



Working Together

A guide for Obedience Stewards

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WORKING TOGETHER

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Stewarding in obedience is a rewarding, fun way to enjoy an obedience trial sponsored by your club. It gives you a chance to represent your club, learn ring procedure, pick up a few handling techniques, meet other people and, above all, to give something back to the sport.

Obedience stewards can make or break a trial, but, stewarding is not difficult – it should be fun. Those interested in stewarding should attend a training session and learn as much as possible before volunteering as a steward. A steward not acquainted with obedience ring procedure can severely slow down the entire judging procedure and could conceivably cause a dog to not qualify. As an experienced steward, be prepared to help the first time steward learn and become confident at being a part of the trial.

Some Rules and Regulations to keep in mind:

- **The Ring Steward.** It is the sole duty of the ring stewards to assist the judge, only as instructed by the judge. There must be a minimum of two stewards for each judging ring – three are recommended. It is important for the stewards to report to the ring at least 30 to 45 minutes prior to the scheduled time for judging to assist the judge in setting up the ring and equipment and to receive specific assignments from the judge.
- **The judge has sole responsibility for the ring.** Stewards are provided to assist the judge and can act only on the judge's instructions. Stewards must keep in mind that they have been selected to help the judges and not to advise them. Decisions about the competition are that of the judge alone.
- **Ring stewards** must ensure that no person except the trial chair, superintendent, trial secretary, judge, other ring stewards and those actually engaged in exhibiting a dog before the judge, are permitted within the ring during judging.
- **Dogs are judged in judging schedule order.** If, for some reason, an exhibitor has a conflict or requests to withdraw, the judge must be notified and will advise the steward of what action to take. Stewards cannot change the judging order. Adjustments to the order, moving a dog to the end of the class, dealing with latecomers, etc. are the judge's decision. In the case of a conflict, obedience takes precedence over rally obedience, official classes over unofficial classes and conformation (in the event of a combined show) takes precedence over obedience. The conflict must be for the same dog, not the handler.
- **Group exercises.** The dogs line up in judging schedule order for the group exercise regardless of where they were judged in the individual exercises. Lowest (or highest if running in reverse order) number in the group goes in first and dogs are lined up accordingly.
- **Judges are not allowed to read the catalogue** until after their assignments are complete and the judge's books turned in to the trial secretary. Stewards should refrain from discussing or even seeming to discuss the dog's performance with the judge and must not show or give the appearance of showing the catalogue to the judge. In referring to any handlers, stewards should use their armband number rather than their names.
- **Scores are confidential** until the end of the class. Stewards or the judge must not disclose any score or partial score or placements until after the class is completed. At the end of the group exercises (or the individual exercises in Novice Intermediate or Utility) the judge will advise each handler whether or not they have qualified.

- **The Judge's Book** - The judge is not to judge any dog until he has entered the scores of all dogs judged previously in the judge's book, and until he has subtotaled such scores. Scores for the long sit and long down must be entered in the judge's book immediately after each group of dogs has been judged. Beginning in 2012 CKC judges books became based on a "points off" basis with the final score determined at the end of the group exercises. No scores may be changed except to correct a mathematical error. All totals must be entered in the judge's book before prizes are awarded.
- Following completion of the judging of each obedience class, the yellow copy of the judge's book, which sets forth the scores assigned by the judge, must be posted in a prominent place, within the precincts of the trial. This is done by the trial secretary.
- **On completing the judging assignment**, the judge must ensure that the cover of the judge's book is completed with start and finish times, signed and H.I.T. recorded and awarded in the ring by the last judge completing the assignment for the trial.
- **Score sheets** - At the conclusion of each class, judges are required to provide meaningfully marked individual score sheets to each exhibitor. In some cases this could result in the table steward being asked to transpose the scores from the judge's own sheet to the one to be handed to the exhibitor.
- **In the case of a run-off** handlers should not be given advance notice but they will be called back to the ring on the judge's instruction. Handlers are entitled to a reasonable warm up period prior to entering the ring but this will be determined by the judge and not the stewards.
- **Instructions to owners or handlers.** Stewards should not give information or instructions to owners or handlers unless specifically instructed to do so by the judge, and then should do so only in such a manner that it is clear that the instructions are those of the judge.
- **Avoid serving as a steward** with judges under whom you may be entered that day or the next as it reflects negatively on the club and the steward and puts the judge in a difficult position.
- **Show courtesy and consideration** to all handlers but refrain from playing favourites. Even the most experienced handlers can suffer from nerves when entering the ring, so unnecessary "chatter" should be avoided. This also applies to interacting with their dog.
- **Stewards should be quietly efficient.** If there are problems with the ring, gates, jumps, mats, etc. notify the judge, chief ring steward or trial chair.
- **Combined shows and trials.** At a combined event the conformation show committee has sole jurisdiction over all the matters which may properly come before it, regardless of whether the matter has to do with the conformation show or obedience trial.

