Headquarters and Training Center

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Client Experience Team

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Applicant and Graduate Support: 888-987-2188

**Dear Guiding Eyes Student,**

You will begin training with your guide dog shortly. Not only will you be building your skillset as a working team, but also integrating many basic care practices into your daily routine. Your dog will need time to settle into your lifestyle and grow accustomed to boundaries in your home. With that in mind, we would like to provide you with some advanced guidance on how to prepare a healthy and safe environment for your guide.

1: Make sure your floor, or any surfaces that are easily accessible to a dog, are clean and absent of choking hazards/toxins.

Just as you are learning your dog’s working habits, you will also be observing their house manners. While puppy raisers built a strong foundation for appropriate behaviors in the home, your dog then lived in a kennel during formal harness training for several months and may be tempted to test the waters in a new environment. It’s important to keep tabs on your dog at all times while establishing a bond and teaching them what is and is not allowed. Make sure all trash cans have lids or store them in cabinets, pick up small children’s toys, keep food out of reach, and identify an accessible location for a crate, bed, or tie down. There will come a point of trust when you know your dog well enough to predict their behavior, but until then, it is important to set your guide up for success.

2: Be aware of foods/drinks that are poisonous to your dog.

Some examples include, but are not limited to:

* Grapes and raisins
* Chocolate (dark and unsweetened varieties are the most dangerous)
* Garlic and onions
* Macadamia nuts
* Xylitol (an artificial sweetener often found in candy, gum, toothpaste, and certain peanut butters)
* Fat trimmings and bones
* Yeast dough
* Fruit pits and seeds (some fruits are safe and beneficial in reasonable quantities when seeds and pits are removed)
* Alcohol
* Caffeine

You may choose to consume these items, but take extra care to keep them away from your guide, as even a small amount can cause harm when ingested. If your dog does get any of these items accidentally, call your local vet immediately.

3: Be aware of plants, or products that contain these plants, that are poisonous to your dog.

* Sago palm
* Tomato plants
* Aloe Vera
* Ivy
* American holly
* Common flowers such as daffodils, tulips, baby’s breath, azaleas, lily of the valley, Chrysanthemum, Oleander
* Flower bulbs of any kind
* Poinsettias
* Mistletoe
* Marijuana

4: Please do not, under any circumstances, smoke indoors with your guide dog. Just as secondhand cigarette smoke can damage human lungs, it can also result in severe health conditions for dogs, most notably cancer.

You may find it helpful to pass this information along to friends and family members to ensure that everyone is on the same page. No doubt you will have many questions as you transition into life with your new dog, but we hope that this letter gives you an idea of steps you can take before training to best prepare your home for their arrival. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to the Guiding Eyes Client Experience Team for clarification at any time. The Applicant and Graduate Support Line phone number is 888-987-2188.

Sincerely,

The Client Experience Team