

Suggestions for Interviewing a Walker

1. Is the candidate formally vetted and endorsed by CDWA now? If not, *please refer*.
2. Is the Walker a member of positive-only professional groups, which promote best practices?
3. Does the Walker use LIMA, positive reinforcement or force-free standards? Look for evidence.
4. What equipment is used on pup-clients? (gold standard: harness. Not supported: prong, shock collar, martingale or choke chain)
5. What training/education does the Walker have? Does he/she have great reviews?
6. Does the Walker engage in continuing education? (recommended: 100+ hours per year).
7. What industry books is he/she reading for professional development? Favourite authors? Are those authors on this website?
8. How does the Walker greet your dog and what is the pup's reaction to him/her? (gold standard: calm. Not supported: harsh behavioural suppression or aggression, like *kneeing in the chest* for excitable dogs.)
9. Does the Walker use high quality treats in training and interactions with the dog? (gold standard: yes; check their quality.)
10. Is the Walker transparent about methods? Look to pictures and videos on their social media (gold standard: happy, playful, engaged dogs who are at ease and not wearing prong, choke, martingale or shock collars, or leashes wrapped and fastened around their necks)
11. Does the Walker advise you to do anything that makes you uncomfortable? Everything should feel comfortable, be humane (rewards-based, not corrections-based) and do no harm.
12. What is the Walker's Emergency Protocol?
13. Does the Walker have a fulsome legally-prepared contract that is clear about your, and his or her, responsibilities and liabilities? This should include a dog profile that captures identification, medical, vaccinations, tick and flea treatment, and health data; a legal Terms & Conditions portion that is protective to all, not just the Walker; and a release letter to your veterinarian, naming the Walker as a decision-maker and guardian in the case of an emergency, when you're not available.
14. Is the Walker Animal CPR trained?
15. Is the Walker insured for liability? This is mandatory if walking groups, however, the most diligent Walkers will be insured regardless of group size, as it protects him/her, you and the dogs in care.

16. Is the Walker insured for auto that covers dogs in the event of an accident? This is a niche insurance product. The main industry insurers are Profur and Verge and they provide coverage for animals in vehicles.

17. Does the Walker have a municipal-issued Permit to walk groups of dogs? Check the bylaws in your region for the number of dogs. Permits are mandatory.

18. Talk about risks. Ask the Walker what should be done in important scenarios that will ensure safety to your pup. This substantiates knowledge and training.

19. If your pup has fear, reactivity or other behavioural issues, ask the Walker how he/she would address the issues, rather than offering management advice first. Assess his/her questions and knowledge.

Special Notes...

*1. CDWA has the ability to assess candidates on more stringent criteria than is shown here. If you feel you do not have the knowledge to assess a candidate or his/her information and interview answers, **it is strongly advised to refer the candidate to CDWA.***

2. We strongly discourage private citizens from requesting private or sensitive documentation from a Walker. They are entitled to privacy, under the Canadian constitution. CDWA has a Privacy Policy and is committed to upholding privacy laws, unlike private citizens, who are not held to the legal standard that organizations are.

3. All Walkers, whether CDWA Members or not, are entitled to use humane tools and decline to work with aversive equipment and/or corrections-based treatment. We encourage all dog parents to follow suit, for best overall results. This ensures that dogs have the best quality of life while in care, without any behavioural fallout.