What to do before the trial starts:

- **Report to the chief ring steward** 30 to 45 minutes before you are scheduled to begin, for instructions and to pick up your steward's badge.
- While waiting for your start time, stroll around the area near the obedience rings to find out where the handlers have set up. This will help later, should you need to locate them for group exercises or for any other reason. Know the location of the restrooms and exercise area should you be asked by a visiting handler or judge.
- **Meet with your judge**, introduce yourself (and other stewards) and ask for any instructions. Some judges will give detailed instructions, others are more casual. Let the judge know if this is your first time stewarding at a trial or first time stewarding in a particular class, such as open or utility. Don't be afraid to ask the judge for help as

most would prefer to help you rather than have you confused or create a problem during judging.

- **Take time to check your ring.** Make sure everything relating to the ring is in order, there is no residue or bits of food, or dog “hair bunnies” on the floor; the number board is ready; clean up supplies are available; mats, gates, jumps, etc. are all in order.
- **Stewards, like exhibitors, should have no food** in the ring or in pockets. This includes residual crumbs. Don’t chew gum or wear anything that might distract a dog while in the ring (for example, if you have a dog in season at home, your clothing might be particularly enticing to an intact male).
- **Each ring should have three stewards** unless the class is very small. Under CKC rules, there must be a minimum of two stewards (one of which should be experienced) for each judging ring. Stewards have to work together, efficiently, as a team and should decide beforehand who will do which jobs throughout the class or trial.

Stewarding functions in the obedience ring fall into three general categories: gate, table and ring. In large trials four stewards are sometimes required, however, we are usually able to manage nicely with three. There must be two ring stewards. Of these, the more experienced will normally serve as the table steward.

The Gate Steward. The primary responsibility of the gate steward (sometimes referred to as the “runner”) is to ensure that the next dog to be judged is immediately available when the judge indicates that they are ready.

- **Prepare ring sign** with the armband numbers and breed for the upcoming class. It is also handy to show the jump height for Novice Intermediate, Open and Utility. As each handler checks in, put a check mark next to his/her number on the sign. Later, as the handler enters the ring with the dog, cross out the number and breed.
- When known, also mark on the ring sign where the judge will break for the group exercises (sits and downs) or for lunch. Before leaving for lunch, mark the time that judging will recommence. This is convenient for the handlers and saves you answering the same question many times.
- **Keep track** of the number of dogs that have entered as judges sometimes rely on the stewards for a reminder about when to break the class for the group exercises (maximum 8 dogs per group).
- **Get the next handler ready** outside the gate as the dog in the ring gets close to the end of the individual exercises (unless the judge is going to break for the group exercises or for lunch). Do not let the next dog into the ring until the previous dog has left and the judge is ready. If you do not see the next handler, call out the armband number rather than the name but wait until the dog in the ring finishes working. If a handler has not checked in, alert the subsequent handlers of the possible absence.
- **Group exercises** – for the sits and downs have the handlers and dogs line up in judging schedule order ready to follow a steward into the ring when the judge indicates. It is important that the dogs go into the ring in judging schedule order rather than the order in which they were actually judged.
- **Stewards are not required to seek out handlers.** Handlers are responsible for being ready when their dogs’ number is called. The gate steward should report any absence to the table steward and the judge will decide when the dog is to be marked absent in the judge’s book.

