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Member Guidelines

Membership Definitions:

A **Certified Therapy Team** consists of one person and one therapy pet. Love on a Leash certifies dogs, cats and rabbits as therapy pets. All pets must be a minimum of one year old to begin the certification process. Love on a Leash accepts Rescued, Re-homed and Career Change pets. Love on a Leash does not accept Wolf or Coyote hybrids as our insurance does not cover them.

You may only handle one pet per visit even if you are certified with multiple pets. Anyone who will be handling the pet on visits must be certified with that pet. Responsibility for a pet may not be transferred, i.e. having another LOAL member or client control your pet.

A **Rescue or Re-Home** is generally defined as a previously homeless, lost or abandoned pet that comes into a home with little or no history. ***It is strongly recommended that you take a minimum of 6 months to bond with this pet and to get to know its reactions in various situations before beginning the process of becoming a certified therapy team.***

Career Change dogs are those who were bred to become a service animal and are disqualified for service work due to a medical condition or temperament incompatible with the strict requirements of service work. ***It is strongly recommended that you take a minimum of 6 months to bond with this pet and get to know its reactions in various situations before beginning the process of becoming a certified therapy team.***

An **Additional Handler** for a therapy pet must complete the entire membership certification process with the pet.

Each handler must complete a Control Evaluation, perform at least ten hours of supervised visits, and pass the Visit Evaluation. Visit hours cannot be shared or credited to more than one handler.

A **Continuing Member** is a member (owner/handler) in good standing whose pet is unable to participate in visits due to illness, infirmity, or is no longer living.

A **Junior Handler** is a member of a certified therapy team who is between the ages of 16 and 18.

A Junior Handler's membership application and release form must be signed by a parent or legal guardian, who is already a certified member in good standing with Love on a Leash. That member acknowledges responsibility and agrees to accompany the Junior Handler on all LOAL activities and visits. Additionally, an application for Dogs or Cats and Rabbits must be filled out and all required steps must be completed.

A late fee will be charged to anyone renewing greater than **30 days** past their expiration date.

Any LOAL member who allows their membership to lapse for **one year** or more will be required to complete the entire membership process again including the Control Evaluation, Supervised Visits, and Visit Evaluation — before renewing.



Assistance or Service Animals vs. Therapy Pets:

A Therapy Pet's sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support to those we visit. While they do provide a valuable service, they ***do not*** qualify as service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A ***therapy pet*** does not have the same legal rights as an assistance or service animal.

Service Animals are defined as animals that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. The work or task an animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability.

Misrepresenting an animal as a service or assistance animal may be punishable by incarceration and/or fines – as determined by local, state and federal laws.



Steps to Take to Become a Member of Love on a Leash:

- ♥ Attend a therapy pet class (not required, but highly recommended)
- ♥ Have your pet evaluated for temperament and obedience:
LOAL Control Evaluation form
 - The LOAL Control Evaluation for dogs must be administered by a Certified Behaviorist, Certified Dog Trainer, Certified Obedience Instructor, or AKC approved Canine Good Citizen Evaluator. A list of trainers in your area, qualified to administer the AKC (American Kennel Club) Canine Good Citizen Test, can be found at the AKC website: www.akc.org.
 - The LOAL Control Evaluation for Cats and Rabbits may be administered by a veterinarian.
 - The LOAL Control Evaluation is to be fully and successfully completed **before** going on any supervised visits.
 - Candidates for membership cannot evaluate their own pets. The Control Evaluation and the Visit Evaluation are to be done by two different evaluators.
- ♥ Perform at least 10 hours of supervised visits:
LOAL Supervised Visit Log form
 - Prospective members must carry a copy of their completed Control Evaluation while on supervised visits and should only enter a facility or do visits when accompanied by a Visit Captain or an approved substitute. (Contact LOAL's national office to arrange for an approved substitute.) The LOAL insurance coverage will only apply to prospective members while being supervised.
 - Supervised visits and Membership Application must be completed and submitted within one year from date of Control Evaluation. A maximum of one hour per day can be counted during the probationary (supervised visits) period. (At any time, you may be asked to continue with additional supervised visits to help you become a better therapy team.)
- ♥ Have a successful evaluation of the supervised visits:
LOAL Visit Evaluation form
 - The Visit Evaluation form must be completed by whoever supervised at least five of the required hours, but may not be completed until the conclusion of the required 10 visit hours. The Control Evaluation and the Visit Evaluation are to be done by two different evaluators.
- ♥ Complete **LOAL Membership Application form**:
(use LOAL Membership Checklist)
 - Include two photos of your pet, showing full body, for LOAL files
 - Include payment for fees and dues (LOAL members or applicants are responsible for any charges or fees incurred by returned checks.)
 - Email a digital photo of pet's face, for membership ID

Forms may be downloaded and printed from website, www.loveonaleash.org, under **Forms**.



Owner/Handler Agreement:

As the therapy pet's handler, I understand and agree that:

- ♥ I am responsible for all my pet's actions at all times, including but not limited to financial or physical injury.
- ♥ I shall consider the safety of other people at all times.
- ♥ I shall continue my pet's education, refreshing obedience commands, and teaching special commands.
- ♥ My pet and I shall be clean, neatly groomed and healthy on each visit. My pet shall be parasite-free and up to date on all state required vaccinations.
- ♥ I will remember at all times that my pet and its actions as well as my behavior, actions, and attitude represent all therapy teams in the eyes of the public.
- ♥ I agree to abide by all of Love on a Leash policies and procedures, including any revisions.
- ♥ If at any time my pet can no longer do this work due to age, illness, disability or behavior problems, I will stop the work and will notify LOAL. Love on a Leash reserves the right to make a determination on whether my pet is suitable to continue on visits.
- ♥ I agree that if I do not or cannot abide by Love on a Leash policies, procedures and guidelines (including any revisions), my membership may be terminated at the discretion of the LOAL Board of Directors.
- ♥ I give Love on a Leash permission to use my photograph and the photograph of my pet for the purposes of education or promotion of Love on a Leash and its programs.



