

Guide Dog Etiquette:

When You Meet a Working Guide Dog Team:

As tempting as it may be to pet a Guide Dog, remember that this dog is responsible for leading someone who cannot see. **The dog should never be distracted** from that duty. A person's safety may depend on their dog's alertness and concentration.

It is okay to ask someone if you may pet their guide. Many people enjoy introducing their dogs when they have the time. The dog's primary responsibility is to its blind partner, and it is important that the dog not become solicitous.

A Guide Dog should never be offered food or other distracting treats. The dogs are fed on a schedule and follow a specific diet to keep them in optimum condition. Even slight deviations from their routine can disrupt their regular eating and relieving schedules and seriously inconvenience their handlers. Guide Dogs are trained to resist offers of food so they will be able to visit restaurants without begging. Feeding treats to a Guide Dog weakens this training. Providing a forum for chief executive officers to share information and to update executive level skills for the purpose of improving services provided by the private not-for-profit agencies they direct.

Although Guide Dogs cannot read traffic signals, they are responsible for helping their handlers safely cross a street. Calling out to a Guide Dog or intentionally obstructing its path can be dangerous for the team as it could break the dog's concentration on its work.

Listening for **traffic** flow has become harder for Guide Dog handlers due to quieter car engines and the increasing number of cars on the road. Please don't honk your horn or call out from your car to signal when it is safe to cross, which can be distracting and confusing. Be especially careful of pedestrians in crosswalks when turning right on red. **It's not all work and no play for a Guide Dog. When they are not in harness, they are treated in much the same way as pets.** However, for their safety they are only allowed to play with specific toys. Please don't offer them toys without first asking their handler's permission.

In some situations, working with a Guide Dog may not be appropriate. Instead, the handler may prefer to take your arm just above the elbow and allow their dog to heel. Others will prefer to have their dog follow you. In this case, be sure to **talk to the handler and not the dog** when giving directions for turns.

From time to time, a Guide Dog will make a mistake and must be corrected to maintain its training. This correction usually involves a verbal admonishment coupled with a leash correction. Guide Dog handlers have been taught the appropriate correction methods to use with their dogs.

The Americans with Disabilities Act and laws in your state permit guide dogs to accompany their handlers anywhere the public is allowed, including taxis and buses, restaurants, theaters, stores, hotels, apartment and office buildings.