

1st September, 2013



**OBEDIENCE, TRACKING &
ENDURANCE COMMITTEE**

**A GUIDE FOR
RALLY OBEDIENCE
STEWARDS**

Duties of the Steward

Depending on a number of criteria, including class, judge's preference, availability of personnel at the host club etc, there can be between one and three stewards per ring. There are typical roles for each steward but it is up to individual judges to decide how they wish to allocate duties on the day.

The Steward's job is to ensure the ring runs smoothly in all aspects. They:

- Assist the Judge to make this happen by being in the right place at the right time, ready to carry out all instructions.
- Assist the Handler by being friendly, understanding, unobtrusive and considerate.
- Assist the Dog by being in the background and making sure there is a smooth flow from one exercise to the next.

A well-run ring is a pleasure to judge and to compete in, even if, as is sometimes inevitable, things go pear-shaped for the handler and the dog.

General things to remember

All trial officials, including Stewards, must be financial members of DOGS Victoria.

No matter at what level you are stewarding, some things never change:

1. It is important to be familiar with the current Rally Obedience Rules.
2. Arrive on time, usually at least an hour before judging time.
3. Advise the Trial Secretary that you have arrived and find out for which Judge you are stewarding. Ask to be introduced to the Judge if you don't know him/her.
4. Advise the Judge you are there and offer to assist in setting up their ring. Most Judges like to set up early and then have refreshments, other times they leave setting up until just prior to judging. It is up to you to be available when needed.
5. At some stage, usually at or soon after setting up, the Judge will give clear instructions as to how they want things done. It may be confusing if you are inexperienced, so make sure you ask questions if you aren't sure.
6. The Judge is responsible for handing their completed score sheets to the Trial Secretary.
7. Wear suitable clothing, appropriate for your position and the weather – be prepared for all conditions.

Running the Ring

1. Your Judge will advise you about the conduct of your specific ring on the day. Even if you are experienced, listen well as each Judge may do things differently, but all within the Rules.
2. Your position(s) will be explained – where the Judge wants you to stand, i.e. during and between exercises. Avoid unnecessary moving about.
3. Don't let people come up and distract you. If a handler wishes to speak to you, ask them to wait if you are needed during judging.

The following are the duties which will need to be executed by the steward(s) allocated to the ring. It will depend on how many stewards are available whether the duties will be divided as per the suggested categories.

Assembly Steward

- The primary responsibility of the assembly steward is to ensure that the next dog to be judged is immediately available when the judge indicates that he/she is ready. As soon as the judge begins judging the dog in the ring, this steward calls the next dog and ensures the handler is at ringside before the dog in the ring has completed their run. This steward has a clipboard list of dogs in Catalogue order.
- Dogs must be judged in catalogue order to the extent that it is practical to do so. If the dog listed next in the catalogue is not at ringside, the steward should call the next dog in order. It is the handler responsibility to be present and ready when their number is called.
- The steward should report any absentees to the judge.
- Exhibitors may make requests for special consideration, such as asking to be judged out of catalogue order. Any request of this nature must be directed to the judge. This situation can occur when handlers have more than one dog competing and when Obedience Trials are run concurrently with Rally Obedience Trials.
- Dogs can only be withdrawn during judging **with permission of the Judge**. If a handler approaches with this request, ask them to wait until you can relay it to the Judge, preferably between dogs and not during judging an exercise.

Ring Steward

- The steward will receive specific instructions from the judge as to what will be required.
- The judge may ask the ring steward to select the next Score Sheet from the clipboard and to hold the judge's board during judging.
- The steward will ensure that the class, proper armband number, and breed of dog are entered correctly on the sheet, as well as the jump height of the dog, if applicable. The ring steward may be asked to check that the scores on the worksheet have been added correctly. If an error is detected, the steward will bring it to the attention of the judge, who will enter any corrected score and time on the judge's score sheet.
- The ring steward will post the scores at ringside as each dog and handler team finishes the course and will often be required to hand the Individual Score Sheet to competitors who have finished their run.

- In Rally Advanced and Excellent Classes, it is the responsibility of the ring steward to take the dog lead at the start of the course and to return the lead as the team completes the “Finish” sign but before they leave the ring. The judge will indicate where the lead is to be placed, often on the exit gate post.

- The ring steward may also be responsible for the setting of jumps for dogs in the Rally Advanced and Excellent Classes. This information will be in the clipboard.

Time Steward

- The steward will receive specific instructions from the judge as to what will be required.

- The time steward will accurately time each dog. (Any tied scores for placeholders will be split by time.)

- The steward will use the stopwatch supplied by the judge.

- The time steward is positioned in a place specified by the judge. When the judge gives the order “Forward”, the time steward starts the stopwatch and stops it when the dog and handler cross the Finish station. Times are reported immediately to the ring steward and/or judge after each dog completes the course.

Honor Steward

- The steward will receive specific instructions from the judge as to what will be required.

- The honor steward will monitor the honoring dog in Rally Excellent. This dog is placed into either a sit or drop stay and the steward watches the dog and handler to make sure they maintain the stay during the course run of the next handler and dog team. The rules require that the honoring team is carefully scrutinized for the complete run of the dog and handler completing the course.

- The judge will determine where the steward and each dog and handler will be stationed.

- As the Judge says Forward for the dog to be judged the Honor Steward says “Leave your Dog” to the honoring Handler. The Honor Steward makes sure that the Handler stands at the end of their 2 metre lead. As the judged dog and Handler pass the finish line the Honor Steward will say “Exercise Finished” to the honoring team.

- The judge will ask the Steward whether or not the Honor dog maintained the “stay” position throughout the period when the next dog was being judged around the course.