Annual Renewal Information:

Your membership expires each year and must be renewed. The expiration date can be found on both your ID card and your pet's ID card. On the Member's card, it is located in the bottom right corner of the ID. On your pet's ID card it is located just below our logo. ***If your membership has expired please bear in mind you may not go on any visits and you are not insured until you have renewed and received your updated ID cards with the new expiration dates.***

National will attempt to notify you before your membership expires. However, it is your responsibility to be sure you have renewed before your expiration date.

There are two ways to renew. You can renew by mail or on-line. National will attempt to send you a Renewal Form by mail or email. It will have the instructions on how to renew and the cost. You may renew on-line by visiting the National website at www.loveonaleash.org. Go to "Members" at the top of the page and login. Your login will be your Member ID (not your pets) and your password is your zip code (if you have not already changed it). Once you have logged in, you may change the password. The "Member Renewal" is located in the left-hand column. Click and follow the instructions.

A late fee will be charged to anyone renewing greater than **30 days** past their expiration date.

Any LOAL member who allows their membership to lapse for **one year** or more will be required to complete the entire membership process again including the Control Evaluation, Supervised Visits, and Visit Evaluation — before renewing.



Training:

Your pet must be a minimum of one year old to begin the certification process. If it is a rescue, re-homed or career change pet, it is strongly recommended you take a minimum of six months to bond and familiarize yourself with its reactions in various situations.

LOAL does not endorse a particular training style, provided the training is structured to foster a positive, loving bond between the pet and his handler.

Attending a therapy pet class or Canine Good Citizen class is not a requirement for membership in LOAL, but is highly recommended if you can find one in your area. A group basic obedience class is useful for teaching your pet to listen to you while in the presence of other pets and other people.

Any certified behaviorist, professional dog trainer or obedience instructor can help you complete the membership process. The trainer does not have to be a LOAL member.

Behavior:

Any LOAL member has the right and responsibility to "un-invite" a LOAL team from any visit or activity due to disruptive behavior on the part of a member of a visit team, whether it is the handler or the pet. (Disruptive behavior can include a dog "talking", whining, or barking, during a visit. Or, a handler that is distracted on a visit by not paying attention to their pet or the client/patient.) "Mouthing", even play mouthing, is not allowed.

Any team may be required to perform additional supervised visits to become a better therapy team.

Any incident that could potentially affect a pet's status as a therapy pet must be reported to the visit captain, facility contact person, chapter leader, and our national office. (An Incident Report is available from our website www.loveonaleash.org.)

Any incident that involves written communication between visit sites, members, and/or leaders, is of sufficient importance that the National Office should be notified.

Any team with behavior issues is required to stop visits until re-evaluated. Serious behavior issues, like aggression, should be referred to a professional who is qualified to evaluate the particular behavior and work with the dog and handler.

Members of Other Organizations:

Some LOAL members have membership in other pet therapy organizations. In order to be certified by LOAL, a potential member must complete the full LOAL membership process, using LOAL documentation.

For the purpose of Advanced Therapy Degrees, documented visits will only be accepted from volunteer hours as a certified Love on a Leash member.



Evaluator Guidelines for CONTROL Evaluation for Dogs:

- ♥ This evaluation for dogs must be administered by a Certified Behaviorist, Certified Dog Trainer, Certified Obedience Instructor, or AKC approved Canine Good Citizen Evaluator, and is to be fully and successfully completed **before** going on any supervised visits. The Control Evaluation and the Visit Evaluation must be administered by two different evaluators.
- ♥ Candidates for membership cannot evaluate their own pets.
- ♥ Your pet must be a minimum of one year old before beginning the certification process. If a rescue, re-homed or career change pet, it is strongly recommended you take a minimum of 6 months to bond with this pet and get to know its reactions in various situations.
- ♥ The LOAL Control Evaluation is to test the temperament of the dog and the amount of control that the handler has in various situations. These guidelines are meant to give the evaluator objective criteria and to make the test as consistent as possible in all parts of the country.
- ♥ All parts of the evaluation should be performed with the dog on a four foot leash. If the dog shows aggression towards any person or dog, the evaluation should be stopped and the dog disqualified. The handler may talk to the dog and encourage him, but ***no treats*** may be used during the evaluation. Additionally, no prong, pinch or electronic collars, of any kind, may be used

1. I have read and will abide by the LOAL Evaluator Guidelines, accompanying this form, when evaluating this team.

As an evaluator you have a responsibility of deciding whether or not this team is ready to begin their supervised visits. By signing off on a team you are acknowledging that the team has satisfactorily performed all required tasks on the Love on a Leash Control Evaluation. Be sure to include your CGC Evaluator # (if applicable) and include a business card in case you need to be contacted by National Love on a Leash.

2. Is the dog able to do a sit, lie down, heel with people close by, and come when called while on a leash?

The dog must sit and lie down at the handler's command. The handler may repeat the command, but no more than two times. It must be obvious that the dog is responding to the handler's command. A hand signal may be used, but no force, such as pulling down on the leash or pushing the dog into position. The dog should stay in position for at least three seconds before being released.

The dog should be able to heel by the owner's side while walking through a crowd. The dog must be under complete control without pulling on the leash. If the dog is pulling the handler or paying too much



attention to other people, the dog should not pass. The criteria should not, however, be one of competitive obedience.

When called to come, the dog should go directly to the handler and not run past. This is not a test of “stay”. If necessary, the evaluator may gently hold the dog in position until called - the dog does not need to remain in a sit position. The handler may coax the dog with his voice, but may not use the leash to bring him in.

