

# AGILITY GUIDELINES



Pima County 4-H Dog Project  
Rev. April 2023  
Equipment List Rev. May 2024

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Agility is to be a fun, safe opportunity to train and develop a trusting relationship between 4-H youth and their dog.

## **WHAT IS AGILITY?**

Patterned after equestrian show jumping, dog agility combines the elements of a dog's agility, briskness, confidence, and a 4-H Member's control over an obstacle course designed for dogs. It is a fun sport with great spectator appeal.

## **PURPOSE**

- Add new members and maintain established members in the dog project.
- Provide positive motivational training methods and interactions with the dog.
- Enhance a working relationship between the dog and handler.
- Provide a better-conditioned dog and handler.
- Promote good sportsmanship and citizenship.
- Promote a better-rounded handler/dog team.
- Add confidence to both dog and handler.
- Provide a variety of competitive areas for the Dog Project.

## **GUIDELINES:**

### **Safety Rules**

- Because the safety of both dogs and handlers is of paramount importance, the following rules will be enforced.
- It is NOT safe for the handler and dog to do more than they have been trained for, especially under conditions of competition.
- Dogs must have a reliable off leash recall in order to train/participate in agility.
- The handler must be entered in Obedience at the Pima County Fair to participate in Agility.
- Dogs and handlers must be trained on all equipment within a specified class to compete. Either 4-H classes or those of a recognized training school will be accepted. Simply working with your dog in the back yard is not acceptable.
- As of May 1, 2017, all dogs entered in Level II or Level III Agility must be at least 18 months old. Younger dogs (12 months and older) will be allowed in Level I.
- No dog with a physical or mental condition that would significantly impair their performance may participate. Some examples of these include (but are not limited to) hip dysplasia, disc problems, severely slipped stifles, shoulder problems, overweight, or advancing age. All handlers are strongly encouraged to consult their veterinarian before beginning agility training. A judge, Project Coordinator or the participants Project Leader will have the authority to stop the performance of any dog whose soundness they question.
- Dogs that show signs of aggression toward humans or other dogs will not be permitted to participate.
- Judges will inspect all equipment prior to beginning the show and may modify the requirements to the extent necessary to eliminate any piece of unsafe equipment.
- All agility jumps must be of the type that have a dis-placeable bar or plank.
- All parents/guardians and members must complete the "4-H Dog Agility Release Form" about injury to dog and handler to participate in classes, shows, and demonstrations. This form will include a section stating that they have been trained on all pieces of equipment for their particular class level, and they will not attempt any piece of equipment on which they have not been trained. This form is available at time of registration in event.
- Agility competitions must be performed on a level, shock absorbent surface that provides good footing for the take-off and landing of jumps. Outdoors on short grass, dirt, or any other footing commonly used in

horse areas is ideal. It is recommended that dirt be packed hard enough to prevent injury to either dog or handler. A fully matted or carpeted area may provide an acceptable alternative. The judge will inspect the area to be used, and if it is unacceptable, will request a different location. In extreme cases, the show may need to be canceled.

- The use of completely fenced area is required.
- A supervised warm-up area consisting of only a single jump may be provided in a specified area outside the ring. No obstacle or jump shall be permitted elsewhere on the show grounds for training, warm-up, or other preparatory purposes.
- The Project Coordinator is the final authority regarding 4-H dog agility competition.

