

Hospital/Facility Stay Guidelines

To ensure a positive environment for all hospital patients, staff, and mindDog teams, the following guidelines apply when a mindDog handler and their assistance dog are staying at a hospital, including psychiatric wards and facilities.

Assistance Dog Vest & Lead

Assistance dogs must always be wearing their approved vest and on a lead when working.

Dogs should only be off lead during designated breaks and in approved areas for downtime or play.

Dogs should never be allowed to be off lead especially in communal areas, group sessions and dining areas.

Handler Responsibilities

The handler is solely responsible for the care and behaviour of their dog, including breaks, feeding, and any cleaning needs.

The handler is solely responsible for the toileting of their dog.

Breaks must be taken in designated areas specified by hospital staff to ensure minimal disruption.

Hygiene & Grooming

Dogs must be clean, well-groomed, and odour-free before arriving at the hospital.

Handlers should make every effort to maintain the dog's hygiene during the stay, ensuring it aligns with hospital standards.

Dog Behaviour

Dogs must display appropriate public behaviour, including remaining calm, quiet, and unobtrusive in shared spaces. There is to be no barking or disruptive behaviours displayed by the dog at all.

Any aggressive or disruptive behaviour will require immediate attention from the handler.

Interaction with Other Teams

Handlers and their dogs must avoid interference with other assistance dogs present or hospital patients unless explicitly invited.

The assistance dogs must not be approached by other patients or staff members unless explicitly invited.

Any disputes or concerns between teams should be reported to the Nursing Unit Manager and if the situation remains unresolved, mindDog is to address this directly.

Equipment & Training Methods

As per mindDog's force-free, trust-based ethos, the use of aversive equipment such as, but not limited to, crates, head halters, muzzles, choke chains, and prong collars is strictly prohibited for any mindDog team to use at any time.

Punishment and/or aversive training methods used for training, such as, but not limited to, smacking, lead jerking, alpha rolls, submission holds, corrections, tight circles, or deep voice reprimands, are strictly prohibited for any mindDog team to use at any time.

Hospital Rules

Handlers should work collaboratively with hospital staff to ensure their dog does not disrupt medical care or the hospital environment.

Emergency Protocols

Handlers must provide the hospital with an emergency contact who can assist with caring for the dog if the handler is temporarily incapacitated.

Consequences for Non-Compliance

Repeated or significant breaches of these guidelines may result in intervention from mindDog representatives.

Teams found in serious or repeated violation of the guidelines risk suspension or withdrawal from the mindDog program.