3. Is the dog able to do a two minute down or sit/stay with the owner holding the leash?

The two minute stay may be done in either the sit or down position. It is the handler’s choice. Whatever position the handler chooses, the dog should stay in that position the entire two minutes. The handler may stay close but must not hold the dog in position. He may encourage the dog with his voice. If the dog is sitting, he should not lie down and, if lying down, he should not sit up. The dog may move around in position, but not crawl or leave his spot. If the dog gets up or moves away, the evaluator should start the time again, but no more than two times.

4. Is the handler able to greet a friendly stranger who has a dog? Is the handler able to maintain control without the dog being aggressive or over stimulated?

The handler and dog should approach another dog and handler from a distance of about 20 feet, stop, shake hands, exchange brief pleasantries and then move on. (The neutral dog should be proofed prior to the test to make sure that he will remain calm). If, for some reason, the neutral dog reacts to the dog being tested, the test may be redone with another dog.

This will demonstrate that the dog can behave while the owner greets another person, who is also with a dog. The dog being tested may show casual interest, but must stay by the handler’s side. The dog does not need to sit, but should not cross in front of or behind the handler. The handler may talk to their dog to encourage it.

5. Does the dog allow petting including having its head, ears, feet and tail touched?

The dog may sit, lie down, or stand. The owner should hold the dog. The evaluator should approach the dog in a calm, friendly manner, kneel in front or to the side of the dog and touch the dog’s head, ears, run his hands down the dog’s side, touch and very lightly squeeze the dog’s paws and tail.

The dog should not shown signs of fear, aggression or shyness. He may move toward the tester, but must not lunge or jump. He may roll over onto his back, but should not wiggle too much. He must be under the control of the handler at all times. He may stand or lie down to receive attention. The dog should not struggle to the point of needing restraint when the tester checks the dog. The handler may talk to the dog while being handled by the evaluator.

6. Is the dog clean and well groomed?

The dog should be prepared for this evaluation as he would be for an actual visit. He should be clean and trimmed if necessary. His nails should be trimmed and filed so they will not easily scratch. He should be in good health and his teeth and ears should be clean and free of infection. He should be obviously well cared for.



7. Is the dog under control with people around, and able to walk on a loose leash without pulling?

The dog should be able to maintain composure when around other dogs and people. He should be attentive to his handler and not wanting to charge or jump. He should show interest in others, but not insist on attention. He should be able to walk on a leash without pulling.

8. Is the dog able to maintain composure when a stranger approaches in an erratic manner?

A person who is not known to the dog should approach the dog in an erratic manner. He may be wearing odd clothes, such as a long coat and a floppy hat. He could be on crutches or just stumbling. The handler may reassure his dog, but the dog must not lunge, cower, or attack. He may give a short bark, but must recover quickly.

9. Is mouthing, biting, dodging or aggression apparent?

The dog should not touch his teeth to skin or clothing, even in a playful manner. No growling or snarling should be allowed. Excessive shyness should not be apparent. Dodging should be a judgment call. Sometimes a dog may back away from a situation that may be uncomfortable for him. The intensity of the contact that causes the evasion should be noted and taken into account. A dog that demonstrates excessive shyness should not pass.

10. Does the dog show signs of fear, sound sensitivity, or shyness?

The test for sound sensitivity should consist of:

- (a) Dropping a dog's stainless steel food dish or a non-breakable item on a hard surface
- (b) Flapping a trash bag (an insert for a household trash can)

These should be done no closer than about five feet from the dog.

The dog may react or startle, but may not attack the object, bark, or cower away. He should recover within a couple of seconds.

Does the dog welcome attention and seem to enjoy it? If he tries to evade touch or show signs of stress, such as panting or obsessively licking his lips, he probably is not suitable, at this time, to be a therapy dog. This should be an enjoyable experience for the dog as well as the people he is visiting. If the dog does not pass, the handler should be encouraged to keep exposing the dog to new and different experiences (in a very positive way) and perhaps try again later.

11. Does the dog or owner appear to have any training difficulties or behavior problems that might interfere with its ability to work as a therapy team?

Are there areas that could use some work? These may be areas that would disqualify the dog for therapy dog work or they may just be something that the evaluator feels could be better. You may offer suggestions to help the handler better prepare the dog for therapy work.



Insurance:

Love on a Leash carries two insurance policies that provide coverage for our members while attending organized LOAL pet therapy events.

General Liability Policy

- ♥ Covers members during any organized pet therapy event during the policy period.
- ♥ Covers third parties only for property damage/bodily injury due to negligence. Does not cover LOAL members for their own injuries.
- ♥ Pet owners are responsible for actions of pet, 24/7. Member's personal liability insurance would be first due to actions of your pet. LOAL insurance would be excess coverage. If member does not have their own insurance, (homeowners/renters policy), then responsibility would be LOAL insurance.
- ♥ Coverage does not apply if you have your pet with you while at work or use your pet as part of your work.
- ♥ Coverage limits are \$2,000,000 aggregate and \$1,000,000 per occurrence.
- ♥ **Certificate of Insurance** will be provided if an organization or event requests LOAL show Proof of Insurance to attend the event. Contact LOAL National to request a copy.
- ♥ **Additional Insured Endorsement** is necessary when the organization requests they be named as an additional insured on our policy. Cost is \$50, paid by the organization and is good for remainder of our policy term. Additional insured endorsement and a certificate of insurance with the organization listed as a certificate holder will be issued. Please allow 5-7 business days for processing.