### **General Rules**

- Dogs are not permitted to be dragged or jerked on a leash at any 4-H event or function
- Training is more important than competition.
- Agility is a privilege not a right.
- In order to encourage participation refusal of obstacles will not be faulted.
- AKC scoring system will be utilized. The maximum attainable score is 100 points. Qualifying faults are deducted from the 100 points to determine placement and qualification. 1 point deduction for every second over course time down to whole numbers.
- Training aids and treats are not permitted on the course.
- Dogs may be brought to the start line on slip leads, body harnesses or other collars that are permitted on the trial grounds. Pinch/prong and electrical collars (dummy or not), head halters and special training collars are not allowed.
- No food, balls or other device may be used within ten (10) feet of the ring.
- Handlers may not jump over the jumps with their dogs.
- Handlers may not touch their dogs or an obstacle while running the course. Incidental contact that does not aid the dog on the course will not be penalized.
- Poor sportsmanship will not be tolerated. Any handler exhibiting poor sportsmanship such as swearing, yelling at their dog, striking the dog, pulling on their dog's fur or body parts, excessive corrections, loud complaints about other exhibitors or the judge, etc., will be eliminated - receiving no ribbon.
- The judge will penalize any handler receiving outside assistance. In severe cases, the handler will receive a white ribbon. The show committee is also responsible for investigating any incidents of outside assistance reported to them.
- A dog unable to complete the course for any reason (including leaving the ring and not immediately returning in control of the handler, or ceasing to work for a significant period of time will receive a white ribbon.
- Any dog refusing an obstacle for the third time will be asked by the judge to go on to the next obstacle. Anyone not obeying the judge's order will be asked to leave the ring, receiving no ribbon.
- Handlers may use voice commands, signals, or both. Handlers are encouraged to talk or cheer their dogs through the course. There is no penalty for multiple commands or verbal encouragement, but all must be in the spirit of good sportsmanship.
- Any dog fouling the ring during competition or familiarization will be asked to leave the ring and will receive a white ribbon. Water, or some other odor-neutralizing substitute, should be on hand to clean fouled equipment. Fouled equipment may be removed from the course at the judge's discretion, and all dogs running the course previously may, at the judge's discretion, be required to rerun the course.
- All courses must have clearly designated starts and finishes. All obstacles must be sequentially numbered with numbered cones or some other movable system.
- All competitors in agility must be active in their Club's dog project and exhibit in obedience and showmanship at a county qualifying event.
- Gate is to be closed and will remain closed while dog and handler in ring makes run. Only one dog in ring at a time. Next dog may be waiting outside of ring but must be out of the walkway and away from gate

for the running dog and handler to exit the ring.

### **Disabled Handlers**

- 4-H Members with disabilities are encouraged to take part in Dog Agility. The judge is to consider each case individually and make a fair and suitable adjustment for judging disabled handlers. The Judge's decision is final, as it is for all handlers in agility competition.
- Courses and individual course times may be altered to accommodate handlers with disabilities. Hearing or verbally impaired handlers may use clickers or squeakers to aid in running their dog through the course. Judges may use flags or relay a signal to a course steward who will use a flag to communicate to the handler, if necessary.
- When a course time adjustment is necessary, it is suggested to have the handler "test run" the course without their dog, going from obstacle to obstacle at a reasonable rate for the handler. The Judge will record the time using a stopwatch and determine an adjusted Course time for that handler, making sure to record the adjusted course time on the appropriate score sheet.
- All Disabled handlers needing an adjusted Course Time should inform the Agility Coordinator as soon as possible that they would need an adjusted time. The Coordinator will inform the Judge as early as possible.

### **Fair Competition / Trial**

- All youth and dogs enter at their own risk.
- Female dogs in or coming into season are not allowed on show grounds for any dog or round robin events. Pregnant, within four (4) weeks of the due date, or bitches with a litter eight (8) weeks of age or older but still lactating (producing milk) must have veterinarian approval before being shown. A letter of approval from a veterinarian must be submitted at the time of check-in.

### **Judges**

- Judges are to be shown respect. Parents or exhibitors will bring any issues or concerns to their respective Project Leader who will bring it to the Coordinator if necessary. The Coordinator will bring issues to the Ring Stewards and/or Judge as needed
- The Judge's ruling is final.
- Judge may alter course for safety concerns.
- Judge may excuse a dog they feel is unfit or unable to participate.
- Judge will dismiss a dog that is out of control.
- Judge will excuse any youth who willfully abuses their dog.
- Judge will excuse any youth that shows unsportsmanlike conduct.
- All youth must agree to abide by all rules and regulations.
- All youth entered into agility must have their project leader's permission. Leader must submit Certificate of Readiness.

### **Course**

- Course descriptions will be posted outside the ring.
- Obstacles will be numbered.
- Food and/or toys are not allowed on the course.
- No devices or instruments are allowed on course.
- Encouragement is permitted.