The Table Steward. Most judges use some kind of score sheet (and then transfer the scores to their judge's book). If not completed in advance by the trial secretary, the table steward will prepare the score sheets ensuring the class, catalogue number, breed and jump height, if applicable, are correct. Preparation of the score sheet for the group exercises is also required, listing the dogs in judging schedule order. As it may be necessary for the stewards to consult the catalogue, the judge is not allowed to read it. Therefore, it is important to be discreet and not leave the impression that the judge may be in a position to read it before the end of the trial. On the group sheet, most judges prefer to have the non-qualifying dogs indicated by circling the armband number. Ask the judge if this is what is wanted.

- **Confidentiality.** Ensure the judge's book and score sheets are face-down on the table so the scores cannot be seen by competitors or spectators.
- **Double checking the scores.** If the judge requests, the table steward must double-check to see that the scores on the score sheet are added correctly. The judge will transfer the scores from the score sheet to the judge's book. The steward should also check to ensure that no error has been made in the transfer of the scores from the individual score sheet to the judges book. If an error is detected, the steward should bring it to the attention of the judge as no one other than the judge or trial secretary may make an entry in the judge's book.
- **Ribbons and trophies.** As the class nears completion, the table steward should get the rosettes, ribbons and prizes (if any) from the chief steward or whoever is in charge of trophies and prizes. Ensure that all prizes, trophies and ribbons required for each class are available at the conclusion of judging and once it is established who the qualifiers are. Often, the steward is asked to assist in the awarding of such trophies and ribbons to the winners. The same applies at the end of the trial when 'High in Trial' and most of the prizes are awarded.
- **Figure Eight.** The table steward will act as one of the posts for the figure eight exercises. At the end of the Novice Figure Eight the table steward should take the leash from the handler and place it on the judge's table.
- **Jumps.** The table steward will take responsibility for one of the jumps in Novice Intermediate, Open and Utility, ensuring that it is set to the correct height or width for each dog.
- **Articles.** As the most experienced, the table steward should put out and take up the articles for the scent discrimination exercise in Utility.

The Ring Steward will be responsible for bringing the next competitor into the ring and into position for the beginning of the first exercise. In Novice Intermediate, Open and Utility, this will also include taking the leash, dumbbell, glove or articles from the handler (depending on the order of exercises in that trial) and **placing them on the judges table** before the exercise starts.

- **Figure Eight.** The ring steward will act as one of the posts for the figure eight exercise.
- **Stand for Examination,** The ring steward may also be required to hold the clipboard during the sit or stand for examination exercises and the moving stand in Utility if the judge requires it.
- **Dumbbell and Glove.** The ring steward may be asked to bring the dumbbell or glove (if the seek back is not the first class in Utility) to the judge or handler for the retrieving

exercises. This should be discussed with the table steward and judge prior to the start of judging.

- **Jumps.** The ring steward will take responsibility for one of the jumps in Novice Intermediate, Open and Utility, ensuring that it is set to the correct height or width for each dog.
- **End of Judging.** At the completion of judging of the individual exercises, the leash, dumbbell, glove and/or articles are to be returned to the handler before they leave the ring. It is best to take the leash into the ring so that the handler can put it on the dog away from the ring entrance as the dog must leave the ring on leash.
- **Position.** Stay close to the ring entrance when not in the ring and be alert for dogs that might bolt. Should a dog bolt, remember not to stop it until it has left the ring. Ask the judge if they have any preferences in this regard. Make sure no one comes into the ring during judging and do not become distracted by people wishing to talk.
- **Excusals.** If a dog leaves the position where it was left during the long sit exercise it **must** be excused before the long down. Consult with the judge as to their preference for retrieving the armband and leash for the competitor before they leave the ring. Some judges prefer to do it themselves and some prefer to leave it to one of the stewards.

Getting your instructions. Before the beginning of judging, or at the beginning of each class, the following matters need to be discussed with the judge and other stewards. Some judges will give detailed instructions, others will just introduce him/herself. Don't be afraid to ask as you need to know beforehand rather than after the class begins.