Special Risk Accident Policy

- ♥ Provides accident insurance for our members while attending a sponsored event
- ♥ Policy also covers travel directly and uninterrupted to or from the event
- ♥ Medical expense maximum of \$100,000
- ♥ \$10,000 accidental death and dismemberment benefit

Insurance will be in effect only if the following conditions are met:

- ♥ Member and pet must be current on dues at time of incident, or be a supervised team in training.
- ♥ You are acting on behalf of and within the scope of our principal objectives as a pet therapy organization.
- ♥ Attending an organized LOAL pet therapy event.
- ♥ Pet was on a 4' leash and in your control.
- ♥ Pet is parasite-free and all state required vaccinations are current at time of incident.
- ♥ You have followed all the rules and regulations of the facility/organization you are visiting.

Note: Love on a Leash does not accept Wolf or Coyote hybrids as our insurance does not cover them.



Visits:

At this time, there is no minimum number of visits required for current members.

No one associated with Love on a Leash is to charge for visits or ask for donations from those who are visited.

All visits are to be made with leashes that are four foot in length or less. Stretchable and extendable leashes may not be used on visits. Off leash work is not permitted during a visit.

Types of collars to be worn on visits: Standard cloth and leather flat collars are acceptable. ***LOAL prohibits using remote electronic collars, pinch (prong) collars, and choke/slip (chain) collars.*** If you choose to use a Martingale or halter-type collar, such as a Gentle Leader, be prepared to answer questions from those you visit.

Handler and pet ID membership cards must be visible at all times. Teams in training must carry a copy of their completed Control Evaluation and Supervised Visit Log on all supervised visits.

It is preferred that pets wear a LOAL bandana or a LOAL vest during visits. This is not a requirement, but we hope members consider it an honor to identify their pet as a LOAL therapy animal. Occasionally, a hospital or similar facility may require teams to wear a vest or bandana in a color other than our official blue. That is permitted, but a LOAL patch must be visible on the item as well. **Chapters may not substitute** a “chapter color and/or design” on vests or bandanas in place of the official ones. Holiday or special occasion attire is always permitted as long as it is acceptable with the facility you are visiting. Always check with the Visit Captain first.

Handlers are expected to be clean, neatly groomed, and healthy. Handlers are not required to wear LOAL attire but if the Love on a Leash logo is used it should conform to our national standards:

- ♥ The official color is **medium blue**.
- ♥ The official logo is a **paw print within a heart** with **Love on a Leash** written at the top.





Visit Facilities:

LOAL Therapy Pet Teams can visit any place they have been invited. Therapy Teams visit hospitals, retirement homes, Alzheimer care facilities, day care centers, libraries, preschools, grade schools, and homes. Community education presentations are encouraged and can be great fun.

If you would like to offer pet therapy visits to a facility, an "Introductory Letter" and a brochure explaining Love on a Leash can be downloaded from the Forms page on our website, www.loveonaleash.org.

When visiting a facility, be aware of and follow any special restrictions or guidelines. For example, some facilities ask for a copy of each pet's vaccination records to have on file.

If several LOAL teams visit a facility, the Chapter Leader will choose someone to be a Visit Captain. A Visit Captain is the liaison between the facility and the LOAL teams. He or she will communicate with team members regarding changes in schedules or other information of interest.

Any LOAL member, but especially Visit Captains, can help educate the staff of the facility as to "acceptable behavior" towards the Therapy Teams. Every visit team has a responsibility to insure the safety of handlers and pets in any situation, even if it means not visiting a particular facility.

Recommended Items to Carry on a Visit:

The handler's attention must be on their pet and the client, not on outside distractions.

- ♥ **Required: LOAL membership cards (or copy of Control Evaluation and Supervised Visit Log)**
- ♥ At least one copy of the Love on a Leash Incident Report
- ♥ Spare leash - maximum 4'
- ♥ Poop bags
- ♥ Copy of proof of vaccinations
- ♥ Pen and pad
- ♥ Bookmarks/brochures/business cards
- ♥ Hand wipes/antibacterial hand gel (for personal use only!)
- ♥ Water bowl
- ♥ Copies of Photo Release Forms for Adult and/or Child



Evaluator Guidelines for VISIT Evaluation for Dogs:

- ♥ This evaluation is to be filled out by a Visit Captain, or an experienced LOAL therapy team. If there are no LOAL teams in your area, an approved experienced facility employee (i.e. Recreational Therapist or Activities Director, etc.) may substitute as an evaluator who has supervised this team for at least five of the minimum 10 visit hours. Contact LOAL for approval of a substitute supervisor. It is preferred that a team in training pair up with a certified LOAL team for their supervised visits.
- ♥ The recommended ratio of supervisors to teams in training is one supervisor with one team in training or one supervisor and two teams in training (without supervisor's pet present).
- ♥ Candidates for membership may not evaluate their own pets.
- ♥ The LOAL Visit Evaluation is to evaluate the team and the amount of control the handler has in various situations. These guidelines are meant to give the evaluator objective criteria and to make the evaluation as consistent as possible in all parts of the country.

1. On how many visits have you observed this therapy team?

In order to sign this evaluation form, you must have observed this team for at least five of the mandatory 10 hours. This form cannot be signed off until after the minimum of 10 hours has been completed. If a team begins their supervised visits with you, and completes 5 visits with you, then goes to another facility to complete their 10 hours, the team must come back to you for their last visit so you can officially sign them off after their minimum 10 hours.

Additionally, if you do not feel this team is ready to be signed off after 10 hours, you may request additional visits under your supervision. Currently, there are two additional blank lines on the Supervised Visit Log for this reason. You may ask the team in training for more than two additional visits if needed. If you do ask for additional training/supervision, **do not sign** the Visit Evaluation until the team is ready to be signed off.

2. Does the dog seem to like and relate well to people?

The dog should look relaxed and have happy presence. The dog's tail (for breeds that have them) should be relaxed, not tucked between their hind legs. A tucked tail may be a sign of fear, lack of confidence, or an indication that the dog may be unhappy.

