



**SLOVENSKI STANDARD**  
**oSIST prEN 17984-3:2024**  
**01-julij-2024**

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**Psi pomočniki - 3. del: Kompetence strokovnjakov za pse pomočnike**

Assistance Dogs - Part 3: Competencies for Assistance Dogs Professionals

Kompetenzen von Assistenzhund-Fachleuten

**Ta slovenski standard je istoveten z: prEN 17984-3**

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**en**



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NORME EUROPÉENNE  
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English Version

## Assistance dogs - Part 3: Competencies for assistance dogs professionals

Kompetenzen von Assistenzhund-Fachleuten

This draft European Standard is submitted to CEN members for enquiry. It has been drawn up by the Technical Committee CEN/TC 452.

If this draft becomes a European Standard, CEN members are bound to comply with the CEN/CENELEC Internal Regulations which stipulate the conditions for giving this European Standard the status of a national standard without any alteration.

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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR STANDARDIZATION  
COMITÉ EUROPÉEN DE NORMALISATION  
EUROPÄISCHES KOMITEE FÜR NORMUNG

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## European foreword

This document (prEN 17984-3) has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN/TC 452 “Competencies for Assistance Dogs Professionals”, the secretariat of which is held by UNI.

This document is currently submitted to the CEN Enquiry.

prEN 17984-3 is the third part of a series of standards under the general title *Assistance Dogs*, which comprises the following parts:

Part 1: Vocabulary

Part 2: Lifetime welfare

Part 3: Competencies for assistance dogs’ professionals

Part 4: Training and assessment

Part 5: Client services

Part 7: Conformity assessment

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**prEN 17984-3:2024 (E)****Introduction**

At present there are no defined competencies at a European level for professionals working in assistance dog organisations. This creates a high risk of assistance dog users being partnered with poorly and insufficiently trained dogs. It presents further risk to the welfare and wellbeing of assistance dog users and dogs if staff are not competent to perform their role according to safe and recognized standards.

This document will reduce this risk by encouraging organisations to provide training, or select appropriately trained professionals, to work within their organization. This document will allow assistance dog users greater choice when selecting an assistance dog provider and offers a level of quality of the service they can expect.

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## 1 Scope

This document specifies the competencies required of assistance dogs' professionals. The purpose of this document is to improve and ensure the quality of professionals working in a role within an assistance dog organization. Each speciality of assistance dog requires a specific set of role competencies and there are some common core competencies.

Core competencies:

- breeding;
- puppy raising;
- dog care;
- assessors;
- orientation and mobility;
- trainers;
- instructors.

Specific competencies:

- guide dogs;
- hearing dogs;
- medical alert dogs;
- mobility assistance dogs;
- autism and development disorder dogs;

- team training instructor.

It is accepted that assistance dog organisations vary greatly in structure and not every organization will have all the roles identified. Where one person performs more than one role, it is expected that they will have the competencies of all the roles they perform e.g. a dog trainer may also have the competencies of a dog care specialist. And there will be some organisations where some of these roles are not required, e.g. those with no breeding programme will not require the associated role competencies.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

FprEN 17984-1, *Assistance dogs — Part 1: Vocabulary*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in FprEN 17984-1 and the following terms and definitions apply.

**prEN 17984-3:2024 (E)**

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>
- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>

**3.1****knowledge**

facts, information, truths, principles or understanding acquired through experience or education

**3.2****skill**

ability to apply knowledge to complete tasks and solve problems acquired through education, experience or other means

**3.3****competence**

ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended results

**3.4****education provider**

organization which provides training to adults

Note 1 to entry: See Annex A for country-specific examples of assessment and education providers.

**3.5****national accreditation body**

institution which attests to the competence and impartiality of conformity assessment bodies (testing and calibration laboratories, certification, and inspection bodies), according to an international standards body

**4 Assistance dog breeding specialist**

An assistance dog breeding specialist shall:

- demonstrate knowledge of physical and behavioural genetics and genetic improvement of dogs, including selection and matching of studs and bitches;
- demonstrate knowledge of the principles of dogs' anatomy, physiology, general pathology, and infectious and parasitic diseases;
- demonstrate knowledge regarding nutritional requirements of brood bitch, including throughout pregnancy and during nursing, and nutritional requirements of puppy;
- demonstrate knowledge of reproduction and more specifically birth related issues;
- be aware of current best practices of suitable environments for dog: breeding, birth and early development, identify them in the environment and modify it accordingly or make the recommendations to improve these in the interest of the dog's wellbeing and breeding safety;
- identify appropriate point of referral to a veterinarian either physically or through distance consulting, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the dogs and puppies;
- be continually alert for risks during whelp and be rapid in response to alleviating and minimizing the risks by taking prompt action;



- monitor the delivery to minimize risks and have the proper responses in case of complications;
- demonstrate understanding of the competencies required of a working assistance dog;
- monitor the dog's growth and health from birth to eight weeks of age with respect of the current knowledge of puppy's development;
- monitor the puppy's psychological development, including socialization and behaviour;
- keep accurate records for each individual in each litter related to puppy growth and development, psychological development, including socialization and behaviour;
- evaluate the suitability of a puppy to enrol in an assistance dog program with respect of the puppy's welfare;
- using a consistent measurement tool, provide evidence of the puppy's suitability, health and soundness for the role of an assistance dog;
- demonstrate knowledge of welfare principles enlisted in the present norm and provide accurate records that demonstrate their applications.