## Competition Class / Trials Descriptions

All levels are off leash

### Level I – Hoops and Tunnels, Pause Table - Intro class

- Introductory class open to any dog, one year and older, not trained on contacts. The main goal is to introduce agility obstacles to the dog and ensure that the dog will perform the obstacles safely.
- Level I will include hoops, tunnels and a pause table.
- Youth may show two dogs per level as long as the dogs have competed in obedience.
- Dogs must enter and exit the ring on leash and under control. Upon entering the ring, the judge will indicate that the leash may be removed to start the run by saying, “Good Luck.” The leash must then be taken off the dog and placed on the chair/bucket ringside before the dog crosses the course start line. Handlers must be sure to not throw the leash in a way that could hit the leash runner or other ring personnel. After the course has been completed, the handler will place the dog back on leash prior to exiting the ring.
- May use quick release collar (with no attachments i.e. license)
- Dog will stand or sit on pause table to end timer. This is a positionless obstacle.

*NOTE: Certificate of Readiness MUST be submitted by the Project Leader*

### Level II – First year with contacts - Timed event

- Open to dogs, 18 months and older, that have been trained on contacts. The main goal is to test the dog's ability to perform the obstacles safely, with beginning level discriminations and directional control. The dog is asked to perform the obstacles at a moderate pace and at a moderate distance.
- Level II may include hoops, jumps, tunnels, tire jump, A-frame, teeter, weaves, and pause table.
- Youth may show two dogs per level as long as the dogs have competed in obedience.
- Dogs must enter and exit the ring on leash and under control. Upon entering the ring, the judge will indicate that the leash may be removed to start the run by saying, “Good Luck.” The leash must then be taken off the dog and placed on the chair/bucket ringside before the dog crosses the course start line. Handlers must be sure to not throw the leash in a way that could hit the leash runner or other ring personnel. After the course has been completed, the handler will place the dog back on leash prior to exiting the ring.
- A-Frame 42” AT APEX
- Teeter at its lowest height 17”
- Tire jump will be 4” lower than standard jump heights (see Standard Jump Heights below).
- Dog will stand or sit on pause table to end timer. This is a positionless obstacle.

*NOTE: Certificate of Readiness MUST be submitted by the Project Leader*

### Level III – Advanced Contacts - Timed event

- Open to advanced dogs (that have competed in level 2), 18 months and older, that have been trained on contacts and have leader approval. The goal is to test the handler and dog's ability to perform the obstacles at a faster pace, while performing the obstacles with more directional and distance control and exhibit more difficult obstacle discriminations. The course design should encourage handlers to work the dog from both sides comfortably.
- Level III may include hoops, jumps, tunnels, tire jump, A-frame, teeter, weave, broad jump, dog walk, and pause table.
- Youth may show two dogs per level as long as the dogs have competed in obedience.
- Dogs must enter and exit the ring on leash and under control. Upon entering the ring, the judge will indicate that the leash may be removed to start the run by saying, “Good Luck.” The leash must then be taken off the dog and placed on the chair/bucket ringside before the dog crosses the course start line. Handlers must be sure to not throw the leash in a way that could hit the leash runner or other ring personnel. After the course has been completed, the handler will place the dog back on leash prior to

- exiting the ring.
- A-Frame 54” at APEX
- Teeter at full height 25”
- Tire jump will be at standard jump heights (see Standard Jump Heights below).
- Dog will stand or sit on pause table to end timer. This is a positionless obstacle.

*NOTE: Certificate of Readiness MUST be submitted by the Project Leader*

### Standard Jump Heights

Wither height	Up to 14”	Over 14” to 18”	Over 18”
Jump Height	4”	8”	12”
Veteran dogs	4”	4”	8”

- Dogs up to 14” high at withers will have a standard jump height of 4”, dogs over 14” up to 18” high at withers will have a standard jump height of 8”, dogs over 18” high at withers will have a standard jump height of 12”.
- Veteran dogs (7 years old or over) will jump 4” lower than their standard height.
- No dog will jump lower than 4”.
- All dogs will be measured at the withers by a leader.
- Course Familiarization & Warm-Ups
- Youth are allowed and encouraged to walk the course prior to the class (without dogs). Walk through is for handlers only.
- Youth are encouraged to ask questions during the walk-through.
- Warm -up jumps may be provided in a designated area.