3. Is the dog under control of the handler when it interacts with others?

The dog should be at the handler's side or just slightly in front of the handler. Additionally, in the event something were to happen, is the handler paying attention to the dog and ready to intervene or correct the dog if needed? ***The handler should never be so engrossed in conversation, that he/she does not know what the dog is doing at all times.***



4. Is the dog able to walk on a leash without pulling?

The dog should be on a loose 4' leash. If the leash is taut, then the dog is pulling and the handler is being controlled by the dog. The leash should be relaxed, and the dog should be by the handler's side or just slightly in front of the handler, not 4' in front.

5. Is the handler able to get the dog close enough to people during visits?

No matter what size dog, the handler should be able to get the dog close enough to those in a manual or electric wheelchair, next to walkers, and raised or lowered beds. There are times people will be sitting in corners, or in physical therapy, or rooms that are small and have lots of medical equipment around them. The handler should be able to get the dog close enough for petting in any of these situations. It could be by picking up your dog (smaller breeds), or kindly asking if a walker can be moved for a moment for a visit. If you do move any furniture, be sure to place it in the same position it was in beforehand and sanitize your hands if applicable.

6. Is the handler able to initiate conversations with people and stimulate interest in the dog?

It can be difficult at times to strike a conversation with a complete stranger. However, while doing therapy work this will more than likely occur at each visit. Can the handler walk up to a person and talk to them? Does the handler attempt to converse with those who do not wish to speak or are unable to speak?

7. Based on your observations, do you feel this team is a good candidate for pet therapy at this time?

Taking in to consideration all of the questions, does this team appear ready to be on their own without any further supervision? If you do not feel the team is ready, additional visits should be requested by you and under your supervision.

8. Is there any behavior you would like them to work on that would not disqualify this team for therapy work?

Some examples could be but are not exclusive:

- ♥ The dog or handler is a bit shy and could use more training.
- ♥ The dog is fine around a manual wheelchair but is a bit uncertain around electric wheelchairs.
- ♥ The handler is still working on the certain sound sensitivity issues.



Visit Captain:

If several LOAL teams visit a facility, choose someone to be a Visit Captain. All Visit Captains must be approved by the Chapter Leader. A Visit Captain is the liaison between the facility and the LOAL teams.

The responsibilities of a Visit Captain include but are not limited to:

- ♥ **Checking that LOAL ID cards are visible and current. If the ID card is expired, the member is ineligible and cannot visit until their membership has been renewed and they have received their new ID cards**
- ♥ **Uninviting a LOAL team from any visit or activity due to disruptive behavior (see page 7 “Behavior”)**
- ♥ **For teams in training, be sure to check the Control Evaluation to be sure it is valid (not a fail), and it is signed by the evaluator and that it is dated January 1, 2016 or newer.**
- ♥ Being present at each visit or arranging for another certified team member to be in charge as a substitute.
- ♥ Coordinating with the facility representative in charge of the visits to:
 - Exchange contact information
 - Establish time and day of week for visiting
 - Arrange what the visit will entail and where in the facility the visit will take place
 - Be aware of any regulations specific to the facility
- ♥ Coordinating with the LOAL teams:
 - Arranging supervisors for teams in training doing their supervised visit hours. The recommended ratio of supervisors to teams in training is one supervisor with one team in training or one supervisor and two teams in training (without supervisor’s pet present).
 - Maintain a complete list of handler/pet teams that visit your facility. (i.e., name, phone, email, etc.)
 - Notifying teams if a visit is cancelled
 - Notifying teams of special events—such as an obedience demonstration, or special occasion
 - Ensuring that unfamiliar teams joining the visit are certified LOAL members or teams in training with proper paperwork. Teams in training without proper paperwork or teams without current LOAL ID cards may not visit
- ♥ Having a copy of the LOAL Incident Report available in case of an incident and reporting the incident:
 - To the facility contact person
 - To the chapter leader
 - The LOAL national president



Manners for Visits:

The following list was created by a group of seasoned volunteers:

General:

- ♥ Your pet must be groomed and tidy – pay special attention that nails are trimmed and smooth.
- ♥ We recommend your pet wear his vest or bandana on all visits. It identifies your pet as a certified therapy pet and is an honor to wear. Members are required to display both their ID and their Pet's on their person.
- ♥ "Meet and greet" other teams before you go in to a visit. Be sensitive to new pets.
- ♥ Keep sensitive pets apart from each other.
- ♥ Any pet that appears "out-of-control" (lunging, pulling or barking etc.) should be asked to leave before you enter a facility for a visit.
- ♥ Know your pet and be alert to signs of discomfort, stress or fatigue. If your pet shows signs of being tired or irritable, simply excuse yourself and notify the visit captain or another team you are visiting with that you are leaving. Never force your pet to enter a room or visit someone if your pet is resisting.
- ♥ Visits may be social, but you must maintain control of your pet and know what your pet is doing at all times. Pay extra attention to long wagging tails. Never drop, let go, or hand-off the leash during the visit.
- ♥ Keep all conversations appropriate. Personal conversations between visiting teams should be kept to a minimum. Remember, we are there to visit patients/clients, not each other.
- ♥ Plan ahead of time how you will handle your pet being offered treats by others and always get permission to give treats to other pets.
- ♥ Some people may be afraid of pets. It may be because they have had a negative experience or they have no experience with pets at all. Either way, respect the person and do not force the pet on them.
- ♥ Be prepared to clean up after your pet. Take potty breaks away from activity. Pick up waste and dispose of it properly. (Stress levels can be high – especially for the first few visits.) If cleanup inside is required, notify staff immediately.
- ♥ Remember that the staff in the places you visit like to be visited, too.



