Contents

3 Resources for Veterinary Teams
3 Top 5 Messages
4 Types of Working Dogs
6 Become Your Practice’s Working Dog Champion
7 Assistance Dogs: Who’s Who?
8 So You Get a Call About a Working Dog
9 AAHA Working Dog History Checklist
10 Quiz Yourself
RESOURCES for Veterinary Teams
aaha.org/workingdog

Top 5 Messages

1. **Learn the special needs & jobs of working dogs**
   Master the difference between working, assistance and therapy dogs.

2. **Look at it from the handler or trainer’s perspective**
   Give them the benefit of the doubt and trust them for subtle observations our teams may miss. They may depend more on this dog’s health than the average pet owner would.

3. **Keep everyone safe and decrease stress**
   Low stress handling is key!

4. **Minimize disease transmission and injury to working dogs**
   Working dogs often interact with human handlers or clients who are health-compromised and/or are exposed to dangerous environments.

5. **Understand the value of these awesome dogs for their family, organization & community**
   We keep them safe, so they can keep others safe!

---

**Central LINE**
The AAHA Podcast

---

**Tools**

---

**Read**

---

**Listen**

---

**Meet Penny!**
There Are Multiple Types of Working Dogs

Know the work they do:

**DETECTION**

*Working Dogs: The Detection Dog*

These dogs are trained to detect and alert to the presence of certain scents or odors.

**Examples:** dogs that detect explosives, narcotics, live humans, human remains, weapons, medical conditions, and more

**SERVICE**

*Assistance Dogs: The Service Dog*

A service dog is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.

**Examples:** guide dogs for the blind, hearing dogs, mobility assistance dogs, seizure alert or response dogs, psychiatric service dogs, diabetic alert dogs, autism support dogs, and allergy detection dogs

**PROTECTION**

*Working Dogs: The Protection Dog*

A protection dog is trained to alert the handler to human or animal threats and to deter the threat.

**Examples:** police dogs, patrol dogs, law enforcement dogs, military working dogs, private security dogs, and livestock guard dogs
EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Assistance Dogs: The Emotional Support Dog
Emotional support dogs are recognized by the ADA, but not as service dogs. They are defined by the Fair Housing Act as dogs providing therapeutic support to disabled individuals by providing companionship, relieving loneliness, and “sometimes help with depression, anxiety and certain phobias” but are not specially trained to perform specific tasks.

Examples: Emotional support dogs have no restrictions on breed, size, or weight and can be any dog that alleviates symptoms of emotional or mental stress.

THERAPY

Therapy Dogs
A therapy dog promotes improvement in human physical, social, emotional, or cognitive function, and functions in either group or individual settings.

Examples: dogs who perform airport visits, de-stress events and visiting hospital patients, caregivers, and residents of nursing homes
TOP TIPS FOR TECHS

5 WAYS TO BECOME YOUR PRACTICE’S WORKING DOG CHAMPION

1. **Learn about the types of working dogs**, the types of work they do, and more about them from their handlers.

2. **Become familiar with common terms, acronyms and abbreviations** so you can “speak the language” of the working dog community.

3. **Familiarize yourself with the different medical care considerations** of working dogs (e.g., olfaction-affecting medications).

4. **Act as a liaison between the practice and the handler** to facilitate and adapt care for these patients in a calm, low-stress environment. Use the AAHA Working Dog History Checklist to collect a thorough history and help the entire team work together.

5. **Create a written follow-up** outlining the expected duration of recovery and return to work.
# Assistance Dogs: Who’s Who?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Service Dog</th>
<th>Therapy Dog</th>
<th>Emotional Support Dog</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples</strong></td>
<td>Guide dog for the blind, seizure or diabetic alert dog, autism support dog</td>
<td>Dogs who are part of speech or occupational therapy, dogs who visit hospital patients and nursing homes</td>
<td>Can be any dog that alleviates symptoms of emotional or mental stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recognized as a service animal by the ADA?</strong></td>
<td>✓ Yes</td>
<td>✗ No</td>
<td>✗ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special training requirements?</strong></td>
<td>✓ Yes</td>
<td>Not per the ADA; individual certifications may vary</td>
<td>✗ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access permitted to “no pets” areas?</strong></td>
<td>✓ Yes</td>
<td>✗ No</td>
<td>Depends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medical management goals</strong></td>
<td>• Recognize when treatments may impact ability to work</td>
<td>• Recognize when treatments may impact ability to work</td>
<td>• Focus on canine standard of care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Allow clients to be present at exams</td>
<td>• Avoid zoonotic disease and deworm regularly</td>
<td>• Emphasize preventive care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Adjust communication to handler's disability</td>
<td>• Avoid raw diets</td>
<td>• Make behavioral recommendations consistent with dog’s role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure dog has stable temperament</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AAHA Working Dog History Checklist

Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability? □ Yes: ___________ □ No

What work or task has the dog been trained to perform? ________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Who does this dog serve? __________________________________________________________

What environments does this dog live and work in? ________________________________

What is the frequency and method of transportation? ________________________________

What special verbal or visual commands does this dog respond to? ______________________
________________________________________________________________________________

What is used for positive reinforcement? _____________________________________________

What does this dog’s diet consist of? _______________________________________________

What equipment, if any, is used with this service dog? ________________________________

What animals is this dog exposed to? _______________________________________________

What people is this dog exposed to? _______________________________________________

What are this dog’s working hours? _______________________________________________

How are breaks provided? __________________________________________________________

Has this dog been consistently and reliably following commands and performing tasks?  
________________________________________________________________________________

Has this dog been displaying any significant behavioral signs of stress? ________________
________________________________________________________________________________

How will you or the handler decide when to retire this dog? ___________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Do any barriers to routine care or treatment exist? _________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
So You Get a Call About a Working Dog…

Step 1  TRIAGE
- Assess urgency
- Be prepared to refer asap
- Be ready to prioritize dog

Step 2  SCHEDULING
- Allow extra time
- Consider early or late in day
- Ask if dog needs sedation
- Alert team to special needs

Step 3  APPOINTMENT
- Low stress handling is critical
- Know this specific dog’s job
- Understand handler’s need to stay with dog
- No treats without asking

Step 4  DIAGNOSTICS
- Prioritize early intervention
- Do not separate dog from owner
- Agencies may need to be consulted
- Know unusual risk factors

Step 5  TREATMENT
- Be aware of medication side effects
- Be aware of breeding status
- Understand long and short term impact on work

Step 6  FOLLOW UP
- Be cognizant of owner needs for communication
- Communication is critical
- Document expected return to work
Quiz Yourself!

Which of the following types of working dogs is trained to detect and alert to the presence of certain scents or odors?

- The Protection Dog
- The Detection Dog
- The Service Dog

Next