## 5 Puppy selector

A puppy selector shall:

- demonstrate knowledge of the competencies required of an active assistance dog with respect of the puppy's welfare, wellbeing, and soundness;
- apply different humane test techniques in order to evaluate the suitability of a puppy to enrol in an assistance dog programme;
- provide evidence and justification for matching with puppy raisers and evaluate the decision, adjusting where necessary in the puppies' best interest;
- demonstrate knowledge of the principles of anatomy, physiology, general pathology, and infectious and parasitic diseases and consider the consequences for the suitability of the puppy;
- identify appropriate point of referral to the appropriate specialist (veterinarian, behaviourist, or other professionals) either physically or through distance consulting, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the dog;
- demonstrate understanding of puppies' behaviours individually and in the litter group, which ones will be identified for assistance selection on completion of puppy evaluation based on health, welfare, wellbeing, and soundness;
- using consistent measurement tools, evaluate and record the temperament of the proposed breeding bitch and once selected continually evaluate her behaviour to establish suitability for breeding, match to suitable stud and to provide evidence of breed selection traits for future litters;
- demonstrate knowledge about dog socialization and identify when the dog has or does not have suitable socialization behaviours for enrolment in an assistance dog programme;
- demonstrate knowledge of welfare principles enlisted in the present norm and provide accurate records that demonstrate their applications.

## 6 Puppy raising supervisor

A puppy raising supervisor shall:

- demonstrate knowledge of the principles of the dog's growth and health from birth to adulthood with respect of the current knowledge of puppy's development;
- observe and record the dog's physical developmental, growth and health from birth to adulthood with respect of the current knowledge of puppy's development;
- demonstrate knowledge of the principles of preventive parasite control, vaccination and prophylactic program and make sure they are applied;
- identify appropriate point of referral to a veterinarian or behaviourist either physically or through distance consulting, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the dog;
- identify problem indicators in the behavioural development of the dog;
- demonstrate knowledge of the competencies required of a working assistance dog;
- monitor the dog's psychological development, including socialization and behaviour;
- keep accurate records for each individual related to puppy growth and development, psychological development, including socialization and behaviour;
- assess the potential of a puppy, based on proven measurement and evidence to enter into an assistance dog programme with respect of the puppy's welfare, wellbeing, health and soundness for the role;
- demonstrate understanding of puppies' behaviour individually and in different human/canine groups and within different environments and identify puppies who are likely to be successful in the role of an assistance dog;
- create and implement a training plan with realistic targets for a desired behaviour of the puppy based upon the principles of learning, ethology, health and welfare and the intended outcomes of the training;
- apply the techniques of dog training by adapting them to the specific role and individual requirements of the animal and its environment, more specifically to the socialisation process;
- select and utilize effectively appropriate equipment for the training of individual puppies eventually associated with aspects of the assistance dog's function;
- plan, supervise or directly deliver education programmes for puppy raisers;
- apply theoretical and practical knowledge of teaching and learning of adults and at times, children, and young people;
- contribute to regular reviews to assess the dog's temperament, behaviour and learnt skills and continually review the puppies progress and suitability for the programme; with respect of the puppies' welfare, apply different pain-free test techniques during the assessment;
- demonstrate the ability to assess the puppy raisers applicants; determine their motivation for taking on the role, identify any need for additional skills development and knowledge for the applicants to be successful in their application to volunteer with a puppy raising programme;

- evaluate the suitability of the physical and social environment of puppy raiser applicant with the puppy raising programme;
- identify puppy raisers ready to receive and be matched with a puppy that has been suitably assessed and is appropriate to their skill level;
- in collaboration with the puppy raiser, set a training plan for each puppy;
- identify and respond to the needs of puppy raisers for further information, training, and techniques;
- create a collaborative environment for the puppy raisers (e.g. classes, informal meetings);
- understanding differences in interacting with a dog for target audience and the purpose we are preparing them for; understand and explain the rules and regulations related to the accessibility of teams; demonstrate observation and analysis skills of interindividual and group relationships;
- demonstrate different communication techniques by adapting them to the public and the professional context, including colleagues, volunteers, and handlers;
- demonstrate knowledge of welfare principles enlisted in the present norm and provide accurate records that demonstrate their applications.

## 7 Dog care specialist (kennel)

A dog care specialist shall:

- demonstrate knowledge of the principles of dogs' anatomy, physiology, general pathology, and infectious and parasitic diseases and apply them to hygiene, sanitation, and infectious disease control;
- demonstrate knowledge of the principles of preventive parasite control, vaccination and prophylactic program and make sure they are applied;
- identify problem indicators with the behaviour and the health of the dog; more specifically, recognize changes in a dog that indicate health concerns and take appropriate action to alleviate these concerns: stool and urine monitoring, monitoring of body weight, and appropriate food selection;
- evaluate and adapt the material environment and the equipment of the kennel in respect of the WG2 welfare principles;
- demonstrate basic knowledge of training techniques;
- with respect of WG2 welfare principles, apply these techniques in relation to dog and puppies' handling for transport, exercise, basic veterinary treatments, and other everyday handling such as ear care, grooming, bathing, walking with a gentle leader, on the tread mill (or, in Holland alongside the bike) and wearing a muzzle when required;
- recognize signs of stress, changes in behaviour associated with the environment and adapt practices in handling and kennel enrichment to relieve stress;
- demonstrate a range of communication techniques by adapting them to other staff including peers, veterinarians, trainers, and instructors; adjust communication as needed to members of the public and volunteers who may or may not be dog professionals;