

LOWER JUMP HEIGHT OPTION IN AGILITY INTRODUCED BY THE KENNEL CLUB

A new lower height option for agility jumps is being introduced by the Kennel Club, effective from 1st July 2016, which will allow agility shows to include a lower height jump for each competition size.

For some time now, there has been a call for the introduction of an additional jump height of 55cm for large dogs (which has been popularly referred to amongst agility competitors as the 'fourth height'). There have also been representations to consider a further height to be introduced below the current 35cm small dog height. The decision to introduce a lower jump height option will allow for this to happen.

Representations made to the Kennel Club regarding jump heights have raised the opportunity to address issues for all heights of dog. In order to provide substantiated advice regarding the jump height debate, the Kennel Club has commissioned research to fully understand the impact of jump heights on dogs. This research is likely to take some considerable time before it is concluded and the findings made available to inform the debate.

Kathryn Symns, Kennel Club Canine Activities Executive, said: "We have listened to ongoing representations made by agility competitors to inform the introduction of the new lower height option, and this decision will allow shows to schedule this height at their discretion.

"It is important that any changes to the regulations do not detract from what is already on offer at agility shows, as many competitors believe that there are currently no issues associated with jump heights for their dogs, and therefore wish the status quo to be maintained.

"It is also imperative that show organisers retain the choice over what they schedule. This change allows for the new height, whilst competitors still have a choice of jump height which they believe to be suitable for their dog."

More details on the lower height option and a set of accompanying FAQs can be found at www.thekennelclub.org.uk/activities/agility/competitors-section-agility/.

The new Lower Height Option regulations are as follows:

H10(c).(11) Schedule

Definitions of classes. **Classes that will include the Lower Height Option must be specified together with whether there will be separate awards for each height.**

(Insertion in bold).

Insert new Regulation H(1)(A)4. and renumber accordingly.

All rounds of a Championship Agility Class and any Kennel Club heat, semi-final or final must be run at Full Height.

(Insertion in bold).

Insert new Regulation H(1)(A)7 and renumber accordingly.

Lower Height Option. Societies may offer the Lower Height Option to all dogs in that height category and may be offered at all grades. It is to be run as part of any Standard class as defined in these regulations and must be clearly identified in the schedule. When the Lower Height Option is scheduled a dog may only be entered at either the Full height or at the Lower Height and cannot compete at a different height in any class at that competition. For these purposes a competition shall be defined as all classes covered within the same schedule. Each relevant class will have two heights with a change part way through to higher/lower the jump heights and competitors must run at their entered height. The order in which the heights will run must be detailed on the ring cards/ring plan. There will be only one course walking at the start of the class. In a class where the Lower Height Option is available show organisers may offer one set of awards by combining the results of each height or may offer separate awards for each height category.

(Insertion in bold).

H(1)(A)8. Progression (was previously H(1)(A)6.)

Progression. Progression from each Grade will require one Agility win or three Jumping wins in standard classes at that grade, **at either Full height or the Lower Height Option**, except that progression from Grade 5 will require 3 wins at Grade 5, one of which must be an agility class. Progression from Grade 6 will require 4 wins at Grade 6, two of which must be agility classes. Results from Combined Classes will only count towards progression from the dog's current grade.

(Insertion in bold).

H(1)(A)10. Standard Classes (was previously H(1)(A)8.)

h. Championship Class. Open to dogs having qualified to compete in Grade 7 **which have had 4 wins at Full Height in either Grade 6 or Grade 7, at least 2 of which must be gained in agility classes.** To consist of 2 qualifying rounds of Standard Kennel Club Classes, 1 Agility Class and 1 Jumping Class and a final round of Agility to be held at the same Show.

(Insertion in bold).

H(1)(B)1. **Courses.**

c. No practice is allowed on the course save that competitors will be allowed to walk the course set at the height the dog is to negotiate without their dog(s) before the class begins. **Hurdles will be raised / lowered during the course walking time if multiple heights are offered within the same class.**

(Insertion in bold).

H(1)(B)3. **Obstacles**

a. **Hurdle**—The height of the hurdle must be 650mm (2ft 1.6ins) **(550mm (1ft 9.6ins) for Lower Height Option)** for Large Dogs, 450mm (1ft 5.7ins) **(350mm (1ft 1.75ins) for Lower Height Option)** for Medium Dogs and 350mm (1ft 1.75ins) **(250mm (9.8ins) for Lower Height Option)** for Small Dogs. Width: 1.219m (4ft) minimum. The top bar or plank must be easily displaced by the dog. A wall should have displaceable units on the top. The height of hurdles in special classes may be lower than those listed above, but the height must be included in the schedule.

(Insertions in bold).

These regulations will not apply to Kennel Club 'prestige events', at which there is a high value to the awards offered. Kennel Club prestige events are those held at Premier Shows, including heats for Crufts, Olympia or Eukanuba Discover Dogs, such as Crufts Singles, Crufts ABC etc.

In addition, schedules must be updated to include the following statement:

Insert new Regulation H(10)c.(12) and renumber accordingly.

Dog Agility is a competitive and physically strenuous activity. It is the responsibility of the owner / handler to ensure their dog is 'fit for function' and that they themselves are fit to take part. By signing the entry form you confirm that to the best of your knowledge your dog is fit and able to take part in Agility classes on the day of the show."

(Insertion in bold).