



GUIDE FOR WORKING TRIAL  
**JUDGES**  
AND STEWARDS



**THE KENNEL CLUB**  
*Making a difference for dogs*



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# Introduction

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This guide is intended as a useful reference for those embarking on a judging career in Working Trials and to assist established judges in understanding their obligations to competitors, Trials Societies and the Kennel Club.

It is important that the information enclosed is read in conjunction with the Kennel Club Regulations, which always take precedence. The updated regulations are published every January in separate booklets for each activity, and full regulations are included in the Kennel Club Year Book published every July. Working Trial judges should read in particular the annual 'Working Trial and Bloodhound Trial Regulations' booklet or the section Regulation I - Kennel Club Working Trial Regulations in the Kennel Club Year Book.

These regulations apply to all judges whether domiciled in this country or overseas who officiate at Kennel Club licensed Trials. The references refer to appropriate Kennel Club Regulations or announcements in the Kennel Club Journal.

It should be noted that this book is intended as a guide to the relevant Kennel Club Working Trial Regulations.

# Chapter 1. Code of Best Practice for Judges

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## **Introduction**

The overall and stated objective of the Kennel Club is to promote in every way the general improvement of dogs and this objective also applies to judges.

The overall aim and objective of a judge at whatever level, from an Open to a Championship Trial, is to provide value for the time, training effort and money which the competitor puts into presenting their dog. Moreover, the decisions of Championship Judges in particular will ultimately affect the future development of Working Trials.

There is therefore an expectation that judges will be competent and trustworthy. Judging is not a right but a privilege. Judges should be respected by the competitor. To that end the following Code sets out the relevant aspects that judges should be capable of demonstrating.

## **Integrity**

- 1.1 Judges should act honestly and impartially when undertaking an appointment.
- 1.2 A dog should be judged on merit only according to the competition regulations. Judges should be prepared to provide a critique on judging.
- 1.3 Judges should conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the standing of a judge at all times whilst at a trial and in any other capacity which might have bearing on the interests of the canine world.
- 1.4 Judges are referred to the factors set out below which may be said to affect their standing and may result in exclusion from judging lists or future judging contracts or withdrawal from an agreed appointment;
  - 1.4.1 Criminal convictions
  - 1.4.2 Threatening behaviour at any time
  - 1.4.3 Misrepresenting or abusing authority
  - 1.4.4 Not judging in accordance with Kennel Club Rules and Regulations
  - 1.4.5 Harsh handling as a competitor or judge at any time
  - 1.4.6 Breach of Kennel Club Rules and Regulations
  - 1.4.7 Using the name of the Kennel Club in an unauthorised manner.

# Chapter 1. Code of Best Practice for Judges

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## **Age**

- 1.5 No new judging appointments to award Working Trial Certificates for the first time will be considered once a judge has attained the age of 75 years (at the time of fulfilling the appointment).

## **Health Guidelines**

- 1.6 Judges are expected to decline, or to withdraw from, an appointment which they cannot fulfil. The aim of the competition can only be fulfilled when the judging of dogs is carried out in a fully competent manner.
- 1.7 Ill health of various kinds can temporarily or permanently make it impossible for a person to complete a judging appointment according to the demands which are set forward in this Code of Best Practice. A Society or Club can, if necessary, either temporarily or permanently cancel the judging contract should it become apparent that the judge cannot appraise his/her own situation and can no longer fulfil the judging appointment.
- 1.8 Judges must be able to undertake the judging of the dogs with an obvious independence and in a confident and convincing manner. Judges must not at any time rely on others to assist with the main work of judging.
- 1.9 Judges must be capable of meeting the physical requirements of fulfilling the judging appointment thus should be sufficiently mobile to move around and judge the dogs from all aspects.
- 1.10 From the above it follows that a person with definite lessening of capabilities, and who is dependent on assistance or the presence of various forms of technical help eg mobility aids, may need to consider if he or she is capable of fulfilling a judging appointment in an adequate and satisfactory manner.
- 1.11 The Trial Organisers shall endeavour to establish that invited judges are able to fulfil their appointments.
- 1.12 As far as reasonably possible the Trial Organisers are responsible for ensuring that the aims of the trial are fulfilled and that the competitors receive the quality of judging that they deserve.

