



# THERAPEUTIC PAWS OF CANADA THERAPY CAT EVALUATION

Handler's name: _____	Team: _____	
Address: _____	Tel: _____	
Cat's name: _____	Breed: _____	Age: _____
Vac. Cert. valid until: _____	Verified by: _____	
Venue: _____	Date: _____	
Evaluator _____		
Fee collected: \$ _____	Pick up bag in handler's pocket: Y / N	

The team is under observation from the time it enters the evaluation area. The cat must arrive in a crate/carrying case. Only one cat will be in the evaluation room at a time: Other candidates must wait outside the evaluation room. A clean tidy appearance is expected from both the handler and cat, as they will be the ambassadors for the TPOC program. A cat that relieves itself during the evaluation has failed. A cat displaying any signs of aggression to humans (i.e. scratching, biting, hissing, struggling, fighting, aggressive howling/yowling) has failed. A handler seen harshly correcting their cat is an automatic failure. During the evaluation, and on all visits, the cat must wear a flat buckle or snap collar and/or harness and be on a 4' or 6' leather or nylon web leash. The cat should always be close to the handler: At no time should the cat be allowed to wander around the evaluation premises (this applies to facilities they visit too). Handlers may not use toys or food to lure the cat during any of the categories.

Handlers may carry their cats for each category or have them walk on the floor if they choose for certain categories.

## **INTRODUCING TEAM TO A STRANGER**

**PASS** \_\_\_\_\_ **FAIL** \_\_\_\_\_

#1 With the Evaluator standing in the centre of the evaluation area (wearing a white coat to simulate a Veterinarian for this category), the team will approach quietly and introduce themselves to the Evaluator. The cat must remain quiet while the handler and Evaluator exchange a few pleasantries.

The Evaluator will ask permission to pat the cat (handler's refusal is a failure). The Evaluator will look for a stable attitude in the cat.

The Evaluator will not stare at the cat but should monitor the cat's reactions for signs of discomfort or distress at being handled. Any scratching, biting, hissing, fighting, howling is a failure. The cat should not display extreme shyness. A cat that is unduly stressed by the Evaluator touching him has failed.

## **GOING FOR A WALK AS A THERAPY CAT**

**PASS** \_\_\_\_\_ **FAIL** \_\_\_\_\_

#2 The Evaluator will instruct the team to walk slowly around the inside of the room, passing everyone present in the room. All the volunteers should be standing still, spread out around the perimeter of the room. The team should say hello to each person around the room. While in the handlers arms, the cat should not be struggling or fighting to escape. The handler may talk to their cat to encourage it. The handler must exhibit control over their cat without resorting to physical corrections and must show an ability to help the cat adapt to new situations. (This applies throughout the evaluation.) The cat, if walking on a harness or collar and leash, must walk in a mannerly fashion.

## **ACCEPTING HANDLING/GROOMING AND APPEARANCE**

**PASS** \_\_\_\_\_ **FAIL** \_\_\_\_\_

#3 The Evaluator instructs the handler to put the cat on a table. The Evaluator will approach the handler and ask, "May I examine your cat?" The Evaluator will examine the cat, looking for stable attitude and good grooming. The Evaluator will pat the cat's head, stroke the whole body, touch the tail, lift all four paws and check that nails are trimmed short (if the cat has not been declawed). At no time should the cat display excessive shyness or resentment to being handled.

## **WALKING THROUGH A MOVING CROWD**

**PASS** \_\_\_\_\_ **FAIL** \_\_\_\_\_

#4 The team moves among the moving pedestrian traffic with the cat in the handler's arms. The handler may talk to his cat to encourage the cat to be confident and comfortable in the situation. The cat should display confidence and may show interest in the pedestrian movement but should not interfere with their movement. If the cat displays extreme shyness or aggression towards the crowd members, it shall fail

The four pedestrians will stand in a designated numbered spot and each pedestrian will begin walking back and forth from their place through the center of the test area to the other side and return to their number; they will continue to do so until the Evaluator advises them to stop.

