



GRAFTON DOG OBEDIENCE CLUB INC.

Tracking Trial Information, Rules and Guidelines for Competitors, Stewards, Tracklayers and Helpers

Rules

There are a number of unspoken rules for tracking trials. This probably varies from club to club but at Grafton Dog Obedience Club's trials, the following rules apply:

- We are very lucky to have the use of the property we track on. The property is a working cattle property. **ALL dogs on the property (no exceptions!) are to be on lead at all times**, whether around the camping area, being exercised, preparing to track, or at the completion of their track.
- **take particular care not to drop plastic bags or food wrappers**, either in the paddocks or around the camp, as these can kill cattle if eaten (which curious cattle tend to do).
- dogs are not permitted in the kitchen area of the camp.
- **if you track at our trial, you are also expected to assist at the trial**, either by acting as an "unknown" tracklayer; setting out or stewarding tracks; or helping out in the communal camp. An enormous amount of work goes into running a tracking trial (from setting up and running the camp, setting out tracks, transporting tracklayers, handlers and dogs to and from tracks, gathering firewood, running the kitchen, maintaining the toilet facilities, and packing up the camp). As a small country club it is impossible for us to run such a large trial without all trialers contributing.

General

- because of the large numbers of dogs tracking with us, our trials are conducted as 3 day trials (Friday, Saturday & Sunday). This requires helpers from Thursday late morning to set up the tracks for Friday afternoon and Saturday of the trial. If you are able to help on Thursday that is greatly appreciated as this is the most difficult day to organise sufficient helpers.
- Grafton Dog Obedience Club is proud of our reputation as a friendly club that welcomes visitors and treats all competitors as friends. At our tracking trials we encourage all competitors and helpers to join us for community meals in the camp kitchen. If you are able to contribute to the communal food supply, it is much appreciated. Helpers are also greatly appreciated at meal times. Our July trial in particular is extra special as we have a "Christmas in July" theme, where we enjoy a traditional Christmas dinner in the great Aussie outdoors.

We hope you will enjoy being part of our Grafton Dog Obedience Club trialing "family".

Before the trial

- get your entries to the Trial Secretary on time. Co-ordinating tracks to take into account all tracklayers, cross track layers, stewards, handlers and judges is an enormous task and it helps if the Trial Secretary has all entries in on time.
- if you are doing a TD1 or TD2 track (which has a known tracklayer - a tracklayer that is known to the dog), advise the Trial Secretary who your tracklayer will be. If you would prefer your dog

to track you (which is permissible for these 2 tests), advise the Trial Secretary and also advise who the handler will be. If you don't have a known person for your dog to track, or if you don't have anyone to handle your dog to find you, speak to the Trial Secretary who will arrange for either someone to meet and befriend your dog so they will be motivated to find the tracklayer, or, arrange for an experienced handler to handle your dog to find you.

When you arrive at the trial

- **check in with the Trial Secretary** and have a look at the timetable to see what chores you have been allocated (tracklaying, cross track laying, stewarding, handling) so that you can organise your own personal timetable.
- also **check with the Camp Coordinator** if help is needed with organising equipment, facilities etc at the campsite.

If you are setting out tracks

- where possible the Judge, Track Steward and the Tracklayer set out each track so that they are familiar with the track on the day of the trial.
- to set out a track you will need: flags; hammer; folder; paper for map drawing; pen/pencil; track setter's quick reference card; paddock map (these will be provided by the Trial Secretary). You will also need to carry a 2-way radio and snake kit for safety when setting out tracks.

The morning of the trial

- tracking trials are run to a strict timetable, so you will need to be punctual.
- **if you are competing**, get up early, 5.00 – 5.30 am, so you have time to walk and toilet your dog/s, grab a quick coffee/tea and a piece of toast and be ready at 6.00 am for equipment inspection. You will need to present your harness and lead to the Judge for approval. If you will be carrying a reward for your dog (food or toy), this will also need to be approved by the Judge. Food rewards must be no larger than 100 g and be carried in a sealed container. Food rewards or toys must be carried in a pocket or bum bag and must not be visible or audible during the running of the track and may only be given on completion of the track.
- **if you are tracklaying**, you will need to present your articles to the Judge for approval at the 6.00 am inspection time.
- **if you have an entire female dog on the grounds** (whether they will be tracking or not) they must be presented for vetting by the Vetting Officer every day of the trial at the 6.00 am inspection time.
- if you are tracklaying, stewarding or tracking your dog, check what time your track goes out. If you need to drive yourself to the start of the track, find out exactly where you need to go.
- be ready 10 – 15 minutes before you need to be at your track as you may have to drive (or be driven by the Steward) some distance to the track.

