



Service Animals of Mississippi

promoting independence, inclusion and
quality of life for individuals with disabilities

Obedience Commands

These are the most basic commands that must be mastered by puppies and dogs prior to task training. The commands are not in any particular order. Commands should be obeyed on “1st ask.” You should use a consistent and friendly tone that reflects authority - you expect the dog to comply. Initial training includes ‘helping the dog’ to obey in a gentle, friendly manner. For example, if the dog will not sit on the first ask, you can gently push down on his/her backside. Then, reward the dog for completing the task. Or, you can teach the dog to come using a long lead. If the dog does not comply, you can ‘encourage’ the dog by gently pulling on the lead and using an exciting tone.

Positive rewards include a treat and a verbal cue - ‘good boy/girl’. The number of treats can be reduced and replaced with only the verbal cue - once the dog learns the command.

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- Back – used to move dog back or away from object/person/other animal
 - Come – the come to me command
 - Down – should down and stay (additional command can be used for stay)
 - Drop it – a command for give me what is in your mouth
 - Go play – command to release dog to be ‘free to be a dog’
 - Heel – should walk within 12 inches or shoulder of dog should be at handler’s side
 - Here – used as a direction for the dog to come to a specific spot
 - Kennel – dogs goes to (inside) the kennel and waits for further instruction or reward
 - Leave it – used to mean don’t bother that
 - Left – used to direct the dog to turn left
 - Let’s go – used to initiate walking on leash or other directed movement
 - Loose – dog walks on long lead away from the Heel position
 - Off – used when a dog bumps into you or steps on feet.

The key is that the dog should not run into or step on anyone. Allowing this sort of body contact is counter-productive in training. The animal must show respect for the handler.

- Okay – release command used to release dog from any command (including sit, down, stay)
- Right – used to direct the dog to turn right
- Sit – should sit and stay (additional command can be used for stay)
- Stay – should stay (in sit, down or standing position) until released
- Wait – should wait until released or until handler departs

This one can be a little confusing. It is different from the Stay command where the dog must stay until released from the position.



THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
INSTITUTE FOR
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