### Collars/Leashes

- Flat quick release collars without hanging tags are permitted (Level I only).
- No choke collars/slip chains or training devices
- Dogs must enter and exit the ring on leash and under control. Upon entering the ring, the judge will indicate that the leash may be removed to start the run by saying, “Good Luck.” The leash must then be taken off the dog and placed on the chair/bucket ringside before the dog crosses the course start line. Handlers must be sure to not throw the leash in a way that could hit the leash runner or other ring personnel. After the course has been completed, the handler will place the dog back on leash prior to exiting the ring.

### Handlers Position

- Handlers are permitted to be on any side of the dog.
- Level 1 handlers should complete one change of side at one tunnel.
- Level 2 handlers should complete two changes of side at one tunnel and one jump.
- Level 3 handlers should complete three changes of side at one tunnel, one jump, and one additional obstacle.

### Obstacles

- Minimum of 16 feet between obstacles/jumps.
- Obstacles should stand alone.
- Level I will include hoops, tunnels and a pause table. Number of obstacles will be 10-12.
- Level II may include hoops, jumps, tunnels, tire jump, A-frame, teeter, weave, and pause table. Number of obstacles will be 10-13.
- Level III may include hoops, jumps, tunnels, tire jump, A-frame, teeter, weave, broad/long jump, dog

walk, and pause table. Number of obstacles will be 11-15.

## Time

- Time restrictions will be placed on all classes.
- Level I will have a maximum course time of 3 minutes.
- Level II will be designated with a longer running time.
- Level III will have a shorter running time than Level II.
- Veteran dogs will be given extra time.
- Time faults will be added for exceeding SCT. One point fault for each second over time.
- Time will be scored to the nearest 100<sup>th</sup> of a second.
- Time will start when dog crosses the plan of the first obstacle and end when dog places all paws on the Pause Table.
- In the event of a tie, tie will be broken by a tie breaker.

<b>Yards Per Second (YPS) Run Time - Regular</b>			
	<b>4"</b>	<b>8"</b>	<b>12"</b>
Level I	1.60	1.80	2.15
Level II	1.80	2.00	2.40
Level III	2.00	2.20	2.65

## Scoring

### Non-Obstacle Faults

- In all classes, the handler shall direct their dog through the course without a collar (except Level I) or lead. No food, balls or other device may be used within ten (10) feet of the ring. Any violation of these rules would invoke an Elimination for that run.

### Start Line/Lead out advantage

The following must be adhered to regarding lead out advantage:

- Handlers may lead out to as many obstacles as they wish.
- A handler may touch the dog to position the dog for the start of the course and may return to the dog and reposition it nicely without restriction, as long as neither the handler nor the dog has crossed the start line.
- Once a handler crosses the start line to lead out, he or she may not touch the dog for any reason. If the handler does so, he or she shall be faulted with an "F" or "E" depending on the circumstances.
- Once a handler has taken a lead out, if the dog breaks position (without crossing the start line), the handler may go back to reposition the dog to successfully approach obstacle #1, but may not touch the dog while doing so. The handler may not lead out again (e.g. the dog must leave with the handler).
- If a dog breaks position before the handler is ready and has started the course, the handler may not reposition the dog at the start of the course. This is training in the ring and the handler shall be eliminated. Note: After being eliminated, the dog/handler may re-start the run and continue their run up to 60 seconds, but their run will be scored as 'Elimination'.

### Standard Faults - charged at 5 faults:

- Wrong course - Taking an obstacle in the wrong order or going the wrong direction over an obstacle (including back-weaving three or more weave poles). If all four paws of a dog touches an obstacle not in sequence or in the wrong direction then will be charged with a wrong course.
- Knocking a bar off a hurdle - Applies whether it was the dog or the handler that knocked the bar down.
- Touching the dog - Incidental touches not aiding the dog are expected and not charged.
- Dog steps on or walks over the Broad Jump
- Outside help or interference - Such as someone telling the handler which obstacle is next, any commands or cues to the dog etc. 5 faults up to elimination, depending on severity.