Pre-Novice and Novice

1. How does the judge want to handle conflicts
2. How many dogs in each group for sits and downs or will classes be combined (A, B and/or C)
3. Where are handlers and dogs to be brought into the ring for the first exercise.
4. Where is the figure eight to be done; how and where do stewards stand
5. Who takes the leash after the heel on leash and figure eight
6. Who takes the judge's clipboard during the stand for exam, if necessary.
7. Which steward is to bring the leash to the handler after the last exercise
8. Where are the stewards to stand during the group exercises
9. What do the stewards do when a dog breaks during the group exercises
10. What instructions, if any, are to be given by the stewards to the handlers

Novice Intermediate and Open

1. As in novice 1,2,3,4,7,8,9,10
2. Which steward is to bring the dumbbell to the handler and return it to the table after the retrieve exercises.
3. In Open B, what is the order of judging and if the two retrieving exercises are not consecutive determine how the judge wishes to deal with the dumbbell.
4. Where are the extra boards from the high jump and broad jump to be placed when not in use

Utility

1. As in novice 1,3,7,10
2. Where are the scent articles to be placed in the ring and how does the judge want them arranged. Is a chair required and where?
3. What is the steward to do during the moving stand and examination (ie to the side, hold the clipboard?)

Ring Stewards – Pre-Novice and Novice Classes The ring stewards serve as posts for the figure eight; are available to assist where required (ie. holding clipboard) and help with the group exercises. Decide beforehand who will do which jobs and stick with them throughout the class. Not being consistent just leads to confusion.

Order of Exercises – Pre Novice

- Heel on leash
- Figure eight
- Sit for examination
- Recall
- Long sit (30 seconds – handlers half way across the ring)

Order of Exercises – Novice

- Heel on leash and figure eight
- Stand for Examination (off leash)
- Heel Free
- Recall
- Long Sit (1 minute – handlers across the ring)
- Long Down (3 minutes – handlers across the ring)

Figure eight

- Take your position for the figure eight without having to be reminded by the judge. Your cue is when the judge says “exercise finished” at the end of the heel on leash. Judges and handlers appreciate stewards who are alert and prompt. Posts are 8 feet apart for Novice and 12 feet apart for Pre-Novice – some judges will mark the positions; if not, an easy way is for both stewards to stop at the first post position, then the second steward walks four or six paces and turns into position. (You might want to check your stride length beforehand). Also, decide beforehand which steward will take which post and stay with it. Fold your arms or clasp them in front of you so as not to distract a dog doing the exercise. Do the same for each dog. Stand still, look straight ahead and avoid following the dogs movement with your head or staring at the dog. Do not talk.

Stand or Sit for examination

- Take your cue when the judge says “exercise finished” at the end of the figure eight. One steward may remain to hold the judge’s clipboard if needed during this exercise while the other takes the leash (in Novice) and places it on the table. When the judge says “exercise finished” return the clipboard to the judge and move out of the ring.

After the recall (end of the individual exercises)

- Your cue will be when the judge says “exercise finished” at the end of the recall. In novice, one steward quickly returns the leash to the handler (with the clip up for easier

fastening onto the dog's collar). In pre-novice, the handler keeps the leash during this exercise and attaches it to the collar at the end of the exercise.

- The other steward should make sure that the next dog is ready at the gate (unless there is a break upcoming for group exercises or lunch). Do not let the next dog into the ring until the previous dog has left and the judge is ready.

Group Exercises (Long sit and Long down)

- Know ahead of time where the judge will break for the group exercises. The maximum number of dogs in the group exercises is eight at one time.
- The handlers and dogs should be lined up in judging schedule order before you take them into the ring. Be sure you know where the line is to be and how to get there without mixing up the handlers order. Listen to and follow the judge's instructions on dealing with dogs that break. Take your position before the start of the exercise. One steward should be at the gate. Each steward requires a leash (kennel leads work well and save fumbling with a nervous dog).
- Any dog that leaves its position during the long sit **must** be excused from the long down. If the judge wishes, the ring steward should retrieve the leash and armband and give them to the handler so that the dog can be taken out of the ring on leash.

