

Changes to Heelwork to Music Regulations for 2026

The Royal Kennel Club has approved the following changes to the regulations for Heelwork to Music.

The following amendment to the regulations increases the time frame between requesting a show licence to 6 months before the date of the show.

Amendment to regulations L2.a & L5

Regulation L2.a Application.

TO:

The application for a licence to hold a HTM competition must be made to the Secretary of The Royal Kennel Club, at least six ~~weeks~~ **months** before the proposed date of the competition, together with the appropriate licence fee.

(Insertions in bold. Deletions struck through)

(Effective 1 January 2026)

Regulation L5. Societies are required to apply for permission to hold Special Events.

TO:

Applications should be submitted to The Royal Kennel Club by email at least six ~~weeks~~ **months** before the start of any qualifying heats for the event.

(Insertions in bold. Deletions struck through)

(Effective 1 January 2026)

The below amendment to the regulation relates to practice rounds, allowing the dog to undertake the routine on a lead.

Amendment to regulations L12 & L13.d

Regulation L12

TO:

c. For the duration of the competition and including those in the exercise area, all dogs must be on a lead except when competing, **undertaking a practice round, when a lead may be used** or practising prior to competition.

(insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2026)

Regulation L13

TO:

Practice rounds are permitted at the judges' discretion and the judges' decision is final, provided their main purpose is to aid the dog's or handler's confidence and their experience of the working ring, and subject to the following:

- a. Where practice rounds are allowed, they must be available for all competitors in that class and must comply with the division entered.
- b. The time taken must not exceed the duration for routines at the relevant level.
- c. The use of toys which emit any noise, and the use of food are not permitted.
- d. The usual rules and etiquette for those who compete must be followed except that the handler may use as many cues as necessary to aid the dog, **the handler may attach a lead to the dog** and may touch the dog in a non-harmful and non-intimidating manner.
- e. Excessive exuberance from the handler or dog will not be permitted if the judge considers that it could interfere with the chances of winning of other dogs and handlers.

(insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2026)