

8. Consistent discipline is key to a successful guide dog team. Ordinarily, verbal admonition is used to maintain control. If this fails it may become necessary for the blind person to use a firm backward jerk on the leash. This will not injure the animal but will bring its attention back to its job.

If these suggestions are kept in mind, both guide dog users and the general public benefit. You see more blind people on the streets today, not because there are more of us, but because we have learned to make our own way in the world. A major factor in this progress is the National Federation of the Blind, the largest organization of the blind. We are blind people speaking for ourselves and acting for ourselves, working as equal partners with our sighted neighbors.

For further information please visit the NFB Web site at: www.nfb.org and follow the division listings links to the National Association of Guide Dog Users (NAGDU).

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Meeting a Working Guide Dog Team

When you see a guide dog at work you are watching a team, with each partner contributing to the team effort. The blind person's role, as a team member, is to maintain control of the guide dog at all times and to direct the guide dog wherever the handler wants to go. The blind partner does this by giving the commands, "left, right, forward..." etc., accompanied by appropriate hand commands. The guide dog's role in this partnership is to obey these commands, except when to do so would place the team in danger.

Dogs working with a blind person are correctly called "guide dogs."

Because guide dog and partner function as a team, the following should be kept in mind: It is a violation of the law to forbid a guide dog team to enter a store, restaurant, park, or any place where the general public is admitted. The law prohibits public carriers such as buses, trains, or planes from refusing to serve guide dog teams. Further, guide dog teams have the same rights as other passengers to choose where they sit on such carriers where no legally established seating requirement exists.

It is essential that nothing interfere with the guide dog and partner, therefore please remember...

1. When you meet a guide dog in harness, which tells you that the dog and handler are working, never call a guide dog by name, do not speak to it, do not make distracting noises, and never establish eye contact with a guide dog.
2. Never feed the guide dog, since feeding it may make controlling the dog in restaurants, grocery stores, etc. very difficult for the handler.
3. Never touch or play with the guide dog while it is in harness and working.
4. Because handler and guide dog have undergone extensive training it can usually be assumed that the team can function safely and independently in most situations. Therefore, never take hold of the person, dog, or the dog's harness at any time. This rule is especially important when the team is in the process of making a street crossing. The blind person has been taught to listen to

traffic patterns and to give the "forward" command when it is safe to cross. Dogs are colorblind and will not respond to traffic lights. Their training has taught them to avoid oncoming vehicles.

5. It cannot be assumed that the guide dog instinctively knows where its handler wants to go. The handler must know where he/she wants to go in order to give appropriate directional commands. If the team is traveling in unfamiliar surroundings, the handler should ask directions as anyone would.

6. When giving directions to a guide dog user, speak to the person. Do not call the dog or try to get it to follow you.

Please be specific about where turns are to be made in order that the blind person may give directions to the dog accordingly.

7. If assistance is requested by the blind person, allow the blind person to take your arm or to give the dog the command to follow you. The blind person should be the one to choose the method that is best.