



Alliance of Therapy Dogs  
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## Policies

The purpose of these Policies is to protect and guide the Members, Tester/Observers (T/O), Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) Board of Directors (BOD), and ATD Staff as they fulfill ATD's mission.

Adhering to the ATD Policies will ensure you remain a Member in good standing.

### I. Use of ATD Materials

All materials representing ATD, which include the title, artwork, and logo, are registered and/or copyrighted and may not be recreated or printed in any fashion in newsletters, memos, or other communications, on websites, business cards, organizational brochures, official printed matter created by a local organization, clothing, or specialty items without written authorization from the ATD Office. You may be denied permission or asked to remove the ATD name, logo, slogan, or link at ATD's discretion.

### II. Use of ATD 501(c)(3) Tax Identification Number

Permission to use the ATD Tax Identification Number will be given only for monetary donations being made to ATD, and requests will go through the ATD Office.

ATD will place all donations received into the general fund or the endowment unless otherwise specified by the donor.

Donations made in the name of a local group for services they have provided will be divided 50/50 between the group and ATD at the group's request. If no such request is made, ATD retains the entire amount of the donation and deposits it into the general fund with any other special instruction from the donor.

### III. Website and Disclaimers

The information that is published on or collected through ATD's website is public information as described in the Freedom of Information Act. The following paragraphs disclose the information-gathering and dissemination practices of the ATD website:

#### Alternative Formats and Accessibility

Copies of portions of the ATD website are available in alternative format upon request.

ATD is committed to making its presence on the internet as accessible as possible to all. A Member of the BOD or the ATD Office may be contacted in case of difficulty with any portion of the ATD website.

Reference Privacy Policy for more detailed information.

### **Linking to External Sites**

The ATD website may contain links to other sites not owned by ATD. Even though efforts are made to ensure the integrity, accuracy, and usefulness of the website, no claims are made as to the accuracy or verification of the information found on external sites. External links to other sites do not have the endorsement of ATD, and therefore, ATD cannot be responsible for the privacy practices observed or for the content of other such sites.

### **Website Statistics**

ATD uses server log analysis tools to create periodic summary statistics of its website's usage. These statistics serve to reflect usage summaries, such as general access (number of hits received), resources accessed (most and least popular pages), visitors and demographics (IP addresses and domains), diurnal activity statistics (most/least active days), technical statistics (client errors), referrals and keywords (search engines and sites pointing to the ATD), and browsers and platforms.

## **IV. Membership**

### **Section 1. Certified Handler Membership**

Membership is open to all who support the purposes of ATD. A Member in good standing is one who is current on dues; who has logged at 1 volunteer in-person ATD visit every 3 months; whose therapy dog is up to date on vaccines and has had a negative fecal test and an annual wellness exam within the past 12 months; who is not presently suspended from making visits for any reason; and who abides by all ATD Rules and Regulations. These ATD membership requirements are the same for Junior Handlers.

Annual membership dues are due and payable by 1 of 2 dates each year. Members whose membership anniversary date falls between October and March renew by January 1 of each year. Members whose membership anniversary date falls between April and September renew by July 1 of each year. ATD reserves the right to not renew a Member's membership.

### **Section 2. Supporting Membership**

Supporting membership is open to anyone who would like to support ATD and is not currently registered with a dog, including T/Os who no longer have a certified dog. Supporting Members receive ATD publications and remain in the organization's database.

### **Section 3. Membership Eligibility**

Members: Any person aged 18 or older may be tested with a dog and apply for membership. Anyone aged 12 through 17 may be tested with a dog to become a junior Member. (Parental involvement is required.)

Dogs: Any breed or mixed breed of dog may be tested with a handler to become a certified therapy dog. For insurance reasons, ATD cannot certify wolves, wolf-hybrids, coyotes, or coyote-hybrids.

Handler/Dog teams only: ATD certifies only handler/dog teams. A prospective Member or current Member testing with a new dog must own or have had a close relationship with the dog for a minimum of 6 months before testing.

#### **Section 4. Termination of Membership**

ATD reserves the right to deny, revoke, or not renew a Member's membership. ATD Members must strictly comply with the Rules and Regulations and Code of Ethics. Membership will expire or lapse for nonpayment of membership fees. The membership of any individual may also be terminated for any reason including, but not limited to:

- Verifiable violation(s) of the Member Rules and Regulations, Policies, and/or Code of Ethics.
- Attempting to damage or defame ATD.
- Deliberately providing incorrect information, withholding incriminating information, or falsifying ATD documents.
- Displaying menacing or abusive behavior while representing or interacting with ATD.
- By every appearance, not supporting the purposes of the organization.
- Being convicted of a felony while a Member.
- Being required to register as a sex offender.
- Engaging in cruelty, abuse, or neglect to animals or humans.
- Engaging in crimes against humanity, including but not limited to, any violent crimes, arson, burglary, robbery, fraud, slander, libel, plagiarism, or copyright infringement.

#### **Section 5. Appeals Procedure**

A Member or nonmember who wishes to appeal termination or denial of membership must submit a letter giving reasons for the appeal to the ATD Office within 30 days from the date of the notification.

1. All information regarding said case and the appeal letter shall be presented to the Appeals Committee for consideration. Full resolution should occur in 30 days from receipt of the appeal.

