



PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO KENNEL CLUB RULES & REGULATIONS G – OBEDIENCE

To allow the removal of “Out of Sight Stays” and increase safety for the lower classes

At The Kennel Club Obedience Liaison Council [KCOLC] meeting which was held on 6 February 2020, the council members were advised by the Chairman of the KCOLC that from a litigation point of view the American Kennel Club had already done so, and the Australian National Kennel Club was planning, to remove out of site stays from their schedules of exercises. The office contacted both organisations and the information was confirmed in their replies. The primary reason for this was because of the higher potential for litigation against individuals and The Kennel Club, in the event of a “dangerous dog” type incident. Prior to the meeting it was confirmed by Heidi Lawrence, head of The Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme (GCDS) that any out of site elements to exercises will be removed from all levels, the changes coming into effect in March 2020. The GCDS made their changes after seeking external legal advice from Trevor Cooper, dog law expert.

Based on the 1871 Dogs Act and a subsequent legal case, Trevor confirmed that **‘legally it has been stated that if a dog is not in sight of the owner / handler and in the absence of positive evidence to the contrary it is not under control’**. He also confirmed that a dog that is not under control has not committed an offence unless there is a problem. There are different ways you can interpret this based on a variety of scenarios.

At the February KCOLC meeting lengthy discussions took place on the stays issue and as a consequence it was agreed by all that the removal of out of sight stays principle be adopted. The minute on this item is as below

1. Having considered the matter carefully, and in view of serious concerns regarding safety and welfare and the legal implications, the Council wished to recommend that out of sight stays be discontinued as soon as possible, and removed from the list of exercises.
2. With regard to other stay exercises where the dog remained in sight of the handler, it recommended that with immediate effect all handlers should be required to stand sideways on to their dogs, not with their backs to them, so that they would be in view of the handler at all times.
3. In view of the seriousness of the issue, the Council was unanimous in recommending that the matter be considered by the Activities Committee and/or the Board as a matter of priority. Any necessary amendments to G Regulations, and adjustments to points, may be addressed subsequently.

Details of the proposal are set out below.

G(A) 5. Introductory No change

G(A) 6. Pre-Beginners b. The detailed tests will be:

(4) Sit one minute, **dog remaining on lead**. Handler in sight 10 points

(5) Down two minutes, **dog remaining on lead**. Handler in sight 20 points

G(A) 7. Beginners b. The detailed tests will be:

(4) Sit one minute, **dog remaining on lead**. Handler in sight 10 points

(5) Down two minutes, **dog remaining on lead**. Handler in sight 20 points

G(A) 8. Novice No change.

G(A) 9. Class A. b. The detailed tests will be

(4) Sit 2 minutes, handler in sight 20 points

(5) Down 3 minutes, handler ~~out of~~ in sight 30 points

G(A) 10. Class B. b. The detailed tests will be:

(4) Sit 2 minutes, handler ~~out of~~ in sight 20 points

(5) Down 4 minutes, handler ~~out of~~ in sight 30 points

G(A) 11. Class C. d. The detailed tests will be:

(5) Sit 2 minutes, handler ~~out of~~ in sight 20 points

(6) Down 5 minutes, handler ~~out of~~ in sight 50 points

G(C) 4. Tests. h. Stays in ALL classes The Judge or Steward will direct handlers to positions in the ring. The command 'Last Command' will be given and handlers should then instantly give their final command to their dogs. Any further commands or signals to the dogs after this 'Last Command' will be penalised. Handlers will then be instructed to leave their dogs and walk to positions indicated until ordered to return to them. These are group tests and all dogs must compete together, but where this is impracticable at any show, the class may be equally divided but the judging for the groups must be consecutive. *The stay ring shall be large enough to cater for the largest expected attendance for each class.*

All stays - Upon leaving, the handler must observe their own dog at all times.

For stays that are carried out on lead (Introductory Class, Pre-Beginners and Beginners) - where dogs are to remain on lead, the lead must be at least 1.8m (6ft) in length and must be kept loose at all times. The handler will be instructed to leave the dog in the sit or down position and then to leave the dog to the length of the lead. Once reaching the full extent of the lead, the handler to remain facing them or turned sideways onto them (Handlers choice) the dog must remain in constant view of the handler at all times. Upon reaching the end of the lead, the handler must drop the lead to the floor and place their foot fully on the lead. Upon the command to return, the handler may release the foothold upon the commencement of returning to the dog, but shall not pick up the lead until the exercise has finished.

For Stays carried out off the lead, - The handler will be instructed to leave the dog in the sit or down position and then the handler to go were directed. The approximate distance the dog must be left shall be 4-6m. The handler to remain facing the dog or turned sideways onto them (at the discretion of the judge) the dog must remain in constant view of the handler at all times. Upon the instruction of "Test Finished" the handler must attach the lead to the dogs' collar before breaking the exercise

Class A, Class B and Class C – The handler will be instructed to stand sideways on to the dog. When turned sideways on to the dog the handler may only use their peripheral vision and shall not engage with direct eye contact with the dog at any time throughout the test

G(C) 4. Tests. h. Stays (3) All Classes: When a handler has more than one dog present in the same set of stays, the dogs ~~may~~ **must** be placed together on the left-hand side of the handler, or on either side of the handler; at the choice of the handler. It should be noted that the dogs must be placed apart with a reasonable space between them. At the conclusion of the stays, the handler should return to the same position they were in at the commencement of the test before the end of the test is indicated.

Presented by Robert Harlow
October 2020