At the end of the class

- Once the last group of dogs has completed the Long Sit and Long Down, help the judge and table steward double check the judge's score sheet addition and handing out the class prizes and ribbons. Be prepared to round up any handlers involved in a run-off, if necessary.

The above also applies to the novice exercises performed in the *Novice C Class* and the *Unofficial Classes of Graduate Novice, Brace, Team, Veterans or Wild Card Novice*. See CKC Obedience Rules and Regulations

Ring Stewards – Novice Intermediate and Open Classes The ring stewards in this class serve as posts for figure eight, handle the leash and dumbbell, set up the jumps, and help with the group exercises. Decide beforehand who will do which jobs and stick with them throughout the class.

All exercises in Novice Intermediate and Open are off leash and in the group exercises in open the handlers leave the ring and go out of sight of the dogs. Decide beforehand which steward will lead the handlers out of the ring and know where to take them before the exercise begins.

The second steward stays near the ring gate and must be alert for dogs that might bolt or move toward another dog. Know the judge's instructions for either case.

Order of Exercises – Novice Intermediate

- Heel free and figure eight
- Stand for examination
- Drop from heel
- Recall holding dumbbell
- Recall over high jump holding dumbbell
- Broad jump

Order of Exercises – Open A

- Heel free and figure eight
- Drop on recall
- Retrieve on flat
- Retrieve over high jump
- Broad jump
- Long sit (3 minutes – handler out of sight)
- Long down (3 minutes – handler out of sight)

The Open B class has the same exercises but the order will vary from trial to trial. The order will be posted at ringside at least 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the class so stewards must know what the order will be for that class and react accordingly. Group exercises will always be last but the figure eight comes before the Heel Free in some routines so the stewards must remain alert.

Setting up the jumps

- Both the high jump and the broad jump must be set up quickly and accurately to the correct jump height for the incoming dog. Use a tape measure for accuracy. Each steward should take responsibility to set up one of the jumps and double check to be sure they are correct. Both the judge and handler are responsible for making sure the dog jumps the correct height. Some judges will measure the jumps before starting judging or even before each dog begins.
- High Jump – after the first 4” board, keep 8” boards at the bottom (and the narrower boards near the top to make it easier to calculate at a glance and so they can be changed quickly. Avoid having to shift all the boards each time – calculate in advance how they should be set. Ask the judge if they want the unused boards stored outside the ring or at the side of the ring.
- Broad Jump – The broad jump length is twice the height of that set for the high jump. Space the boards evenly -using a tape measure start from the smallest 4” jump, which stays in the same position throughout the class. For jumps up to 14” the two four inch boards are used. For the 16” jump the smaller of the four inch boards and the smallest eight inch board are used. For jumps 18” or wider the two 4” boards pushed together constitute the first board. Ask the judge if they want the unused boards stored outside the ring or at the side of the ring.

As the dog enters the ring

- The ring steward should take the leash and dumbbell and put them on the table once the handler and dog are in position. Handle the dumbbell by an end rather than the bar and be aware of dumbbell or leash-happy dogs. The leash and dumbbell must be left on the table until required for an exercise or until returned at the end of the individual exercises,

Figure eight

- Same as in Novice. Move quickly and smartly into position without having to be reminded by the judge. Remember, the dogs are off leash.

Stand for examination (Novice Intermediate)

- The stand for examination is handled the same as in novice. There is no leash to be taken from the handler but the judge may want the clipboard held.

Retrieve on the flat – (dumbbell)

- Your cue is when the judge says “exercise finished” at the end of the drop on recall in Open A and the drop from heel in Novice Intermediate. The steward should give the dumbbell to the handler without having to be reminded by the judge. Sometimes you may be asked to give the dumbbell directly to the judge.

Retrieve over the high jump (Recall over high jump in Novice Intermediate)

- Be ready to take the dumbbell from the handler after “exercise finished” in this exercise. Some judges prefer to take the dumbbell in which case you do not have to enter the ring.
- In any case, neither the judge nor the handler should be made to wait.