Visiting with Children:

- ♥ It is important that members of LOAL maintain a safe and controlled environment when visiting children.
- ♥ Many children do not know animal safety and may have pre-conceived ideas that are false or even dangerous.
- ♥ Media tends to humanize animals through commercials, etc. Many people have unrealistic expectations about animal behavior.
- ♥ Children may believe it is perfectly natural for pets to accept close face to face contact or a hug. Many pets, however, may view this as a threatening gesture, especially from a stranger. The result may be avoidance, a snarl, or worse.
- ♥ Does your pet genuinely seem to like children? If a pet merely tolerates children, he is better suited to more adult situations. A therapy pet visiting children must be steady, not easily upset, and highly tolerant of noise and quick moves.
- ♥ As much as you might want to visit children, if your pet has **ever** shown aggression to children he is not a good candidate for this work.
- ♥ In a classroom situation, discuss your visit ahead of time with the teacher or adult in charge.
 - How many students are in the class?
 - Are they mainstream children or are there special needs?
 - Do any of the children have allergies?
 - How long do they want the visit to be?
 - At no time should the children be permitted to run up to the pets as a group or individually.
- ♥ For all visits with children the visit should be controlled and organized. A teacher or parent must be present. Treats should be discouraged.
- ♥ Never let more than a few children surround a pet at the same time, and always have them approach slowly. Divide a larger group of children up into smaller groups.
- ♥ Pets must be on their leashes (4 feet or less) at all times. You must be free to give the guideline “gentle” to children regardless of disability. Simple direct communication usually



works best, such as "gentle hands" and "hands down". Please remember under no circumstances should your pet be subjected to improper treatment by anyone.

- ♥ Often children want to "walk" a dog. Depending on the situation, and the safety to the dog and child, this may be permitted, however, the handler must always maintain control of the dog. Use two leashes, one to hand to the child and the other for the handler.

Visiting with Seniors:

- ♥ Ask permission before entering a person's room or before bringing your pet close to someone. Ask, "*Would you like a visit?*" If someone doesn't like your pet, realize it's not personal.
- ♥ Be aware of what you are asking. Instead of "how are you today," you can ask "how is today treating you?" ***Never disclose personal information you learn. Never ask why a client is there or what is wrong with them.***
- ♥ When visiting a room that has multiple patients, watch the volume of your voice. Be respectful of those sleeping or who may be on the phone, etc.
- ♥ When you introduce your pet, don't let the person you are visiting put their face right up to your pet or vice versa. Remember - Not everyone likes to be kissed by a pet.
- ♥ Take extra care with these patients when your pet has any physical contact because of the delicate condition of their health. Pay attention to how your dog is interacting with the client. With the client's permission, use caution when placing dogs on their laps or on their beds.
- ♥ Respect the client's space and belongings. Ask permission before moving anything, such as a bedside table or wheelchair (Never move a wheelchair someone is sitting in), and be sure to replace the object in its original position at the end of the visit.
- ♥ We are not medical personnel. We are there to visit! We may not move medical equipment or push wheelchairs. We may not adjust pillows or beds. We may not offer, or help clients to beverages or food. ***Requests from the clients should be passed on to the appropriate staff at the facility.***
- ♥ The facilities you visit are staffed with professionals. Report anything out of the ordinary.
- ♥ Watch out for the shy people in the corner. Make an effort to include them.



- ♥ Don't talk down to people because they are old or disabled.
- ♥ Listen. Many of these people have wonderful stories to tell.

Visiting Hospice/Palliative Care Patients:

- ♥ The "patient" has been diagnosed by a medical doctor as terminal.
- ♥ The interaction with the patient is usually one-on-one and lasts anywhere from 30 minutes to several hours each visit.
- ♥ The hospice volunteer may become more involved with the patient's life and often their family.
- ♥ Being a hospice volunteer requires exceptional listening skills, patience, respect, and empathy.
- ♥ Some of the specific interventions hospice volunteers do are to provide reassurance and comfort with our pets.
- ♥ With our pets we can provide social interaction, and provide for expression of grief.
- ♥ Never rush a visit because this may be the patient's last time to visit with an animal.
- ♥ Keep in mind when visiting with hospice patients, family and friends are often present and can benefit from pet provided therapy.

Visiting Adults/Children with Special Needs:

- ♥ While each facility may be different, it is generally noticed there are more caregivers/staff with children than with adults.
- ♥ Be extra vigilant for the safety of your pet when visiting. Some of the clients/patients may be unaware of their own strength and are not mentally or physically capable of understanding the proper technique for petting or visiting with an animal.
- ♥ When visiting special needs children, prior to the first visit, speak with the teacher in charge to discuss the goals of the visits. Special needs teachers have specific training. Ask them the best way to approach each child.



Advanced Therapy Degrees

Certified teams of Love on a Leash may be awarded an Advanced Therapy Pet Degree after completing a minimum of 50 volunteer hours for a particular specialty field as listed below.

- ♥ Pets that are certified with Love on a Leash are awarded the degree “Therapy Pet (ThD)” from Love on a Leash.
- ♥ Only Love on a Leash volunteer hours may be counted towards the 50 hours required for the Advanced Therapy Degree.
- ♥ A number of different advanced degrees are available. Please select ONE from the list below. If you are volunteering in a field not listed, use “Other” and fill it in.
- ♥ One Advanced Therapy Degree Application must be filled out per Advanced Degree.