# Chapter 1. Code of Best Practice for Judges

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- 1.13 The Kennel Club has an overriding responsibility and may in individual cases either temporarily defer or permanently withdraw approval when the judge in question is considered not to have the necessary capabilities. That is not to say that any particular disability will preclude judging. A common sense approach needs to be adopted by both Trial Organiser and judge.

## **During Judging**

Judges should observe the following formalities when judging;

- 1.14 Judge all competing dogs in a confident, careful and consistent manner:
- 1.15 Conduct themselves in a courteous manner to all and concentrate fully on the dogs. It is inadvisable for judges to initiate or engage in a conversation initiated by a competitor whilst judging is in progress.
- 1.16 Dress in a conventional and acceptable fashion precluding them from being the centre of attention, or from causing any distress to the dog competing or its owner:
- 1.17 Judges should not smoke, consume alcoholic drinks or use or activate a mobile telephone when judging. Mobile telephones should be switched to silent or turned off when judging

## **General**

The following are general requirements for judges:

- 1.18 Absolute integrity in order to judge honestly and impartially, and to judge dogs solely on their merit.
- 1.19 A suitable temperament and sufficient stamina to cope with what can be a physically and mentally demanding task.
- 1.20 To judge in a customary fashion.

# Chapter 1. Code of Best Practice for Judges

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## **Working Trials**

### **Judges should have:**

- 1.21 A comprehensive knowledge of the sport to be judged and its Regulations.
- 1.22 An understanding of Kennel Club Regulation 1 paragraph - Judging.
- 1.23 Qualifications to judge a Championship and Open Working Trial, Regulation 1 paragraph - Approval of Judges.

### **Summary**

- 1.24 Judges should have a comprehensive knowledge of competition procedures and etiquette. It is the responsibility of the judges to keep abreast and up to date with developments in such matters.
- 1.25 Judges should be familiar with the Kennel Club Rules and Regulations and the Guide for Judges as amended from time to time and to keep up to date with all relevant regulations governing the competition and judging.
- 1.26 Judges should give value to the competitor and ultimately the activity in question. Judges should act at all times with honesty and integrity and impartiality.
- 1.27 The Kennel Club reserves the right to observe a judge.

## Chapter 2. Invitation to Judge

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The soliciting of judging appointments is not acceptable.

### **Judges at all Trials should:**

- 2.1 Ensure that they have received a written invitation from the Trials Society.
- 2.2 Confirm that they are available and are able to comply with any conditions laid down by the Trials Society.
- 2.3 Confirm eligibility and acceptance of the appointment in writing.
- 2.4 Ensure that the acceptance is followed by written confirmation of the appointment by the Trials Society.
- 2.5 For each stage of the three part contract, email confirmation is acceptable.
- 2.6 The invitation, acceptance and confirmation form the basis of a contract between the judge and the Trials Society. If a judge has been invited to award Kennel Club Working Trial Certificates the contract is not finalised until the Kennel Club has approved the appointment.
- 2.7 It is not advisable to accept an appointment for the same stake in close proximity by virtue of time or location. See the relevant I Regulations for any mandatory time limits.
- 2.8 A person may be approved to judge a maximum of two Championship Working Trial Certificate Stakes in each calendar year commencing 1st January, but if the two trials are for the same stake, then there must be a 6 month interval between the last day of each trial.

## Chapter 3. Invitation to Award Challenge Certificates

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- 3.1 When a judge is invited to award Working Trial Certificates the Trials Society will ask the prospective judge to complete a Kennel Club questionnaire 18 months prior to the trial. This will detail their judging and competition experience. This will be sent to the judge and when completed will be considered by the committee of the host Club/Society. If the questionnaire is approved by the society, it will be forwarded for consideration by the Board of the Kennel Club. Approval will either be granted or refused.
  
- 3.2 It should be noted that approval to award Kennel Club Working Trial Certificates is the sole prerogative of the Kennel Club and is considered for each individual appointment. Decisions on approval are based on the following criteria:-
  - 3.2.1 The completed questionnaire for the relevant stake (PD/TD).
  - 3.2.2 The length and depth of judging experience.
  - 3.2.3 The number of appointments for both Open and Championship Trials.
  - 3.2.4 The proposed judge's overall judging experience.
  - 3.2.5 All other circumstances that are considered appropriate.

