

7215.5 (a) During the first year following the successful training of each person-dog unit, and release from a guide dog training school of the trained person supplied with a guide dog, the school may retain title to the trained dog. During this probationary year, the school may enter into a contractual agreement with the user of the dog describing the conditions under which the user may maintain the status of legal custodian of the dog. During the probationary year, the school, acting in what it deems to be the best interest of the user, the dog, or the public, may temporarily or permanently resume possession of the dog.

(b) Within 15 days after the end of each fiscal year, each licensed school shall report to the board the following:

(1) The number of dog ownership titles transferred to dog users pursuant to this section during the calendar year.

(2) The number of title recoveries and repossessions made by the school pursuant to this section during the calendar year.

(3) The number, type, and amount of charges assessed for followup training, instruction, veterinary, or boarding services, pursuant to this section, which make a distinction between users who have acquired title to their dogs and users who have not acquired title.

(4) The views of the governing entity of the school as to any problems or concerns relative to compliance with the provisions of this section, along with recommendations for appropriate legislative or administrative changes commensurate with the purposes of this section.

(c) Immediately upon completion of the first year following the successful training referred to above, if the training school and the dog user are mutually satisfied with the operation of the person-dog unit, title to the dog shall be transferred to the user who is blind or visually impaired if the user so desires. Transfer of title shall be evidenced by a transfer of title agreement executed by both parties thereto. The school may retain an option to recover title and possession to the guide dog subject to conditions described in the transfer of title agreement. These conditions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) If in the school's opinion, the guide dog is being misused or neglected or mistreated by its user who is blind or visually impaired.

(2) If the user to whom the dog was furnished has ceased to use the dog as a guide and the dog is not too old to be retrained as a guide for another person who is blind or visually impaired.

(3) If, in the school's opinion, the dog is no longer a safe guide and the user refuses to cease using the dog as a guide after being requested by the school to cease this use.

(d) The guide dog school shall make no distinction as to the quality or extent of followup or supportive services available to its blind graduates based on whether they elect to acquire title to their dogs or allow title to remain with the school after the probationary year. The school may, however, make this distinction when assessing reasonable and appropriate charges for followup training, instruction, veterinary, or boarding services.

(e) No applicant for admission to a guide dog training school, nor any enrolled student, shall be required by the school prior to completion of his or her training to sign any instrument or to announce his or her intention regarding transfer of title of the dog from the school to himself or herself upon completion of the training and probation period.

(Amended by Stats. 2015, Ch. 430, Sec. 18. Effective January 1, 2016.)

7215.6 (a) In order to provide a procedure for the resolution of disputes between guide dog users and guide dog schools relating to the continued physical custody and use of a guide dog, in all cases except those in which the dog user is the unconditional legal owner of the dog, the following arbitration procedure shall be established as a pilot project.

(b) This procedure establishes an arbitration panel for the settlement of disputes between a guide dog user and a licensed guide dog school regarding the continued use of a guide dog by the user in all cases except those in which the dog user is the unconditional legal owner of the dog. The disputes that may be subject to this procedure concern differences between the user and school over whether or not a guide dog should continue to be used, differences between the user and school regarding the treatment of a dog by the user, and differences over whether or not a user should continue to have custody of a dog pending investigation of charges of abuse. It specifically does not address issues such as admissions to schools, training practices, or other issues relating to school standards. The

board and its representative are not parties to any dispute described in this section.

(c) The licensed guide dog schools in California and the board shall provide to guide dog users graduating from guide dog programs in these schools a new avenue for the resolution of disputes that involve continued use of a guide dog, or the actual physical custody of a guide dog. Guide dog users who are dissatisfied with decisions of schools regarding continued use of guide dogs may appeal to the board to convene an arbitration panel composed of all of the following:

- (1) One person designated by the guide dog user.
- (2) One person designated by the licensed guide dog school.
- (3) A representative of the board who shall coordinate the activities of the panel and serve as chair.

(d) If the guide dog user or guide dog school wishes to utilize the arbitration panel, this must be stated in writing to the board. The findings and decision of the arbitration panel shall be final and binding. By voluntarily agreeing to having a dispute resolved by the arbitration panel and subject to its procedures, each party to the dispute shall waive any right for subsequent judicial review.

(e) (1) A licensed guide dog school that fails to comply with any provision of this section shall automatically be subject to a penalty of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) per day for each day in which a violation occurs. The penalty shall be paid to the board. The license of a guide dog school shall not be renewed until all penalties have been paid.

(2) The penalty shall be assessed without advance hearing, but the licensee may apply to the board for a hearing on the issue of whether the penalty should be modified or set aside. This application shall be in writing and shall be received by the board within 30 days after service of notice of the penalty. Upon receipt of this written request, the board shall set the matter for hearing within 60 days.

(f) As a general rule, custody of the guide dog shall remain with the guide dog user pending a resolution by the arbitration panel. In circumstances where the immediate health and safety of the guide dog user or guide dog is threatened, the licensed school may take custody of the dog at once. However, if the dog is removed from the user's custody without the user's

concurrence, the school shall provide to the board the evidence that caused this action to be taken at once and without fail; and within five calendar days a special committee of two members of the board shall make a determination regarding custody of the dog pending hearing by the arbitration panel.

(g) (1) The arbitration panel shall decide the best means to determine final resolution in each case. This shall include, but is not limited to, a hearing of the matter before the arbitration panel at the request of either party to the dispute, an opportunity for each party in the dispute to make presentations before the arbitration panel, examination of the written record, or any other inquiry as will best reveal the facts of the disputes. In any case, the panel shall make its findings and complete its examination within 45 calendar days of the date of filing the request for arbitration, and a decision shall be rendered within 10 calendar days of the examination.

(2) All arbitration hearings shall be held at sites convenient to the parties and with a view to minimizing costs. Each party to the arbitration shall bear its own costs, except that the arbitration panel, by unanimous agreement, may modify this arrangement.

(h) The board may study the effectiveness of the arbitration panel pilot project in expediting resolution and reducing conflict in disputes between guide dog users and guide dog schools and may share its findings with the Legislature upon request.

(i) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2018, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, that is enacted before January 1, 2018, deletes or extends that date.

*(Amended by Stats. 2013, Ch. 333, Sec. 7. Effective January 1, 2014.
Repealed as of January 1, 2018, by its own provisions.)*