- ☐ ThD (c:rp) Children: Reading Programs (Libraries, Schools)
- ☐ ThD (c:se) Children: Special Education
- ☐ ThD (c:pd) Children: Physical Disabilities
- ☐ ThD (c:ed) Children: Emotional Disabilities
- ☐ ThD (c:_) Children: Other _____

- ☐ ThD (t:ed) Teenagers: Education
- ☐ ThD (t:sd) Teenagers: Special Education
- ☐ ThD (t:sc) Teenagers: Special Circumstances (Drug Abuse Treatment, Runaways, etc.)
- ☐ ThD (t:_) Teenagers: Other _____

- ☐ ThD (st:c) Social Therapy: Counseling
- ☐ ThD (st:_) Social Therapy: Other _____

- ☐ ThD (vt) Veteran Therapy
- ☐ ThD (ht) Hospital Therapy

- ☐ ThD (ci) Crisis Intervention
- ☐ ThD (cd) Court Dog Therapy

- ☐ ThD (e:sv) Elderly: Social Visits
- ☐ ThD (e:h) Elderly: Hospice/Critical Care
- ☐ ThD (e:a) Elderly: Alzheimer's/Senile Dementia
- ☐ ThD (e:_) Elderly: Other _____

- ☐ ThD (pe) Public Education
- ☐ ThD (__) Other _____



Chapter Guidelines:

A LOAL Chapter consists of a Chapter Leader who has been a member for a minimum of one year, and at least one other certified team, who would like to participate, individually or in groups, in making visits. Chapters often set up regular visits at various facilities. Members may then choose to visit with the group or visit on their own. A chapter can be organized very loosely, or be more structured. LOAL was started with the idea of making it possible for people with qualified pets to participate.

A chapter provides support, motivation, and social interaction for you and your pet. More teams mean a greater variety of pets, talents, and interests. Visiting together can also help to relieve the sometimes stressful aspect of the work. Sharing your visit experiences helps to de-stress, and also educates others as to what works and what doesn't. It is good to know someone else will be there when you are unable to complete a visit.

Word spreads when the community begins to see therapy pets at work. One facility hears about the benefits and fun and wants a program for their facility. Pet owners hear about pet therapy or see a team at work. The local papers and TV stations like to share the "feel good story" on the news.

If you would like to offer pet therapy visits to a facility, an "Introductory Letter" and a brochure explaining Love on a Leash can be downloaded from the Forms page on our website, www.loveonaleash.org.

It is preferred that pets wear a LOAL bandana or a LOAL vest during visits. This is not a requirement, but we hope members consider it an honor to identify their pet as a LOAL therapy animal. Occasionally, a hospital or similar facility may require teams to wear a vest or bandana in a color other than our official blue. That is permitted, but a LOAL patch must be visible on the item as well. **Chapters may not substitute** a "chapter color and/or design" on vests or bandanas in place of the official ones. Holiday or special occasion attire is always permitted as long as it is acceptable with the facility you are visiting. Always check with the Visit Captain first.

Any chapter leader or member who fail to comply with member and chapter guidelines is subject to revocation of membership.

Depending on the community, as a chapter grows outward it makes sense to become two neighboring chapters. Each Chapter has a regular visit schedule and shares resources when there is a larger event like a Fair. Chapters keep in contact with each other and share each other's news when appropriate. It would be against our purpose and philosophy to become cliquish or selective in chapter formation. Any qualified team should be welcomed and encouraged to join a chapter. Dual membership in chapters is permitted.



Chapter Website and Social Media Page Guidelines

The following guidelines have been issued by the Love on a Leash National Board of Directors in an effort to ensure all online representations of Love on a Leash accurately and appropriately represent and protect the organization. These guidelines will help promote a consistently branded look among all chapter websites and social media pages, which will help represent the organization in a consistent and professional manner. Chapter websites and/or social media pages (e.g. Facebook pages) that do not comply with these guidelines will not be listed on the Love on a Leash National website.

1. Chapter Representation

The only websites or social media pages that may be listed on the national website and be used to represent the Love on a Leash Chapter must be dedicated Love on a Leash Chapter websites or pages. Training companies or other organizations owned or operated by chapter leaders are not to be listed or represented as Love on a Leash chapter sites.

2. Chapter Name, Logo, Official Color

Please include the approved Love on a Leash Logo and Chapter Name on the chapter website and social media home page. The chapter name should be included underneath the logo as per the guidelines outlined on the national website (and repeated below):

Please remember local chapters are subsidiaries of a national group. Therefore, it is mandatory that all local chapters meet the following standards:

- ♥ We require all chapters use the name Love on a Leash®.
- ♥ The official color is medium blue.
- ♥ The official logo is a paw print within a heart with Love on a Leash® written at the top.
- ♥ A chapter's name describes a chapter's geographic location.
- ♥ Chapter names must be approved by the LOAL national office.



A chapter name may be written at the bottom of the logo. (An example below is from the Somerset, Kentucky chapter.) Keep in mind that "Love on a Leash" must be foremost on all accessories and press releases.



The name Love on a Leash means best of the best, proud, trusted, honorable, responsible, and recognized throughout the United States as model therapy pets.

3. Keep Content Current

Please ensure the “About Us” description and content is accurate and up-to-date. You will always find the most current information on the national website at <http://www.loveonaleash.org/Who-We-Are/>

Additionally please ensure all page links are active and working.

4. Photos

Please do not feature photos showing faces of persons or patients on therapy visits unless you have signed photo releases.

5. Chapter Contact Information

Please include your chapter contact information in an easy-to-find location. Additionally, please include a link to National website for all forms and guidelines, rather than including forms and guidelines on the chapter website or social media page. This will help prevent outdated forms from being used.

6. Foundation for Pet Provided Therapy

Please remove the name “Foundation for Pet Provided Therapy” from all pages and sites. The organization is now incorporated as Love on a Leash and that is the name that should be used.

7. Product & Service Endorsements

No products, services, businesses, or training companies should be featured, endorsed, or sold on Love on a Leash chapter websites or social media pages. Love on a Leash is a non-profit pet-provided therapy organization and it is outside the organization’s mission to sell or endorse products or services.

8. Donations

No Donation Buttons (e.g. PayPal) on websites or social media pages unless specifically authorized by the Love on a Leash Board of Directors.



Starting a Chapter:

A LOAL Chapter needs:

- ♥ A Chapter Leader who has been a member of LOAL for a minimum of one year in good standing.
- ♥ Have two or more certified LOAL members. The Chapter Leader may be included as one of the two.
- ♥ Have a minimum of one established visit.

