

# The Phases of Guidework Training

There are ten phases of training through which our dogs progress during their formal training cycle:

## PHASE #1

Pre-training physical exam, neutering/spaying (with the exception of potential breeding stock dogs who are under evaluation at this time), X-rays, eye checks. First walks on leash. Introduction to the kennel environment and schedule. Relaxing walks on the campus and play sessions with instructor assistants. General daily care and grooming.

## PHASE #2

Preliminary harness and obedience training. Introduction to distractions (toys, food, other dogs, cats, etc.). On-campus training of leading into harness (pulling forward in harness) utilizing the BEST™ program and responses to guidework-specific commands such as "Forward," "Halt," "Hop Up" and "Steady." Introduction to campus obstacle course on leash.

## PHASE #3

Harness training in quiet residential areas; frequent rides in the training vans. Teaching new guidework commands and responses, such as "Right," "Left," and "Over Here," as well as continuing to work on commands learned in Phase 2. Curb checks and street crossings are introduced. Progressive obstacle course training on campus. Obedience training continues. Mall exposure walks and introduction to dog social sessions. Those dogs who are on the breeder-watch list but are not selected for the breeding program are spayed or neutered.

## PHASE #4

Guidework training progresses on more difficult sidewalks in busier sections of downtown areas. All curb types and more complex street crossings are introduced. The dogs begin to show clearance awareness, and begin to guide their instructors through the campus obstacle course. Preliminary obedience testing and evaluation of the dogs' reactions to head collars are also performed.

## PHASE #5

Preliminary guidework testing is performed with the instructor under blindfold. Complete medical history review. Guidework training environments become more challenging: pedestrian traffic, stairs, different flooring surfaces, etc.

## PHASE #6

Guidework routes in difficult and challenging level work environments. Heavy pedestrian and vehicle traffic areas, wide crossings, hectic atmospheres, etc. Introduction to sidewalkless areas and rounded curbs. Continued work in malls, stores and buildings with increasing exposure to varying sights, sounds and smells. Advanced guidework skills such as moving turns. Learning "intelligent disobedience", in which dogs learn to refuse to obey a command if it is unsafe to execute. Advanced obedience training.

### PHASE #7

Guidework moves to extremely challenging downtown urban areas (San Francisco and Portland). Training on buses, light rail/subway systems and platform edges. Introduction to low overhead clearances; advanced off-leash obedience. Formal traffic training begins.

### PHASE #8

Continued advanced guidework and obedience training. Intensive indoor mall training with crowds, slick floors and learning to board, ride and exit escalators. Advanced sidewalkless training with obstacles.

### PHASE #9

Final obedience testing including on-leash obedience with the instructor wearing a blindfold, off-leash obedience and distraction response. The dogs are also worked by unfamiliar or novice handlers. Final traffic testing with instructor under blindfold and "real life" traffic situations.

### PHASE #10

Final guidework testing. Includes working a 40-50 minute route with the instructor wearing a blindfold in downtown Gresham or San Rafael. The route covers nearly every aspect of guidework (curbs, street crossings, stairs, buildings, crowded sidewalks, traffic, etc.); obedience exercises are done along the way. Final testing of guidework inside buildings (malls, stores, etc.) with the instructor wearing a blindfold. Includes working escalators, elevators, stairs, etc. Final "class-ready" physical exams.

### PASSING A DOG BACK WHILE IN TRAINING

There may be times when the weekly training report notes that a dog has been moved back in their phase number. This would reflect a dog that has been "passed back" in training. Passing a dog back does not necessarily reflect concerns, but rather indicates that we continue to see positive traits in the dog. In our training process, each string of dogs is separated by at least two phases. So, when a dog is passed back a string or two you can expect to see a significant change in the phase number. Take, for example, a dog who is in phase ten and considered "class ready" but is not selected for class. This dog will be passed back and be available for placement in subsequent classes. Since the string that this dog has been passed to will be in a different phase (most likely a lower phase), the dog will also be formally documented as being in the lower phase as well, even though it has technically completed phase ten and is considered "class ready."