recognises early signs of disassociation (e.g., staring off, lack of response) and interrupts with trained actions like nudging or licking to re-engage the handler. The response must be gentle and persistent if necessary.
- **Training criteria must be explained:** Explain how the dog was trained to detect and respond to signs of disassociation/flashback, and what this cue might look like.

3. Creating space in crowds (“blocking” or “covering”)

- **Videos must show:** The dog positions itself in front (blocking) or behind (covering) the handler to create personal space in crowds. The dog must move into position smoothly on cue and maintain it calmly until released.
- Also accepted is the dog circling the handler to create space in a circular motion

4. Guiding to an exit

- **Videos must show:** The dog responds to a cue to find and guide the handler to an exit or safe location. The dog should choose a safe path around obstacles and distractions, maintaining an appropriate pace. The dog must pause at hazards (e.g., stairs, curbs) if necessary and wait for the handler’s next instruction.
- **Training criteria must be explained:** Outline the cues that the dog looks out for (verbal, body language) to perform this task.

5. Grounding during panic attacks

- **Videos must show:** The dog applies calming behaviours such as nudging, leaning, or offering sustained contact (e.g., chin rest, pressure against the body) during a panic attack. The dog must engage without overwhelming the handler and persist appropriately until recovery or release.
- **Training criteria must be explained:** Detail what symptoms cue this task, or whether it is verbal cue.

6. Deep Pressure Therapy (DPT)

- **Videos must show:** The dog provides deep pressure by lying across the handler’s lap, torso, or legs, maintaining pressure for a suitable period until signalled to stop.
- **Training criteria must be explained:** Outline the cues that the dog looks out for (verbal, body language) to perform this task. Video must be at least **1 minute long**, demonstrating adequate duration of the behaviour.

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Autism Support Tasks

1. Interrupting repetitive or harmful behaviours

- **Videos must show:** Dog recognises repetitive or harmful behaviours such as hair pulling or scratching, and interrupts them using a trained action like nudging, pawing, or lying across the handler.
- **Training criteria must be explained:** Outline the cues that the dog looks out for (body language, specific harming behaviours.) to perform this task.

2. Interrupting meltdowns

- **Videos must show:** Dog identifies early signs of a meltdown (such as agitation, vocalisations) and intervenes with a trained behaviour like leaning, nudging, or licking to provide calming input.
- **Training criteria must be explained:** Outline the cues that the dog looks out for (body language) to perform this task.

3. Bringing comfort objects on cue

- **Videos must show:** On cue, the dog retrieves a pre-trained comfort object (e.g., a toy, headphones) to help the handler self-regulate during stress or meltdowns.
- **Training criteria must be explained:** Outline the cues that the dog looks out for (body language, specific behaviours from the handler, or verbal cues) to perform this task.

Medical Alert/Response Tasks

1. Seizure alert or response

- **Videos must show:** Dog either alerts to impending seizures or responds appropriately once a seizure occurs by staying close to the handler, activating an alert system, or seeking help.
- **Additional documentation:** Videos can include seizure log data or medical device readings.
- **Training criteria must be explained:** Explain how the dog was trained to detect pre-seizure cues (e.g., scent or behavioural changes) and what specific behaviours were taught for alerting or responding.

2. Diabetic alert

- **Videos must show:** Dog provides a clear and distinct alert when the handler's blood sugar is outside the normal range. The alert must be prompt and distinguishable from general behaviour.
- **Additional documentation:** Videos alongside CGM readings (e.g., Dexcom) to validate accuracy.
- **Training criteria must be explained:** Describe how scent samples were used for training and how the alert behaviour was consistently reinforced.

3. Cardiac/heart rate/blood pressure alert

- **Videos must show:** Dog recognises and alerts to changes in the handler's heart rate or blood pressure through a trained, consistent alert behaviour.
- **Additional documentation:** Videos with heart monitor readings.
- **Training criteria must be explained:** Detail how scent or behavioural changes were identified and how the alerting behaviour was conditioned.

4. Retrieving medication

- **Videos must show:** Dog retrieves a specific medication container on command and delivers it appropriately.

