

INSTRUCTIONS FOR DOG TRAINERS

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

1.1.1. With effect from 15 November 2010, all newly licensed Scheduled dogs and dogs which are assessed by the Animal and Veterinary Service of the National Parks Board (“**AVS**”) as requiring obedience training will be required to undergo obedience training by a dog trainer accredited by AVS.

1.2. OBJECTIVE OF ACCREDITATION

1.2.1. The objective of dog trainer accreditation is to ensure a benchmark for competency in dog obedience training so that the dog can be properly controlled by their handler and will be less prone to show aggression or bite.

1.2.2. This is not a mandatory accreditation scheme. Non-accredited dog trainers can continue to offer their services to the public but will not be recognized by AVS to train Scheduled dogs and other dogs required by AVS to be trained.

2. TERMS

2.1. CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

2.1.1. Candidates must be able to satisfy ALL the following criteria for accreditation:

- a) demonstrate an active track record of conducting dog training in the last 2 years;
- b) provide 10 verifiable references from clients: At least 5 of the references have to include the training of Scheduled dogs and/or dogs with aggressive behavioural issues;
- c) demonstrate competency with the accreditation syllabus (refer to “**Annex A – Accreditation Syllabus**”) that covers both basic obedience and situational awareness AVS; and

2.1.2. AVS reserves the right to not accredit or not renew the accreditation of trainers who use methods that are deemed to be inappropriate or inhumane.

2.2. ASSESSMENT FOR ACCREDITATION

Applications for accreditation will be assessed by the AVS **on a quarterly basis (in January, April, July and October for applications received in the preceding 3 months).**

2.2.1. Candidates are required to submit the following:

- a) the online Application for Dog Trainer Accreditation Form (“**Application Form**”) (accessible via <https://go.gov.sg/padt-applicationform>); and
- b) a video showcasing the candidate training a client (must be a reference with no potential conflict of interest) and his/her dog(s) (which have aggressive behavioural issues such as lunging, snapping, biting, etc) within the last 2 years, covering three segments:

(i) **First segment:** The dog’s initial behavioural problems. The video should describe the following:

- 1) Detailed description of problem behaviour;
- 2) possible motivation(s) of the behaviour; and
- 3) the context(s) in which the behaviour is expressed.

(ii) **Second segment (at least 1 minute):** the process of training to improve behaviour. The video should describe and showcase the following:

- 1) type of training aids used (e.g. collar, leash, clicker, verbal or tactile markers etc.);
- 2) reinforcers used (e.g. food, praise, etc.)
- 3) training technique(s) employed (e.g. counter-conditioning, shaping, luring, generalisation etc.), including how the training techniques have addressed the behaviour issue(s) indicated in (i)(1).
- 4) learning processes behind the training techniques indicated in (ii)(3) (e.g. positive reinforcement etc.);

(iii) **Third segment (at least 1 minute):** The results of training for both the client and his/her dog, including the dog performing the full AVS accreditation syllabus (refer to Annex A).

The videos (collectively referred to as the “**Demonstration Video**”), shall be timestamped, and be submitted to AVS via the Application Form in 2.2.1(a), with link(s) to an online streaming/hosting platform, such as Youtube or DropBox. The candidate shall describe the video with reference to the criteria set out in 2.2.1(b). The candidate shall also provide the name and contact details of the client to AVS, provided always that the candidate shall obtain prior consent from the client for AVS to collect and use their name and contact details to contact them for references in assessing the candidate’s application for accreditation (or renewal of accreditation, as the case may be).

- 2.2.2. Candidates shall also ensure that each of their client references (refer to paragraph 2.1.1(b) completes and submits an online Client Feedback Form (accessible via <https://go.gov.sg/padt-feedbackform>) to AVS. AVS may contact the client references for further details to assess the candidate.
- 2.2.3. Candidates shall be assessed based on the Demonstration Video, the information provided in the Application Form and the client references.
- 2.2.4. Candidates may be required to undergo any interview or practical assessment, if AVS deems it necessary. If a practical assessment is needed, AVS may require the candidate to secure the participation of any of the candidate's client references (refer to paragraph 2.1.1(b)) or present clients, together with the client's dog(s), in the practical assessment.
- 2.2.5. Candidates will be notified on the outcome of their application through email approximately 4-6 weeks from the month of assessment. Candidates may be requested to provide more references should any of them be unverifiable.
- 2.2.6. Applications which are incomplete or fail to meet the accreditation criteria will not be processed.
- 2.2.7. AVS will publish the list of successful candidates on the AVS website. No certificate of accreditation will be issued. The names of accredited dog trainers are published on the AVS website for informational purposes only. AVS is not affiliated with and does not endorse or recommend any particular accredited dog trainer.

2.3. AUDIT AND CLIENT FEEDBACK FORMS

- 2.3.1. AVS may conduct random surprise audits on any accredited trainer ("**Trainer**") during his/her obedience training sessions to observe the standard of training conducted.
- 2.3.2. For Scheduled dogs and dogs that are required by AVS to undergo obedience training, the Trainer's client is required to complete and submit the online Client Feedback Form to AVS at the end of the course.
- 2.3.3. For other dogs, the Trainer is encouraged to get the client to complete and submit the online Client Feedback Form to AVS.

