

Guide Dog Etiquette 101



Guide dogs aren't pets. They're partners in mobility for people who are blind, Deafblind, or have low vision.

Although guide dogs are among the most highly trained dogs in the world, they're still dogs. And distracting them while they're working can jeopardize both their safety and the handler's.

By learning and following proper etiquette, you can help make your community more welcoming for guide dog teams.



How to behave around a guide dog

Remember: A guide dog's number one priority is the safety of their handler.



Don't distract

Harness on means hands off. A guide dog in a harness means, "Please don't interact with me. I'm working." As tempting as it may be, never pet, talk to, or make eye contact with a guide dog in a harness.

Contain your excitement. Don't encourage excitable play with a guide dog. Staying calm is part of the job and excitement directed toward them is distracting.

Say "hello" another time. If you approach a guide dog team with your pet dog, keep your dog on a leash and away from the guide dog.





Hands off & no treats

Never grab a guide dog's harness or leash, or try to steer their handler. This can be disorientating and dangerous for the guide dog and the handler.

Never offer food or treats to a guide dog. This can result in disruptive behaviours like begging for food and scavenging off the ground.



Work hard, play hard

There is time for play! When their harness is off and they're not working, guide dogs are like any other dog. They love to play, run around, cuddle with humans, and relax.



Don't discriminate

Guide dogs belong everywhere. Guide dog teams are allowed access to any premises the public would normally have access to. It's the law.



It's okay to offer help

Before offering your assistance, you should always ask if it's needed. When approaching a guide dog handler, introduce yourself and always speak directly to the handler, not the guide dog.



Educate and advocate

Help champion equal access for guide dog teams. If you encounter someone not following proper guide dog etiquette, politely remind them not to distract the guide dog.



Become a guide dog champion!
Visit [guidedogchampions.ca](https://www.guidedogchampions.ca) to learn more.

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