

Is the Comfort K9 Program Right for You?

A successful Comfort K9 requires a substantial commitment of time, training, patience, love, and dedication. Below are Paws for Responders requirements and recommendations for Primary Handlers, Secondary Handlers, and Puppy Raisers. Keep in mind that while recommendations may be somewhat flexible to meet the specific situation, the requirements must be adhered to by all participants.

Requirements and Recommendations

Requirements for all Members

- Must be able to provide a safe, secure, and low stress home environment where the dog will spend "off duty" time.
- Must be able to provide a reliable means to transport the dog safely and securely.
- Must be able to provide a safe, secure, and low stress environment to kennel the dog while unsupervised.
- Must be able to provide a safe, secure, and low stress environment for the dog to relax throughout the day.
- Must use positive, rewards based, training methods with the dog throughout the lifetime of the dog.
- Must have the dog "under control" at all times via crate, leash, and/or fenced or enclosed area.
- Must not apply aversive tools (including, but not limited to, E-collars, prong collars, choke collars, sound correctors) or aversive methods (including, but not limited to, collar corrections, choking the dog, alpha rolls, ear pinches, or any other physical punishment) throughout the lifetime of the dog.
- Must have the availability to actively participate in training sessions and meetings throughout the training program.
- Must be able to dedicate a considerable amount of time towards raising, training, and caring for the dog, both during and after normal work hours.
- All members of the Handler/Raiser household (human and animal) must be comfortable with adding a new dog into the home environment.
- Must be able to communicate with other people about the program and instruct others in the use of specific protocols while interacting with the dog.
- Must communicate openly and honestly with the trainer about progress and concerns.
- Must be able to communicate via phone, text, and email, and must be able to access online training platform and online discussion group.
- Must complete assigned homework by due dates provided throughout the training program.

Recommendations for all Members

- The dog should not be left alone for more than 5 hours per day.
- Maximum of 2 dogs living in the home environment (not including the Comfort K9)
- Children living in the home environment should be over 5 years of age.

Recommendations for Primary Handlers

- The Primary Handler should be non-patrol personnel, and spend the majority of the workday in the facility, where the dog will be working.
- The Primary Handler has the desire to play a major role in the therapy team, providing comfort to fellow emergency responders, support staff, and/or members of the community.
- The Primary Handler has the ability to interrupt job tasks to prioritize the care of the dog, as needed.
- The Primary Handler is team-oriented and prepared to work with a team of 1-3 Secondary Handlers, as well as the trainer.
- The Primary Handler is committed to staying with the facility that owns the dog for at least 5 years after completion of the Comfort K9 Program.

Policies and Procedures

Getting started

Please review entire website (www.pawsforresponders.com) to get a general overview of the Comfort K9 Program, particularly the "Things to Consider" page. Once your facility has determined that the Comfort K9 Program would be a good fit, please schedule an appointment with the trainer to go over your facility's specific needs.

Contact

Email: info@pawsforresponders.com Phone: 916-899-9637

Acquiring the puppy

After determining the best program option, the facility must make an initial deposit to begin the process of acquiring the puppy. All policies, waivers, and contracts will be covered at this time. The trainer will then select a puppy from the pre-approved breeder list and give the Handler Team access to written and online training material. Once the puppy is purchased, hands on training with the puppy begins. The puppy will go directly to the Raiser's home, and visits and training sessions with the Handler Team will be scheduled immediately. The Handler Team must read the written material and complete the online training courses by the applicable deadlines.

Payment plan

The Program contains 4 separate options, each with different rates. Facilities will receive a training payment schedule at the start of the Program, as well as monthly emailed invoices. Payment should be made by the 10th of every month, for that month's services, by check or card to Paws for Responders. If training services are added to supplement the Program, those will be billed at the time of service or added to the following month's invoice, based on facility preference. Program payment includes: training services for the dog, training services for the handlers, program expenses, and supplies. Facilities will receive a detailed breakdown for everything included in their individual program.

Sponsorships

There are two types of Comfort K9 sponsorships. One is a Program Sponsor, which partners with Paws for Responders to offer services or supplies for multiple puppies in the Program. Program Sponsors are listed and advertised as sponsors of the puppy, but do not impact the program costs for the facility. The second is a Facility Sponsor, which partners with the individual facility to help lower the costs of the Program. The Facility Sponsor can assist the facility by offering services (such as, grooming or vet care), supplies (such as, food or equipment), or providing financial support (payments directly towards account balance). Paws for Responders must approve potential

Facility Sponsors to avoid any conflict of interest, and so program costs can be adjusted and billed appropriately.

Transferring the puppy

The puppy is owned by Paws for Responders until completion of the Program. Typically, the Program is completed when the puppy is around 24 months of age. Ownership of the puppy along with supplies that were purchased as part of the Program price will be transferred to the facility and there will be no more monthly payments. From that point forward, responsibility for all costs and expenses relating to the Comfort K9 rest solely on the facility.

Certifications

Handler and Raiser Certification

In addition to all requirements listed above, Handlers and Raisers are responsible for the timely completion of all reading materials and online education assigned by the trainer. Under no circumstance should anyone be working with the Comfort K9 without the Handler or Raiser's direct supervision. The Comfort K9 must be in an approved containment area when the Handler or Raiser is not able to provide direct supervision.

Dog Certification

Successful completion of the Program requires the Comfort K9 to pass the Canine Good Citizenship evaluation as well as a Therapy Dog Evaluation in order to receive the official title of "Facility Dog." As these evaluations serve to test the teamwork of the dog and its handler, the Primary Handler is required to participate. It is recommended that Secondary Handlers also participate.

Terminating the Program

Canine Compliance

Though there is a careful screening process for candidates likely to succeed, not every dog selected will be a good fit. If a dog fails to pass the Evaluations after a reasonable amount of training, the dog may be dropped from the Program. The dog will be rehomed and payments will stop. If the facility would like to start over with another dog, payments will restart at the beginning of the monthly installments portion of the Program. There will not be an additional deposit.

Handler Compliance

If a Handler fails to abide by the rules of the Program, they may be dropped from the Program. In such cases the facility may be responsible for additional costs relating to training up a replacement Handler to take over at the level at which the previous Handler was dismissed.

Facility Compliance

The Comfort K9 Program requires a substantial amount of time and financial support to succeed within a facility. If a facility is unable to maintain the training schedule, unable to pay invoices in a timely manner, or unable to accommodate the needs of the dog or the Handler, the program may

be terminated at the trainer's sole discretion. The facility is also able to terminate the Program at any time, for any reason. In either circumstance, the dog will be rehomed or moved to another facility. The facility will be responsible for any outstanding invoices.

Cancellation Policy

Since the Comfort K9 Program is tailored to the needs of each facility, it is understood that sessions may be cancelled and/or rescheduled from time to time. Make up classes will be mandatory for all cancelled classes in order to complete the requirements for completion of the Program. If the facilities cancels a Puppy Transport or Private Facility Session with less than 48 hours' notice, they may be billed a \$100 cancellation fee. If more than 48 hours' notice is given or if the trainer reschedules a session, no fees will apply.

Refund Policy

There will be no refunds for monthly fees as the program is designed to be "pay as you go". The initial deposit may be refunded prior to purchase of the puppy.

Waivers and Contracts

See separate document.