## Chapter 4. Before the Trial

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- 4.1 The Trials Society will contact the judge with details of the entry in the Stake.
- 4.2 The judge at this point should obtain from the Trials Manager enough information to enable him/her to set his/her test, select appropriate articles and generally prepare him/herself for the Trial.
- 4.3 The judge should provide sufficient track patterns, drawn to scale, giving both tracklayers and judges confidence in each other's ability and removing any confusion.
- 4.4 The judge should enquire of the Trials Manager the time at which he should arrive and the planned time for the commencement of judging.
- 4.5 It is important at this time that the judge plans his/her route to the Trial to avoid arriving late.
- 4.6 All judges must be aware of the I Regulations in respect of a judge being unable to honour an appointment. If such an eventuality arises, the judge should take the following action:
  - 4.6.1 Notify the Society immediately.
  - 4.6.2 Confirm the reason in writing in order that a report can be made to the Kennel Club.

## Chapter 5. Setting the Test

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- 5.1 When setting the test a full and complete understanding of the Rules and Regulations is required. The Regulations must be strictly adhered to and tests must comply with the rules as they appear in the current Kennel Club Year Book.
- 5.2 It is advisable for judges to re-acquaint themselves with the relevant regulations for the stake to be judged prior to setting the test on every occasion that an invitation to judge is received.
- 5.3 The test should be set with regard to the stake to be judged ensuring that a progression can be clearly observed from CD to TD/PD.
- 5.4 A golden rule is to set a test that you can judge and not put yourself in a position where you cannot justify your actions.

# Chapter 6. At the Trial

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## **At the Trial all judges must:**

- 6.1 Arrive in ample time for their judging appointment – it is discourteous to keep the host Society/Club and competitors waiting.
- 6.2 Report to the Trial Manager to collect judging sheets, if supplied, together with any other papers, instructions and special requirements.
- 6.3 Arrive at the venue in good time to check the land and meet with their stewards.
- 6.4 Deposit with the Trials Manager a set of track and search articles.
- 6.5 The judge will decide how he or she wishes the stake to be organised, and the judge should discuss this with the stewards.
- 6.6 If judging the control/agility section, allow time to check on the safety aspects of any equipment to be used, and that their size conforms with the regulations.
- 6.7 Take competitors details and brief them in a clear and concise manner. Give competitors their marks on completion of each section of judging.
- 6.8 Behave at all times in a manner that will command respect.
- 6.9 At the conclusion of the Trial the judge should express his/her thanks to the Tracklayers, Stewards, Trials Manager and other helpers.

## **Judging the test**

- 6.10 When judging do not make “snap” decisions; study the situation, take account of all the circumstances and take a fair, reasonable and moderate view on what has occurred and how you will deal with it.
- 6.11 Judges should be prepared to make a judgement on an incident which they did not foresee. Remain calm and take sufficient time to reach a decision that you can justify to yourself and to others who may require an explanation.
- 6.12 Have a clear view and understanding of the rules and regulations and how and when to apply them. Always have a copy of the current Kennel Club Year Book available for reference when required.

# Chapter 6. At the Trial

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## **Judging the dogs**

- 6.13 These listed items are intended to assist and enable judges to appreciate their obligation to competitors, Trials Societies and the Kennel Club:
  - 6.13.1 Judges should concentrate solely on the stake they are judging.
  - 6.13.2 Judges should adopt a system that tests every dog in a similar manner.
  - 6.13.3 Judges must judge in accordance with the Kennel Club Regulations (I).
  - 6.13.4 Judges should be aware of the number of dogs to be judged and the conditions and time available, and pace the speed of judging accordingly, but without prejudicing the standard of the stake.
  - 6.13.5 Judges should not wait unduly for competitors who are late reporting for a stake as this would delay the test for the following competitors.
  - 6.13.6 Judges may dismiss from the stake any dog if, amongst other things, it is likely to cause suffering to the dog if it continues competing. The dismissal should be reported to the Trials Manager.
  - 6.13.7 It is usual for judges to allow a dog to be withdrawn from competition provided the Trials Manager is notified.
  - 6.13.8 All awards made by the judge at a Working Trial must be made in accordance with the agreed scale of points. Equal placings are prohibited; where there is an equality of marks, the award must be decided either by a run-off exercise(s) where all parties are present, or where all parties involved are not present, the order shall be decided at the discretion of the judge.
  - 6.13.9 Judges should give competitors their marks at the end of the nosework, C and A and Patrol sections before the competitor leaves the test area.