The team will walk around and pass close to each numbered spot as directed by the Evaluator.

**STAYING IN PLACE/RESTRAINING HUG**

PASS \_\_\_\_\_ FAIL \_\_\_\_\_

#5 The team will sit in a chair and the Evaluator will approach quickly from behind in a wheelchair to end up sitting beside the team. The handler will place a towel/blanket on the Evaluator's lap and then pass the cat to the Evaluator. If the cat tries to fight or shows any aggression towards the Evaluator it will fail. The Evaluator will hug the cat to monitor its ability to accept being restrained. If the cat struggles but settles down quickly, it will not fail.

**DISTRACTIONS**

PASS \_\_\_\_\_ FAIL \_\_\_\_\_

#6 To monitor the cat's reactions to some situations that may happen during a pet therapy visitation, the Evaluator will ask the team to remain seated in a chair in the middle of the room. The Evaluator will remain in the wheelchair beside the team to monitor the cat's reactions. While the Evaluator and handler are talking,

- a) In a corner of the room, a volunteer will drop a bag of empty cans as a noise distraction.
- b) Another volunteer at the side of the room will talk in a loud voice to someone else in the room.
- c) A volunteer with a neutral dog (one that is well controlled and indifferent to cats) will walk six paces into the room at a distance of at least 20 feet away from the team and prevent the dog from facing the cat. The dog team should then turn around and exit the room immediately. The handler may hold their cat in a towel to give the cat an increased sense of security, should the handler choose to do so. It is acceptable if the cat freezes and displays a degree of apprehension, including attempting to run to hide. If the cat's reaction turns to aggression and the handler is not able to control the cat, the team would fail.

***\* If the cat becomes too stressed, stop the test and go back to the point at which the cat felt safe; let the cat calm down. Make sure this is a positive experience for the cat before continuing.***

**CROWD SURROUNDS TEAM**

PASS \_\_\_\_\_ FAIL \_\_\_\_\_

#7 The team will stand up and move to the centre of the room. The volunteers will crowd in, in a friendly manner, to greet the team and say hello to the cat.

- a) One of the crowd members will gently bump the handler from behind. The cat may show a moderate reaction to the sudden movement but should remain under control.
- b) One of the crowd members will imitate the hand and head tremors of a patient with palsy. The cat may show normal apprehension but should not show any aggression towards the "patient."

**TAKING A TREAT**

PASS \_\_\_\_\_ FAIL \_\_\_\_\_

#8 The Evaluator will approach the team and offer the cat a treat. If the handler refuses, that would be a failure. The handler may encourage their cat to take it gently. The Evaluator will hold the treat in the palm of their hand to ensure the cat takes it gently and displays patience. The cat may refuse the treat – this refusal is NOT A FAILURE.

The Evaluator will give the cat a gentle pat to end the evaluation on a positive note.

**EVALUATOR'S CHECKLIST OF SUGGESTED MATERIALS TO CONDUCT EVALUATION**

White coat, numbers to put on floor for exercise # 4, chairs, wheelchair, registration table, evaluation test sheets, evaluation master score form, blanket or towel (in case the handler forgets to bring one), extra leash and collar, treats.

It is imperative that the Evaluator meet with all volunteers participating in the Evaluation to instruct them on their role. The volunteers must carry out the Evaluator's instructions and directions quickly and without question.

**Evaluators must complete a Master Score Sheet and Evaluation Report. The Evaluation Report is a written record of your comments and impressions on each Team tested that will be kept on file for reference in the future. Your evaluation of this Team could be used in any legal action involving this particular team.**

**Evaluators will keep the Master Score Sheet, where they have written their comments on each handler/car and their copy of each participant's Evaluation Test. Forward to the Director of Evaluators a photocopy or electronic copy of your Master Score Sheet and your descriptive comments within seven (7) days of the Evaluation.**