

The Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme Silver Award

Aim

The Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme Silver Award aims to build upon the skills learned in the Bronze Award whilst increasing the level of difficulty. The Silver Award is a natural progression of practical dog training skills and introduces new concepts such as the controlled greeting, road walk and vehicle control exercises which are important in everyday life situations. The Silver Award aims to provide handlers with a good knowledge of understanding and training their canine companion.

Eligibility

The Scheme is aimed at all dogs whether Kennel Club registered or not, there is no age limit. For the Silver Test Examiners will only accept dogs that have already been awarded a Bronze Award Certificate. Handlers must show that they have means of cleaning up after their dog and that it has proper Identification. It is a legal requirement to inscribe the name and the address of the owner on the collar or on a plate or disc attached to it. Engraved tags can be purchased from the Kennel Club website.

Standard Required

The test is non-competitive but examiners should be satisfied that dogs are worthy of passing. Examiners should also observe the spirit of the Scheme, which is to produce happy, contented dogs, which are well behaved, and under the control of handlers who fully understand the responsibilities to their dogs, to their neighbours and to the community. A Certificate will be awarded when the required standard has been achieved. At the start of each training course, in addition to the Description, handlers should be given a copy of the Canine Code and the Responsibility and Care leaflet. Dogs are only permitted one attempt at each exercise.

Any uncontrolled, mouthing, barking, growling or other threatening behaviour is not acceptable and further training will be required before the dog can be passed. In order for it to be meaningful the testing must be carried out thoroughly. Emphasis must be placed upon the ability of the handler to handle, care for and generally be responsible for their dog.

The Test

Dogs may be tested singly or in groups, those passing all parts of the test will receive a Good Citizen Dog Scheme Silver Certificate. The Examiner will enter the comment "Passed" or "Not Ready" along side each exercise. In order to receive a Certificate, dogs must receive the comment "Passed" for each exercise during one testing session.

The Club/Organisation arranging the test will be responsible for appointing an Examiner and the standards required are stated in the Scheme's Guidelines and Information Handbook and should be strictly adhered to.

Handouts

Literature to be given out at the beginning of each training course:-

1. Description of Exercises
2. Canine Code
3. Responsibility and Care leaflet

Description of Exercises

Exercise 1 - Play with the Dog

The object of this exercise is to demonstrate that the dog will play with its handler. Play adds an extra dimension to a dog's life and can be used to make training fun. When instructed to do so the handler should commence to play with the dog. Play should be under the handler's control and if it involves articles they should be readily given up by the dog. **Note: Play should be appropriate to the dog under test but should not include play fighting. Formal retrieves will not be deemed as appropriate play. It is recommended that the Examiner commences with this exercise.**

Exercise 2 - Road Walk

The object of this exercise is to test the ability of the dog to walk on a lead under control on a public highway. This exercise should be carried out at a suitable outdoor location and an occasional tight lead is acceptable. The handler and dog should walk along a pavement, execute a turn, then stop at the kerb where the dog should remain steady and controlled. Having observed the Highway Code, they should proceed to the other side, turn and continue walking. Distractions should be incorporated such as passing vehicles or bicycles, people, wheelchairs, prams, pushchairs, etc.

Note: The turns are only tests of ability to change direction.

Exercise 3 - Rejoin handler

The object of this exercise is for the dog to remain steady, off lead, while the handler moves away, the dog will then rejoin when instructed to do so. Having left the dog and moved approximately ten paces away, when directed to do so, the handler should call the dog. Having rejoined, the dog should stop close to the handler in any position, the lead shall be replaced.

Note: The dog should not rejoin until instructed, but minor anticipation will be acceptable.

Exercise 4 - Stay in One Place for Two Minutes

The object of this exercise is that the dog will stay on the spot while the handler moves away for two minutes. The handler should remain in sight. The handler should place the dog with the lead attached in any position of their choice i.e. stand, sit or down. Upon instruction, having quietly dropped the lead, the handler will move a distance of five paces away for a period of two minutes.

Note: This exercise is a test to see if the dog will stay in one place without changing position. The dog must stay in the position it is left in.

Exercise 5 - Vehicle Control

The object of this exercise is for the handler to get the dog in and out of a vehicle in a controlled manner. The dog should remain quiet, relaxed and under control during this exercise. Without pulling, the dog should be taken on lead towards a vehicle and remain steady whilst the handler opens the vehicle door. The dog should not attempt to get in until instructed but should then enter willingly and the door should be closed. The handler, Examiner and, if necessary, a driver will get into the vehicle. The engine should be started and run for a short time to enable the Examiner to assess the effect upon the dog, which at all times, should remain quiet, relaxed, and under control. The dog will then be instructed to exit in an orderly manner. The handler should then close the door with the dog calmly under control. **Note: Only physically able dogs should be invited to jump into the vehicle and where appropriate, dogs may be lifted in and out of the vehicle. It is highly recommended that when travelling, dogs are secure in a vehicle. However, dogs should not be penalised if handlers do not use specific types of equipment recommended for safe canine travel.**

Exercise 6 - Come away from Distractions

The object of this exercise is for the handler to remain in control of their dog when there are distractions. The handler should take the dog, on lead, to a gathering of people with dogs also on lead. When instructed to do so, the lead should be removed and the handler should walk or run away calling the dog, which should return without delay and be placed on the lead.

Note: Dogs of an unruly nature will not take part in this exercise or be part of the group.

Exercise 7 - Controlled Greeting

The object of this exercise is to demonstrate that the dog will not jump up. Should this happen, the handler must be able to successfully instruct the dog to cease. The Examiner will greet the dog as they may do when entering a house. A dog that does not jump up will pass. **Note: The Examiner should not over incite the dog to jump up. A dog displaying poor temperament will not pass.**

Exercise 8 - Food Manners

The object of this exercise is for the dog to have good manners when aware of food. Food should be handled or consumed while the dog, on a loose lead, is taken in close proximity to it. The dog should not unduly respond to this temptation, i.e. not to beg for food or steal. **Note: The Examiner should be satisfied that the dog has been taken close enough to the food to be aware of it.**

Exercise 9 - Examination of the Dog

The object of this exercise is to demonstrate that the dog will allow inspection of its body by a stranger as might be undertaken by a veterinary surgeon. The dog on lead will be required to be placed for inspection of its mouth, teeth, throat, eyes, ears and feet whilst standing, sitting or lying down as required. Other than mild avoidance, the dog should allow inspection without concern.

Note: It is the responsibility of training officials to ensure that only suitable dogs take part in this exercise.

Exercise 10 - Responsibility and Care

The object of this exercise is to test the knowledge of the handler on specific subjects relating to owning a dog. The Examiner should construct questions based on section one and two of the Responsibility and Care leaflet. Topics include – a dog's needs, illness, responsibilities of ownership, other responsibilities, children, barking, dogs and stationary vehicles and vehicle travel. The questions should not be phrased in an ambiguous manner and where necessary, Examiners should rephrase the same question in an attempt to bring out the correct answer from the handler. At the start of each training course, in addition to the Description, handlers should be given a copy of the Canine Code and Responsibility and Care leaflet. There should be a session during which the importance of these topics in every day life situations are discussed. **Note: Only one numbered item may constitute a question. The handler should be able to give six out of eight correct answers from section one and two of the Responsibility and Care leaflet.**