## **Whilst officiating Judges should not:**

- 6.14 Smoke at any time. Judges should request their stewards/tracklayers refrain from smoking at any time whilst competitors are in the vicinity and dogs are working or about to work.
- 6.15 Consume or have available alcoholic drinks.
- 6.16 Engage in conversation with anyone other than the steward, tracklayer; Trials Management or competitor.
- 6.17 Mobile phones should be switched off whilst judging.

## Chapter 7. After the Trial

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### **Records.**

- 7.1 It is important for all judges that they keep records of all their judging experience. This is of particular relevance to those hoping, at some future date, to be invited to award Kennel Club Working Trial Certificates. It is a requirement of the Kennel Club when being asked to award Working Trial Certificates for the first time that judges complete a questionnaire detailing their experience. Accuracy in completing this questionnaire is essential and the judge signs to that effect. Therefore it is beneficial to retain a marked catalogue from each appointment to assist with the completion of the questionnaire.
- 7.2 If at any time this information is misplaced the appropriate Trial Managers can be contacted or in the case of Championship Trials, it may be produced from the records held by the Kennel Club.
- 7.3 It is worth noting that the Kennel Club produces an inexpensive Judges Record Book that can be obtained from the Kennel Club Publications Department.
- 7.4 The Kennel Club considers it a matter of courtesy to Competitors that judges write a critique on their placed dogs and send this to the specialist dog papers or website in an agreed form. It may be that this is part of the judging contract agreed with the Society.

## Chapter 8. Overseas Judges and British Judges Officiating Overseas

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- 8.1 Judges from overseas officiating in this country must judge in all respects in the same general manner as is expected of judges resident in the UK. Overseas judges judging at Kennel Club licensed Trials should note that they must judge to the Kennel Club Regulations.
- 8.2 The suitability of overseas judges to judge at Kennel Club licensed Trials will be assessed in the same way as for judges resident in the UK. To assist judges from overseas, inviting societies are required to supply them with:
  - 8.2.1 A copy of the relevant Kennel Club Regulations and
  - 8.2.2 A copy of this guide.
- 8.3 By the same token, British judges are reminded when judging overseas that they must conform to the rules, regulations and conventions of the host country. Judging must be undertaken on the basis of the regulations that are recognised in that country.
- 8.4 Overseas judges who are not endorsed by the relevant Kennel Club of their own country will not normally be approved to judge in the UK.

# Chapter 9. Stewarding at Working Trials

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## Getting Involved

- 9.1 Every variety of dog competition needs stewards and, although their work is carried out voluntarily, Working Trials simply could not take place without their assistance. There are no specific qualifications necessary to become a steward and, as such, stewarding is an ideal starting point for those people keen to become more involved in trials management or the dog scene in general.
- 9.2 If you have never undertaken any stewarding and would like to try, most Club Secretaries or Trials Managers are only too glad of an offer of help and will put you in touch with an experienced steward to "learn the ropes".
- 9.3 It is also worth trying to attend a Stewarding Seminar at an early stage. Many clubs run these and they are usually advertised on the Working Trials Info website.
- 9.4 A good working knowledge of Kennel Club rules and regulations is most useful, but you do not need to be an expert in these matters by any means, as the interpretation of rules and regulations lies in the hands of the trials management and judge.

# Chapter 10. Types of Steward

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- 10.1 The appointment of several stewards, all fulfilling different duties, is essential to a well coordinated and enjoyable Working Trial. One person can, however, perform several of the stewarding functions listed below:-

## **Control & Agility Stewards**

- 10.1.1 A caller steward should clearly issue commands as instructed by the judge and assist the judge during the agility exercises.
- 10.1.2 A scribe should pay close attention to the judge and make careful note of every point the judge indicates has been lost.
- 10.1.3 A stay steward(s) should be appointed to observe the stay tests.

## **Tracklayers**

- 10.2 Tracklayers have to be appointed to lay the track to the pattern provided by the judge. It is recommended that a Chief Tracking Steward is appointed to coordinate the work of the tracklayers.

## **Search Steward**

- 10.3 A steward should position the articles for the search in accordance with the judge's instructions.