5. Finding another person for help

- **Videos must show:** In response to an emergency or when the handler gives a cue, the dog seeks out another person (e.g., family member, carer) and leads them back to the handler.

Hearing Impairment Assistance Tasks

1. Alerting to sounds

- **Videos must show:** The dog recognises and alerts the handler to important sounds (e.g., their name, doorbell, fire alarm, oven timer, baby crying) with a distinct, trained behaviour (e.g., nudging, pawing)

2. Waking the handler/turning on a light

- **Videos must show:** The dog wakes the handler when an alarm sounds (e.g., smoke detector, morning alarm) or if an emergency is detected. The dog must do this reliably and persistently, using a trained behaviour like nudging, pawing, or jumping up on the bed. The dog might be trained to turn on a light to alert the handler at night time.

3. Leading to the source of a sound

- **Videos must show:** After alerting the handler to a sound, the dog leads them to the source (e.g., a doorbell, crying baby, beeping appliance) using a controlled and confident pace.

Visual Impairment Assistance Tasks

1. Guiding around obstacles

- **Videos must show:** The dog guides the handler safely around stationary and moving obstacles, stops at kerbs or steps, and maintains a straight and appropriate walking pace. The dog must respond to directional cues and make safe decisions when navigating hazards.

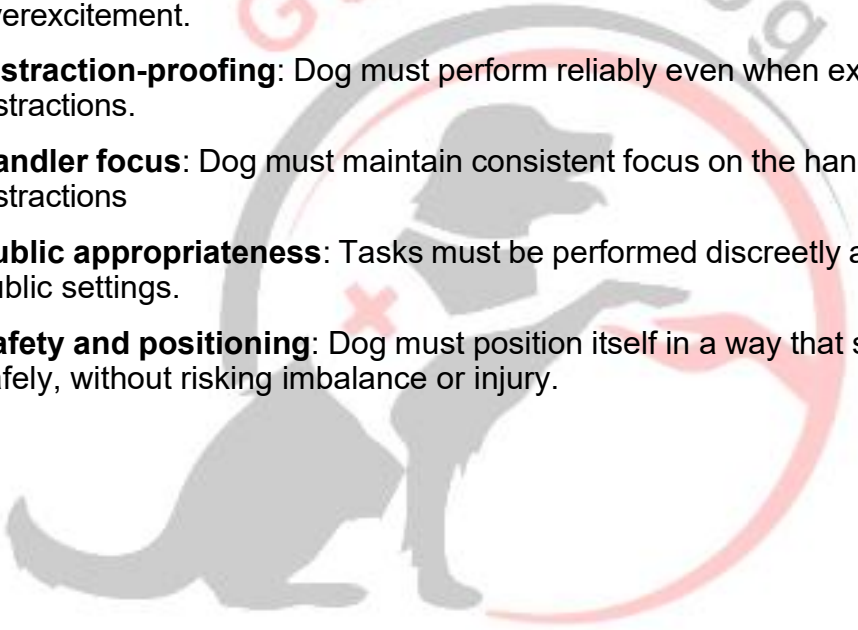
2. Stopping at changes in elevation

- **Videos must show:** The dog reliably stops at kerbs, stairs, or drop-offs without specific cues from the handler, allowing the handler to assess and

proceed safely.

General Video Assessment Criteria for All Tasks

- **Reliability:** Dog must perform on first or second cue.
- **Consistency:** Behaviour must be predictable and uniform across environments.
- **Gentleness:** Dog must handle objects and make physical contact carefully and without causing harm.
- **Item discrimination:** Dog must accurately identify and retrieve or alert for the correct item, sound, or signal.
- **Calm demeanour:** Dog must work calmly without signs of stress, frustration, or overexcitement.
- **Distraction-proofing:** Dog must perform reliably even when exposed to common distractions.
- **Handler focus:** Dog must maintain consistent focus on the handler, disregarding distractions
- **Public appropriateness:** Tasks must be performed discreetly and appropriately in public settings.
- **Safety and positioning:** Dog must position itself in a way that supports the handler safely, without risking imbalance or injury.



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