



## **RELIEVING YOUR PILOT DOG**

The purpose of this lecture is to familiarize you with the proper method for relieving your Pilot Dog. “Go potty” is the term you will use to communicate to your dog that it is time to relieve himself. This lesson will describe:

- Appropriate locations for relieving your dog
- The typical relief schedule of your dog
- How to appropriately relieve and pick up after your dog
- What to do if your dog relieves himself at inappropriate times

### **Appropriate Locations for Relieving Your Dog**

Pilot Dogs are able to relieve themselves on a variety of surfaces including grass, gravel, and concrete. While in class, you will likely relieve your dog on grass or Astroturf in the relief area located outside in the courtyard.

When selecting a relief area in your home or working environment, avoid using private property such as someone’s yard. Ensure that you are using the appropriate relief area if you are using a communal area. For example, if you work in an office complex, ask where the most appropriate place to relieve your dog would be located.

### **Typical Relief Schedule of Your Dog**

It is critical to maintain a consistent relief routine during class and when returning home. The times at which you feed, water, and relieve your dog will affect the maintenance of an appropriate relief routine. During class training, you will be asked to relieve your Pilot Dog every 3 to 4 hours. This schedule includes relieving your dog when you wake up, before every walk, and shortly before you turn in for the night. You will be asked to maintain a similar schedule when you return home.

## How to Appropriately Relieve and Pick Up After Your Dog

- Each dog will be different in his typical relief routine. Most dogs will urinate when given the opportunity. Your dog may defecate once or multiple times per day. While in class, you will develop a familiarity with your dog's particular routine.
- Your dog may relieve himself immediately when given the opportunity, or it may take him up to 5 to 10 minutes. You will want to ensure you are giving your dog sufficient time to relieve himself, especially when introducing a new relief area.
- Relieving your Pilot Dog is an active process. This may require you to repeat the command "Go potty" as you walk back and forth to stimulate the dog to relieve himself.
- You should avoid multitasking such as smoking or being on your phone when relieving your dog. Avoiding these tasks allows you to pay close attention to the behavior of the dog if the dog is relieving or becoming distracted.
- Always take off the harness prior to relieving your dog so the dog doesn't associate relieving while in harness. Make a long leash to signal that it is the appropriate time to relieve.
- The dog may give you different signals to indicate that he is about to relieve himself. Some dogs will sniff, move back and forth in wide circles, or spin around in small circles just prior to elimination.
- When you feel as though your dog is relieving, trail down the end of the leash to feel the dog's spine. If the dog's spine is straight, this is an indication that your dog is urinating. If the dog's spine feels curved, this indicates that your dog is defecating.
- Once you locate the back of the dog, trail lightly down the spine of the dog just before the base of the tail, pointing your foot towards the dog's tail. Take warning not to place your foot directly under the dog, as you do not want to step in the stool. This process allows you to identify the approximate location of the stool.
- Once your dog has finished relieving, make a short leash, allowing you to keep your dog under control while you pick up after him.
- To pick up the stool, place your hand in a bag and reach down in front of your foot. With the bag over your hand, make small concentric circles on the surface of the ground. Once you identify the location of the stool, pick it up with the bag, turn the bag right side out, tie a knot, and place it in a waste receptacle.

## **Relieving While Working/Inappropriate Elimination**

You may experience a moment when your dog relieves inappropriately while in harness. The more consistent the routine you maintain with your dog, the less you will see this behavior.

- It is important to always keep extra bags with you at all times in case you do need to pick up after your dog.
- There are many potential causes for inappropriate elimination including a medical/physical problem, a change in diet/food, a change in routine, not wanting to relieve on the chosen surface, stress, new scents, or a new area.
- Any major change or stress in a dog's life may cause a disruption in the relief routine. If you do need to change your dog's routine, providing extra relief times will help to avoid accidents.
- Allowing the dog to relieve before each work session may help to avoid instances of relieving while working as well.