#### **Section 6. Member Handler/Dog Team Reevaluation**

If ATD has been alerted to a possible high-risk or behavior issue with a Member or a Member's dog, ATD may request that the team be reevaluated. When there is no T/O in the general area who can give an unbiased report or evaluate the handler/dog team

fairly, ATD may choose to send one of the Directors to the area to reevaluate the handler/dog team at the expense of ATD.

## **V. Aggressive Behavior**

ATD prohibits any dog displaying aggressive behavior toward humans or dogs while on a visit. When the ATD Office is notified of an incident, the team will immediately be placed on suspension to allow time for the Grievance and Ethics Committee to investigate the incident. If a dog has been deemed dangerous, aggressive, or similar designation as defined by local laws as a result of an incident and documentation verifies it, the Member must notify the ATD Office **within 24 hours**. The certified dog's membership will be terminated.

## **VI. Social Media**

Social media allows therapy dog teams from all over the world to come together in community. It can help to build relationships both with and among our volunteers and those interested in Alliance of Therapy Dogs. ATD encourages its volunteers to share and tag ATD in posts while adhering to all ATD Rules and Regulations as written in the current Member Handbook.

ATD-owned social media accounts and direct tags (@ not #) are monitored by the ATD Board of Directors and Office staff. When adding comments that refer to ATD Rules and Regulations, Policies, Procedures, and Code of Ethics, they will identify themselves as ATD representatives.

When you post photos and videos that include people you are visiting, you must have a completed ATD Media Authorization Release Form (available in two formats on the ATD website). This protects the privacy and wishes of those you visit. When you post, please indicate "ATD Media Authorization Release on file."

- Behave kindly. Do not use discriminatory language or personal attacks against others. Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated, including prejudice or inflammatory comments.
- Be tolerant toward others' viewpoints. Respectfully disagree when opinions do not align. Compassion helps to foster a healthy and positive discussion between people.
- Respect the privacy of others and do not share their personal information.
- Protect confidentiality. Do not state the names of applicants or Members in your post or divulge any information that would allow someone to specifically identify an individual.

ATD recognizes and understands that photos are a moment in time and may not accurately reflect the actual situation. ATD also understands that we all have a choice as to whether we post on social media or not. If a photo or video shows a team violating an ATD rule, the team may be subject to any of the following:

- A public post or comment with a reminder to follow the rule(s).

- A private message or email detailing what was seen and a request to follow the rule(s).
- An ATD Online Complaint and Concern Form submitted to the ATD Office or ATD Board President.
- A case sent to the appropriate ATD Committee.

The steps outlined above are to protect ATD, its Members, those we visit, and to keep insurance active, in place, and available for the entire organization.

ATD does not expect or require its Members, T/Os, Board of Directors, or ATD Staff to police the internet. However, if you see something on social media and want ATD to know about it, please complete the ATD Social Media Concerns Form and submit to the ATD Office. Anonymous forms will not be accepted. All forms must have a screenshot(s) of the post in question. When commenting on a non-ATD social media platform, ATD Board of Directors and ATD Staff responses do not reflect the opinion of the organization.

## **VII. Endorsements**

No unauthorized advertisements or solicitations will be allowed on the ATD website or social media platforms.

## **VIII. Nondiscrimination**

ATD provides registration to all qualified persons. No person shall be excluded from participation, denied the benefits of membership, or be subjected to discrimination because of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin. All applicants will be tested and observed under this Policy.

## **IX. Breeds and Breed-specific Legislation**

ATD does not support any breed-specific legislation. ATD membership is open to handlers with all breeds of dogs except wolf and wolf-hybrids and coyote and coyote-hybrids for insurance reasons. T/Os are expected to test all breeds and mixed breeds without prejudice.

## **X. Local Groups and Events**

ATD functions on a national level; there are no ATD-sanctioned local groups or chapters. The ATD Board of Directors does not involve itself with any locally formed group issues, costs, or rules unless the local rules conflict with the ATD Rules and Regulations, Policies, or Code of Ethics. ATD only recognizes individual Members and T/Os. Individual Members may choose to join any local group as they see fit.

ATD wants to help support your local event! ATD will pay up to \$100 for a booth at an event. Members may apply to the ATD Office. Please submit an application to the Office

at least 14 days prior to the event. Please note that if your request is approved, it will be an ATD booth. As ATD does not sponsor local groups, all signage must be ATD. The Application for Booth or Event Fee can be found on the ATD website under the Member Tab, Download Helpful Documents.

## **XI. Disaster Relief**

Any ATD team that provides visits as a result of an emergency or disaster while representing ATD is covered by ATD insurance. An agency that contacts a team requesting their services is acting merely as a liaison and is not financially liable.

## **XII. Member Communications**

ATD will use multiple communication channels to ensure that membership is kept informed about new developments. The following channels will be used for all membership updates: posts in the Member Portal, email, social media content, and, as appropriate, paper mail. T/O communications will be done through these channels as well as the T/O Egroup.

**Confidentiality:** ATD understands and recognizes the difficulty for an individual to come forward with a complaint. For this reason, the ATD Grievance Procedure is designed to protect the interests of the complainant, the person complained against, and any others who may be witnesses to the infraction.

The ATD Board of Directors and Staff strive to maintain confidentiality. ATD Procedures limit any discussion of grievance details with the parties involved in the complaint, both before and after the grievance is resolved. Individuals who are involved in a grievance case are discouraged from discussing information about the case with ATD Members.