Group exercises (Long sit and Long down) (Open)

- The gate steward will line up the dogs and handlers outside the ring immediately prior to the time the judge has indicated. These exercises are always done in judging schedule order (not the order in which the dogs were actually judged). The ring steward will line up the dogs and handlers along the side of the ring as indicated by the judge, and placed an equal distance apart. It is up to the judge to give further instructions.
- One steward leads the handlers out of the ring and into a ‘blind’ area. Handlers should be reminded to keep their voices down and are not permitted to peek at their dog. Stewards are not to announce when a dog breaks position (goes down or gets up). The steward is also responsible for getting the handlers back to the ring in correct order quickly and orderly. Watch the judge at all times during the exercise in order to be able to see the signal to return the handlers to the ring (this could be before the completion of the three minutes).
- The second steward assists the judge in the ring in the same manner described for the Novice Class.

The above also applies to the open exercises performed in the Unofficial *Graduate Open Class* or *Wild Card Open Class*.

Ring Stewards – Utility Class. In this class the ring stewards set up the jumps – bar jump and high jump and set out the articles for the scent discrimination exercise. Utility has no group exercises. Ascertain from the judge, where the two jumps are to be placed and the scent articles are to be placed for the scent discrimination exercise and how the articles are to be handled by the steward. Also where the judge will be placing the handler's articles (you may have to ensure a chair is available for this).

Order of Exercises – Utility A

- Seek back
- Scent discrimination
- Signals
- Moving stand
- Directed jumping

The Utility B class has the same exercises but the order will vary from trial to trial. The order will be posted at ringside at least 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the class so stewards must know what the order will be for that class and react accordingly.

Setting up the jumps

- The jumps are set up perpendicular to the sides of the ring and at least 14' apart.
- The bar jump is set at the same height as the high jump. It is set with the bar on the opposite side of the posts from which the dog is jumping so that it can be knocked off if hit by the dog.
- Confirm correct height with a measuring tape.
- The judge must make certain the jumps are properly set and will determine which jump is on which side of the ring.

As the dog enters the ring

- One steward should take the leash, articles and glove (if Seek back is not the first exercise) from the handler and put them directly on the ring table. Ask if the handler wishes the scented articles kept separate when the exercise is complete. Again, these must remain on the table until returned after the judging is complete.

Seek back

- Be prepared to take the glove to or from the handler after "exercise finished". Place it on the ring table.

Scent discrimination Two articles/two separate exercises

- The judge selects two scent articles for the handler to use.
- One steward quickly places the remaining 13 articles in the ring where the judge has designated. The closest article should be about 20' from the handler and all articles placed about 6" apart. Handle (but do not actively scent) the articles as you put them down. Confirm with the judge how the articles are to be handled and do not over handle them.
- **The articles to be scented by the handler are to be touched only by the judge and the handler so the steward must remember not to pick them up.**
- The steward placing the articles should be aware of any foreign scent on their hands (cigarette smoke, food, dogs). The scent given when handling the articles should be consistent for all dogs so only one steward should be responsible for putting out the articles.

- The handler must show the article, prior to or while scenting it, to the judge and the ring steward. Remember which article (leather, metal, wood) and which number (picked by the judge) the handler has shown. Pay attention to which article the handler is scenting and the dog retrieves in case there is a question as to whether the correct article was retrieved.
- After the judge has said “exercise finished” on the second article the dog has retrieved the stewards should move out briskly – one steward gathers the remaining articles returning them to the handler’s carrying case or bag and placing them on the table. The second steward will retrieve the scented articles and put them on the table with the case. Do not put articles or glove in the case as you will be transferring scent.

Moving stand

- At the beginning of the moving stand exercise the steward may be required to hold the judge’s clipboard during the examination of the dog.

On completion of the last exercise

- The judge will say “exercise finished” at the end of the exercise at which time the ring steward should quickly return the leash to the handler. Some dogs are quite excited and handlers like to get them on leash well before exiting the ring.
- Return the scent articles and glove to the handler as they leave the ring.
- Set the jumps for the next dog. Bring the next dog into the ring only after the previous dog has left and the judge is ready.

At the end of the class

- Help the judge and table steward (if necessary) in checking the score sheets and handing out the prizes and ribbons.

The above also applies to the utility exercises performed in the Unofficial Versatility and Wild Card UtilityClass.