If you are tracklaying

- on the day of the trial you will lay the track only when advised by either the Track Steward, Judge or Trial Secretary (sometimes the trial can run late for various reasons and the time the track is to be laid may need to vary from the schedule).
- do not wear scented deodorant or perfume on the morning of the trial and do not smoke.
- have the exact number of articles required, which have been on your body for at least half an hour (many tracklayers sleep with the articles on them overnight) and which have been approved by the judge at the equipment inspection.
- have a backpack or similar to carry your waterproof ground sheet, bottle of water, tissues, reading material, etc. as you may have to wait for up to 2 hours depending on the track you are laying.
- collect a 2-way radio from the Trial Secretary or the Track Steward and ensure it is turned on and working correctly. This allows you to contact the Track Steward or Base Station if you encounter any problems when laying the track. It also gives you a means of contacting the Track Steward or Base Camp in the event of an emergency.
- collect a snake kit from the Trial Secretary or the Track Steward and carry it with you.
- carry a flag bag to put the flags in as you pick them up.
- leave the start flag in place, putting the first article next to it (except for TD7 and TD8 - the Track Steward will tell you what to do for a TD7 and TD8).
- count the flags as you pick them up, then you will know exactly where you are if there are flags missing.
- the position of articles is highlighted on the map and will be marked by a small brightly coloured ribbon on the track.
- if a flag is missing, don't go looking for it, remain on the track, using the map to guide you until you find the next flag. Only pick up flags that are in position, and only pick up flags that are down or moved if you can reach them without leaving the track. Never retrace your steps if you forget to pick up a flag or forget to drop an article where it is marked on the map. Use sighter trees, hills, logs, rocks, etc. marked on the map to help you if there are flags down or missing.
- if you encounter problems when laying the track, use your 2-way radio to call the Track Steward or Base Station for assistance.
- when you get to the 'hide', take the marker flags down, put your groundsheet down out of sight, put your flags (in their bag) on the far side of you and make yourself comfortable. Once it is time for the dog to commence working the track, lie/sit very still and DO NOT MOVE position for any reason once the dog is out on the track. Any slight movement from the tracklayer can actually disqualify the dog through no fault of either the dog or the handler.
- turn your radio off when it is time for the track to be judged. The only exception is if you are in danger (snakes, wild dogs, health emergency, etc). If you are in danger, use your 2-way radio to call for assistance and/or do whatever you need to do to ensure your safety.

If you are stewarding

The main role of the Track Steward is to act as an assistant to the Judge and ensure the smooth running of the track. It is advisable for the Track Steward to assist in setting out the track so they will be familiar with the track on the morning of the trial.

The Track Steward's duties are to:

- collect a 2-way radio from the Trial Secretary, turn it on and ensure it is working correctly. The 2-way radio is a means of contacting the tracklayer, Base Camp, and other trial officials.
- collect a snake kit from the Trial Secretary and carry it with you.
- ensure the tracklayer has a copy of the map, their articles, a bag for flags, 2-way radio, snake kit, groundsheet and/or anything else they may require in their role as tracklayer. The Track Steward watches as the tracklayer starts walking the track, making sure they leave the start flag plus an article at the start.
- ensure the tracklayer (including the cross track layer/s) starts laying the track on time (as per the trial timetable) and advise the Trial Secretary and handler if there is any change to the scheduled times. The Track Steward may need to pick the tracklayer up at camp and drive them to the start of the track.
- ensure the handler & dog are ready to start working the track at the scheduled time. The Track Steward may need to pick up the handler from camp and drive them to the start of the track.
- turn your 2-way radio off when judging is about to commence and turn it back on after the track has finished. However, safety is of utmost importance, so turn on and use your 2-way radio any time if necessary for safety.
- ensure that all flags (including the start flag); your 2-way radio; the tracklayer's 2-way radio; your snake kit and the tracklayer's snake kit are collected, returned to camp and signed back in when the track is completed.
- drive tracklayer, handler and dog back to camp if required.

After your test

Once you have finished tracklaying, stewarding or tracking your dog, you will either drive back to camp (or be driven by the Track Steward). You may have other tracks to lay, steward, or work (if you are competing with more than one dog).

At Grafton Dog Obedience Club's trials, when all the tracks for the morning have been run, we enjoy a big brunch together, followed by presentations.

On Fridays and Saturdays, we then have a brief break and head off to set out the tracks ready for following day's trial. On Sunday, following brunch and presentations, we all pitch in to help pack up the camp and head for home.

HAPPY TRACKING!
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