## **Patrol Dog Stake Stewards**

- 10.4 Experienced stewards with thorough knowledge of all types of Working Trials are required for the PD Stake patrol section.

# Chapter 11. Equipment

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- 11.1 Different societies have different ideas about what should be provided for their judges and stewards. However, a well organised steward can pre-empt shortages of useful items by always carrying their own equipment to all their appointments. Useful items include:-
  - 11.1.1 A clipboard.
  - 11.1.2 Pens and pencils. (Remember that ball-point pens do not always work in the rain or when it is cold!).
  - 11.1.3 A reliable watch, preferably with a stopwatch facility.
  - 11.1.4 A notepad.
  - 11.1.5 Everyone should ensure that they are suitably dressed for a day's work in the open air and be prepared for changes in the weather during the course of the day.
  - 11.1.6 In addition to the above, the Control and Agility Steward should also carry a tape measure and pegs for marking out the long jump and scale.

## Chapter 12. Before the Trial

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- 12.1 It is essential that all stewards are fully briefed by the judge.
- 12.2 The judge may consider it appropriate to provide plans of test and heel work patterns to be used in the control exercises. If a plan is not provided, the steward should make sufficient notes to ensure that each competitor is stewarded in the same manner.
- 12.3 Ensure that the area being used for the control exercises is free of potentially harmful hazards, such as fragments of broken glass, bottle tops, etc.
- 12.4 Ensure that any markers required by the judge for the control exercises are correctly positioned in accordance with the plan or briefing.
- 12.5 A Scribe must be aware how the judge will indicate that marks have been gained or lost.
- 12.6 The control and agility steward should ensure that they know exactly where the judge requires them to stand for each element of the test.
- 12.7 The judge will provide the tracklayers with a thorough briefing, together with track patterns and articles. Tracklayers should ensure that they are in no doubt about the placing of articles, alternative track patterns and overall and minimum distances. Tracklaying requires a lot of walking and demands considerable expertise.
- 12.8 Tracklayers should obtain sufficient articles for the day and ensure that they have "start" and "marker" poles.

## Chapter 12. Before the Trial

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- 12.9 The judge should provide the search steward with a copy of the search plan. The judge should annotate the plan with the positions of the articles, method of placing, fouling, wind direction etc.
- 12.10 The search steward should ensure that they have all necessary equipment such as the search articles and a bag (not transparent) for used articles and the four marker poles.

## Chapter 13. During the Trial

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- 13.1 If the control and agility steward is required by the judge to issue the control work commands, they should do so in a loud and clear voice. When heelwork commands are being given, the pace should be indicated before the command, to ensure that competitors have no doubt what they are being asked to do.
- 13.2 If the control and agility steward is required to brief the competitor on the sendaway exercise, ensure that the directions given are clear and concise. The competitor should be briefed well clear of the sendaway point with the dog in a position which will not compromise its chances. Once the competitor has been briefed, the steward should retire to a position which will allow the dog a clear view of the handler; and should not do anything which may distract or confuse the dog during the exercise.
- 13.3 Competitors for the stay tests should be lined up and made ready as soon as possible. It should be ascertained beforehand whether the judge wishes the dogs to be in the same order as that on the judge's score sheets.
- 13.4 Stay stewards are often appointed to officiate at the stay exercises only, but the necessity for a full briefing is still important. The judge should coordinate activities and brief all stay stewards, who should be in no doubt as to how their stay cards should be completed. They should also be directed to write their names on the cards. It is vital that completed stay cards are not mislaid.
- 13.5 If a dog breaks a stay, the steward must draw the judge's attention to the situation in order to allow the judge to decide on a course of action.
- 13.6 The stay steward should note all movements of the dogs they are watching and report to the judge after the exercise. It is the judge's responsibility to award marks for the exercise.
- 13.7 During the search, the search steward should stand by the judge, but should only comment when specifically asked to do so.
- 13.8 During the track, the tracklayer should stand by the judge, but should only comment when specifically asked to do so.
- 13.9 The tracklayers and search steward should not discuss the test articles with competitors, nor should the test articles be shown to competitors unless specifically directed by the judge.

## Chapter 14. After the Trial

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- 14.1 The tracklayer and search stewards should collect any unrecovered articles and marker poles.
- 14.2 The judge should ensure that all judging sheets are returned promptly to the Trials Manager on completion of judging.



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