2.4. CRITERIA TO REMAIN ACCREDITED

2.4.1. To remain accredited, a Trainer must:

- a) maintain an active track record of dog obedience training;
- b) not be de-listed (refer to paragraph 2.5);
- c) provide at least 5 new client references per year of accreditation (**10** references for 2 years). At least **5** of the references have to include the training of Scheduled dogs and/or dogs with aggressive behavioural issues. These references shall be submitted to AVS directly by his/her clients via the online Client Feedback Form after they complete the dog training course; and
- d) submit a fresh Demonstration Video in accordance with paragraph 2.2.1(b).

2.5. DISPUTES AND ADVERSE FEEDBACK AGAINST ACCREDITED TRAINERS

2.5.1. AVS shall assess adverse feedback against Trainers which relate to the following issues:

- a) training methodology/effectiveness;
- b) animal welfare issues; and
- c) unprofessional conduct (including but not limited to: committing an offence during training or hurting the reputation of AVS).

2.5.2. A Trainer may be suspended for a period not exceeding 6 months or de-listed if he/she receives any adverse feedback under paragraph 2.5.1 that is verified as credible by AVS. In the event the adverse feedback relates to serious offences which in the opinion of the AVS affects the Trainer's fitness to be an accredited trainer, for example offences related to animal welfare or cruelty, the Trainer may be suspended until investigations into the offences are completed.

2.5.3. A Trainer shall be de-listed if convicted of any animal-related offence.

2.5.4. Before AVS decides to suspend or de-list a Trainer under paragraph 2.5.2, AVS shall invite the Trainer to:

- a) attend an interview to explain the adverse feedback; or
- b) provide any written statement, accompanied by relevant supporting documents, to explain the adverse feedback.

2.5.5. AVS shall consider the Trainer's explanation and any written statement and supporting documents referred to in paragraph 2.5.4 in making its decision.

2.5.6. AVS reserves the right not to accredit or renew the accreditation of trainers who have been suspended or de-listed (as the case may be) under paragraph 2.5.2 or paragraph 2.5.3.

2.5.7. Save for disputes arising from such adverse feedback under paragraph 2.5.1, AVS shall not deal with financial disputes or any other types of disputes.

2.6. TRAINER FEEDBACK

2.6.1. Candidates and Trainers are welcome to provide feedback to AVS. They can write to <http://avs.gov.sg/feedback> or call 1800 476 1600.

Annex A - Accreditation Syllabus

ACCREDITED SYLLABUS - BASIC DOG OBEDIENCE TRAINING

PART 1: BASIC OBEDIENCE	Brief Description	Objective
Heeling	Dog to walk calmly close to the handler's left side, without pulling or lagging. Straight line heeling, one left turn, one right turn and one right about turn.	To ensure the dog is generally under control on leash, and is not a danger to the handler or the public, other dogs etc by lunging or misbehaving.
Sit	Dog to sit by the handler's side.	To control the dog in a stationary position while walking – for example at traffic lights, when leaving the house gate, when approaching another human / dog.
Down	Dog to go into the down position by the handler's left side.	As above - a reliable down position is especially useful for an over excitable or aggressive dog.
Recall	Handler will leave the dog on a sit stay and call the dog from a distance of 6 to 10 feet. Dog to come to the handler and sit in front.	To allow the handler to maintain control of the dog from a distance and/or in the event it escapes from its leash, house, etc
Sit Stay	Dog to remain in a sit position for a fixed period of time – say 30 sec while the handler stands 6 to 10 feet away.	To allow the handler to maintain over the dog from a distance and/or in situations of increased distractions.
Down Stay	Dog to remain in a down position for a fixed period of time – say 60 sec while the handler stands 6 to 10 feet away.	As above. Particularly useful for over excitable, aggressive dogs.

PART 2: SOCIAL INTERACTION	Brief Description	Objective
Walking Through A Crowd	Dog and handler walk around and pass close to several people to demonstrate that the dog can move about politely in pedestrian traffic and is under control in public places. Dog should not display over excitement, shyness or aggression to people and should be able to sit calmly by the handler's side while in a crowd.	To ensure the dog is comfortable around humans and especially strangers in a public place. Increased socialising among strangers would make the dog more comfortable in strange environments, among crowds etc and less likely to be become agitated, provoked and bite.
Dog V Dog Interaction	Two handlers and their dogs approach each other from a distance of about 20 feet, stop, shake hands and exchange pleasantries, and continue on for about 10 feet. This exercise should ideally be conducted between two unfamiliar dogs (i.e. not from the same household) and also with dogs of different sizes.	To ensure the dog is comfortable around strange dogs, and behaves in a neutral manner. Ideally, the dog should be indifferent to a strange dog, and not display over excitement, aggression, barking, growling, jumping etc. Again, the more the dog is exposed and de-sensitised to such situations, the more comfortable it is likely to be and less likely to react adversely.
Reaction To Distractions	The dog should be comfortable facing common distractions it is likely to encounter on the street, at the park, beach etc. The evaluator will select and present two such distracting situations. Examples of distractions include someone riding a bicycle next to the dog, having a jogger run next to the dog from front / behind, young children running around, opening an umbrella.	To ensure that the dog is comfortable and desensitised to common every day distractions which could otherwise startle, scare or agitate a dog and provoke it into reacting adversely or aggressively.