



OBEDIENCE, TRACKING & ENDURANCE  
COMMITTEE

A GUIDE FOR OBEDIENCE STEWARDS

## **OBEDIENCE STEWARD'S WORKSHOP 2011**

A Steward is a very useful and essential person, a good Steward is a treasure, a great Steward is even better.....

In Victoria we usually have only one Steward per ring, and we need well trained people to do the job

### **Duties of the Steward**

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 do go pear-shaped for the handler and the dog.

### **General things to remember**

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

1. It is a good idea to be familiar with the current Obedience Rules, especially the Glossary at the front which applies to all levels, and then with the Class you are assisting in
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 their ring up. 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 setting up, the Judge will give clear instructions as to how they want things done, it may be confusing if you are inexperienced, so0 make sure you ask questions if you aren't sure
6. After judging is completed, usually you will add up your board and compare totals with the Judge's totals, whilst the Judge is responsible for completing their scores correctly, an extra mind is a useful double-check
7. The Judge is responsible for handing their completed score sheets to the Trial Secretary

8. Wear suitable clothing, appropriate for your position and the weather, comfortable footwear, sunscreen. and be prepared for all conditions
9. And, of course, make sure you are a financial member of DOGS Victoria, as all who officiate in rings at events must be

## 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 – where the Judge wants you to stand, i.e. during and between exercises, avoid unnecessary moving about, staying by the table in quiet moments is best
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
4. Exhibit numbers – make sure only one number is visible and that it is the correct number for that dog
5. Check that the handler is not wearing a bum-bag, or carrying a toy or food. Rewards must be left some metres from the ring and never on the table
6. Some handlers carry vital medication which they may bring into the ring and it must be placed on the table in a sealed container
7. 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
8. Unless otherwise directed, leads should be placed on the table
9. Always make sure when taking something from a handler, i.e, lead, dumbbell, articles, that you are on the handler's right so you don't lean over the dog
10. Some inexperienced dogs can be very concerned about their leads being taken by a stranger so do this discreetly
11. All dogs must enter and leave the ring on a lead
12. If a dog fouls the ring the handler is responsible for picking up but you may be asked to fetch a scoop, etc to speed things up.
13. The Judge's board is for the Judge and no-one else should write on it, but you should write up the steward's board, between exercises if the judge agrees, and definitely before the next dog enters.
14. This board should remain on the table or outside the ring for people to peruse

15. Have the next dog ready when the current one is almost finished. It is best if they are not hovering right outside the gate, as long as you know where they are, away in shade if necessary
16. Handlers should advise if they are competing in more than one ring and your steward's board be marked to remind you of this, perhaps with an asterisk.
17. If a handler is not available and not actually competing in another ring, they should be called three times by the Steward and marked absent if the third call is not answered. However, most Judges ask to be informed before the third call is made and the dog marked absent.
18. If a handler looks like not being available, warn the next one that they may be required early so they have time to prepare themselves. Judges usually understand when a handler is called earlier than expected but it is the duty of handlers to be ready and there should be no undue delays in judging.
19. You will invite each handler into the ring when appropriate. Check with your Judge beforehand whether they want you to tell the handler where to take position and if the Judge wishes to be introduced to each handler
20. The handler must wait for the Judge to tell them when to remove lead, hand over dumbbell, etc.
21. Optional Exercises – Novice, Open and Utility have optional exercises, it is usual for and thoughtful of handlers to come and advise their options before judging starts. Generally options are noted on the Ring Board and the Steward advises the Judge before commencing judging each dog.
22. When a dog finishes its individual exercises, return the lead to the handler as soon as possible

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**STEWARDED IN THE VARIOUS CLASSES**

Some things you will have to remember, but always listen to the Judge on the day: Duties are mentioned here as they occur for the first time, many things apply to all levels, so please read all notes and not just the Class you are concerned with.

**COMMUNITY COMPANION DOG**

This class moves quickly as there are not many exercises. This is an introduction to trialling for most handlers/dogs so you need to be patient, explain things to some handlers and keep it moving.

The only Steward involvement is being a post in Figure 8 and taking the lead for the Recall and Stay Exercises. Remember to take the lead discreetly

Being a Post – this involves standing on a marker placed by the Judge, hands folded across the chest and not moving until the Figure 8 is finished. Make sure you have clean clothes with pockets empty of tasty things which might attract a dog.

You will be asked to watch the dog carefully from a designated position whilst the Stand For Examination is done, be alert, watch the feet and nothing else and be able to tell the judge which, if any, feet moved and how many times.

Be careful listening to Judge’s instructions for the Stays as these inexperienced dogs can be an unknown quantity. The Judge may ask you to tell the handlers to Return, speak up if you do.

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**NOVICE**

You will take the lead at the starting peg at the beginning of judging each dog and maybe a dumbbell too. Remember, beginner dogs are fond of their leads and dumbbells.

Make sure you take the dumbbell by an end to avoid leaving your scent on the shank.

Make sure you are ready at your Figure 8 position when required

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**OPEN**

Lead collected at the post, also a dumbbell. You will need to advise the Judge if the dog is doing the Broad Jump option so that it can be set to width before the dog enters the ring

The Steward usually assists setting jumps, the Judge will instruct you re what he /she wants in this regard

Stays are out of sight here, again listen to the instructions. A second Steward may be used here also if it is a big class. Make sure you have a functioning stop watch, many Stewards bring their own, the Judge will have one or the Club should supply. You take the time from when the Judge orders Leave/Leave Your Dogs and about 15 seconds before the time is up; assemble the Handlers in returning order so you are ready to leave the hide exactly when time is up.

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**UTILITY**

This class is a busy one as there is a lot to do. The Handlers will bring Scent Discrimination articles and maybe gloves to the table.

Before handling the articles, take out one of each and place it in receptacle provided – usually the Judge will nominate which number for the day, some don't worry – the remaining articles you will place by hand in the designated area prior to the exercise. Tongs are used to handle the three selected articles and you must be very careful to avoid touching these, or using the tongs to move the ones placed by hand. This takes practice and concentration.

Tongs are used to place the Seek Back article on the Handler's Track; you must not cross this track whilst putting out the article if the Judge asks you to do the job.

Scent Discrimination – listen carefully to what the Judge wants and avoid unnecessary movement whilst the dog is working.

Food / Gloves – again listen to instructions, where to go and where to stand.

Group Stand For Examination – you need to be in a position to watch the dogs at all times so you can advise of any movement which the Judge cannot see as he/she moves through the exercise

Out of Sight Stays – As per Open Class

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**UTILITY DOG EXCELLENT**

Again there are articles; the judge will instruct what he/she wants. You will be asked to place the Decoy in the first exercise.

You will also place the cloths down in Scent Discrimination, after letting the Judge take the two he/she is to scent.

Multiple Retrieve – listen carefully, especially should the dog retrieve an incorrect article.

Group Examination – watch the dogs for any movement.

There is no out of sight stay at this level.

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