Last, but not least, be ready to assist in the presentation of High in Trial, as well as any additional trophies, prizes or awards which have been won during the trial.

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR OBEDIENCE STEWARDS

- Remember – be alert and pay attention to *everything* that is happening in the ring.
- Know the exercises for each of the classes.
- Be familiar with the rule book.
- Be cordial when bringing a team into the ring and refrain from idle chatter.
- Wear clean clothes and wash your hands. Be aware of scents on your clothing or hands which could distract a dog.
- Do not handle the leash, dumbbell or articles during the individual exercises except as required as this could be very distracting for the dog.
- Dress neatly (not necessarily formally) but remember you are representing your club. It also demonstrates respect for the judge and the handlers who have entered.
- If you are going to steward, don’t enter. You should not steward for a judge if you are trialing under that judge – even in a different class or on a subsequent day.
- Ensure stewarding is consistent.

- Allow the judge time to work without constant chatter. Judging requires careful concentration. Ask questions, if necessary, but keep general conversation until after the class.
- After the last individual exercise take the leash (clip up) to the handler.
- Be aware when handling the dumbbell not to excite the dog.
- Move into position quickly when required.
- Remember not to move toward or block a dog heading out of the ring.
- No scores are to be given out before awards are announced. **DO NOT** discuss specifics of the judging with competitors or friends at the end of the trial – **what happens in the ring stays in the ring!**
- Be alert to prevent small children from distracting the dog (running into the ring, hanging onto the ring ropes or gates, acting up or shouting). Also be alert for adults or dogs that might be a distraction to the dog working in the ring (ie using a clicker or squeaky toy or allowing their dog to lay right at ringside).
- If your spouse or other family member is handling a dog, or if there is a dog you are overly familiar with, in the class tell the judge in order to make a swap with another steward during the time the dog is in the ring.
- Be courteous and cheerful to the handlers but avoid too much chatting.
- Do your best to keep things moving but not rushed.
- If your ring is finished before another **DO NOT** start taking down ring gates, moving out equipment or chairs. Show courtesy to the other judge and handlers. Wait until all judging is complete and awards distributed.

Hints for the Chief Ring Steward in Obedience

The primary responsibility of the Chief Ring Steward is to oversee the activity in the obedience rings and act as a liaison between the ring stewards, the judges, the trials chair and trials secretary.

- Keep available by not assigning yourself to a specific task.
- Know the ideal number of stewards needed and work accordingly.
- Seek out your volunteer stewards early to get the most competent people.
- Bring in the newbies – a good way to get a better insight into obedience.
- New stewards are often best introduced to stewarding by acting as Gate Stewards
- Ensure one or more stewards in each class are fully knowledgeable before assigning a new volunteer.
- Try to accommodate peoples' schedules as much as possible.
- Prepare stewards by giving them training and help beforehand.
- Allow new stewards a practice session before the real trial (mock trials and club trials are a good opportunity to do this).
- Match up the right people for each class, including personalities.
- Remember – stewarding for open and utility can be physically challenging to some people.
- Provide 'cheat sheets' for those having to deal with jumps.
- Have a floating steward to give people a break, if possible.
- Arrive early. Check the ring layout and make sure everything is ready. Pick up the judge's books and catalogues from the trial secretary. Pass out the 'stewards' badges and lunch tickets.
- Introduce yourself to each of the judges as well as the judge to the stewards.
- As a member of the show committee, dress accordingly.
- Check in with each class periodically should a steward need a break. Be prepared to help in dealing with handlers' complaints or requests.
- Ensure ribbons and prizes are ready and available when required.
- Ensure rings are left up until all judging is complete and awards presented.
- After the trial, be sure to thank the stewards. If possible, the club might give each steward a small gift for their time and efforts (even a few dog biscuits serves as a simple gesture).

Remember: Stewards are a very important and integral part of a dog trial. They are what makes a trial a success and as volunteers your efforts are very much appreciated by judges and handlers alike.

Be a good ambassador for the sport: congratulate, console and hold your opinions until you are well away from the trial site.

ABOVE ALL – HAVE FUN AND ENJOY BEING A PART OF THE TRIAL!

Good Luck!