There is no fee to become a Chapter. Individual members pay yearly membership dues to the National Organization. All funds received must be forwarded to National Love on a Leash for depositing. Acceptable expenses will be reimbursed by our National Treasurer. No one associated with Love on a Leash is to charge for visits or ask for donations from those who are visited. Laws vary, but Chapters may need to formally register as a charity in the state where they reside.

Participation in a chapter is not required but it does offer an opportunity for members to socialize, brush up on their obedience work, and learn more advanced skills.

Chapters may impose additional requirements on their own chapter members, but may not contradict or negate national guidelines. Chapter may not charge additional dues to their members.

Just remember to continue making participation as easy as possible for qualified individuals. Because LOAL members are not required to join a chapter, respect other properly certified Love on a Leash members that you meet within the community who choose not to join your chapter.

A Chapter, though unique in personality, should reflect the purpose and function of Love on a Leash: to support and guide certified Therapy Teams and uphold high standards and values.



Chapter Leader:

The primary responsibility of a chapter leader is to encourage and support members as they make visits. Chapter Leaders ensure that therapy teams in their chapter are properly certified through the National Office. Chapter leaders have a responsibility to their community to provide quality Therapy Teams to facilities and programs and insure that each team meets LOAL guidelines.

Chapter Leaders are responsible for deciding which of their members are suitable to be a Visit Captain. Chapter members may be designated a Visit Captain at the Chapter Leader's discretion.

We require that all Chapter Leaders be certified members of LOAL for a minimum of one year (or be Continuing Members in good standing). The national office of LOAL should be notified of any change in chapter leadership within 30 days. Chapter Leaders are not to receive any pay or other compensation in their role as a Chapter Leader. They cannot personally make money by virtue of being affiliated with Love on a Leash—we are strictly a volunteer organization.

Each Chapter Leader must supply the national office with a financial report twice a year. The Chapter Leader will be emailed a form by the National Treasurer. The first report is due six months after a chapter is formed and then every year by January 15th. This report will list donations, expenses and any other monies received by or incurred by your Chapter.

Therapy work is a great responsibility. Chapter leaders set goals, educate, lead, and set the example for their chapter members. Chapter leaders remind members that therapy pet work is a service. In order to provide this service, each team must adhere to certain policies to protect those whom we visit as well as those who are doing the visiting.



Chapter Name and Use of Logo:

Please remember local chapters are subsidiaries of a national group. Therefore, it is **mandatory** that all local chapters meet the following standards:

- ♥ We require all chapters use the name **Love on a Leash**.
- ♥ The official color is **medium blue**.
- ♥ The official logo is a **paw print within a heart** with **Love on a Leash** written at the top.
- ♥ A chapter's name describes a chapter's geographic location. (Chapter names must be approved by the LOAL national office.)



A chapter name may be written at the bottom of the logo. (An example below is from the Somerset, Kentucky chapter.) Keep in mind that "Love on a Leash" must be foremost on all accessories and press releases.



The name Love on a Leash, means best of the best, proud, trusted, honorable, responsible, and recognized throughout the United States as model therapy pets.



Media Guidelines

As Love on a Leash® grows, we are garnering more attention from the media. And, that's a good thing! It helps shine a light on all the positive work our teams are doing in their communities.

It also means we have to be mindful about how Love on a Leash® is being portrayed to ensure our organization is being represented accurately and in the best light possible.

To help us with this effort The Board of Directors has created the following media guidelines. Should you be contacted by someone in the media, please use these guidelines to help you determine the best way to respond and cooperate with them.

Love on a Leash® Media Guidelines

If you are contacted or approached by a member of the media who wants to interview you, or shoot a video story about you, your therapy pet, or Love on a Leash® please follow these guidelines to ensure you are representing the organization as accurately and professionally as possible.

If the media is requesting to schedule an interview, or television or video shoot:

- ♥ If you are a member of a Love on a Leash® Chapter, please refer the media to your Chapter Leader to handle the request.
- ♥ If you are not a member of a chapter, please refer the media contact to the Love on a Leash® national website: www.loveonaleash.org/media.
- ♥ If the media wants to shoot video or a television story at one of your visit sites, make sure you get approval from the facility director first. Not all facilities welcome this kind of exposure, and HIPAA and privacy laws may preclude some facilities from wanting to participate. If the facility does not want to be included, try suggesting a different facility to the media (one that you do have approval for).
- ♥ Keep in mind signed photo releases must be on file for any patients or person that are featured in media stories or video. Some facilities maintain photo releases that may suffice (check with the facility director first to find out). If the facility does not have signed releases on file, please download the Love on a Leash® media releases at <http://www.loveonaleash.org/Forms-Guides/Member-Forms.aspx> and have anyone included in the story or video sign a copy. Please retain a copy of all releases in your or your chapter's files.



If you are participating in an interview, or television or photo shoot, or if you are contacted while on a visit and there is no time to contact your chapter leader or refer the media to the national office:

- ♥ Please make sure you are wearing a shirt with the official Love on a Leash® logo, and ensure your pet is wearing its Love on a Leash® vest or bandana, and, according to member guidelines is clean and freshly groomed.
- ♥ You will find the most current information about Love on a Leash® on the national website at www.loveonaleash.org, including the current number of active members, the definition of a therapy pet, the difference between therapy pets and service animals, and more. Take time to become familiar with this information prior to your interview (or print it out and take it with you) so you can be a good interviewee. Feel free to refer members of the media to the website for this information as well.
- ♥ Additionally, please make sure you are following all other member guidelines. Remember you are representing the entire organization; you want to set a great example!

If you are asked questions about Love on a Leash® and you do not know the answer:

- ♥ Please refer the media to the national website at www.loveonaleash.org for the latest, most accurate information.