- Handler touching any obstacle – Charged for Each Occurrence
- Handler jumps over the jump with the dog - Charged for each occurrence.
- Weave poles - if dog starts incorrectly, restart and no penalty. If they pull out after starting, fix and continue for no faults. Can also restart. Just need to complete them correctly. Backweaving 3 poles is a fault of 5 faults for wrong course.
- Separating a breakaway tire.

### **Major Faults - charged at 20 faults:**

- Omitting any obstacle - Includes being told by the judge to omit the obstacle because of the four paw safety rule. It also includes such things as the handler omitting an obstacle by choice or by error, or crossing the finish line before the last obstacle is completed correctly. A 20-point fault will be assessed.
- If a dog attempts the A-Frame or Dog Walk but doesn't go above the contact zone with all four paws, they may reattempt 2 more times without penalty. Once a dog has all four paws above an obstacle with a contact zone and then bails it is considered omitting an obstacle and is assessed a 20-point fault.
- Failure to complete any contact obstacle – a dog will be assessed a 20-point fault if the dog skips or in any way bypasses an obstacle, without reaching a point of completion. The point of completion for contact obstacles shall be when all four paws are on the descent side of the obstacle. This shall be the descent side of the A-frame and the descent ramp of the dog walk.
- Missed Contact Zone when exiting the equipment and will be assessed a 20-point fault. (Yellow or contrasting color zone)
- If the dog attempts the teeter and bails before the teeter begins to tip, they may reattempt 2 more times without penalty.
- Bailing off the see-saw - once it begins to tip and the dog leaves the plank before it touches the ground, it is a fly-off and 20 faults. Once the plank touches the ground and the dog does not touch the contact zone with at least one paw, it is considered a missed contact and 20 faults. Only one 20 point fault will be assessed.
- Unsafe performance on any obstacle. The judge will decide what is unsafe performance.

### **Time Faults**

- The dog shall be assessed time faults for each second that the dog exceeds the Standard Course Time (SCT). The judge is solely responsible for establishing the SCT. The timekeeper shall always time each round to the 1/100ths of a second. 1 point for each second exceeding SCT.
- Each class level that is timed (Level II and Level III) has a specified time limit within which the course must be completed (standard course time).
- The timer will time each performance to .01 of a second.
- Any time beyond this allotted time is considered a time fault and will be penalized on the number of faults per one-second basis. Times will be rounded down to whole seconds.
- No bonus points are added for completing the course faster than required.
- Maximum course time will equal SCT plus 20 seconds. A whistle will blow and handler and dog must leave the course.

### **Elimination and Automatic White Ribbon**

- Dog who stops working and fails to resume within a reasonable time or leaves the ring without immediately returning under control.
- Dog out of control.
- An extreme amount of outside help
- An excessive amount of touching the obstacles or the dog.
- Fouling the course.
- Handler requests to leave the ring before completing run.



**Elimination and no ribbon: (these offenses shall be immediately reported to the coordinator).**

- Poor sportsmanship - including, but not limited to...swearing, treating a dog harshly, complaining loudly about judges or other exhibitors, using treats in the ring, failure to omit and go on to the next obstacle when instructed to do so by the judge.
- Abuse of dogs anywhere on the show grounds.

**Final Score**

- A perfect score (clean run) is 100 points.
- Course faults and time faults (for those classes that are timed) are added together and subtracted from 100 to give the final score.
- Level I scores will be based on total score minus faults.
- The dog and handler team with the highest score and fastest time is the winner.
- If a run-off is required, both dogs will re-run the entire course again. Only one runoff will be done per tie for safety.

**Ribbons and Awards**

- Ribbons will be based on Blue 85-100 points, Red 70- 84 points, White 0- 69 points, except in the cases defined above.
- One Champion and one Reserve Champion (awarded only to blue placing scores) will be awarded for timed events.
- For Level I, any team exceeding course time will receive a white ribbon.
- For timed events only: If champion and reserve champion awards are issued, they will be awarded to the top exhibitors in each class provided that the scores qualified for a blue ribbon. In the event that two or more dogs tied with the same score, the dog with the fastest time will be champion and the second fastest dog will be reserve champion. If there is a tie between two exhibitors for champion or reserve champion, the event committee may award up to two champion and reserve champion awards and no tie breaker is necessary. However, if there is a tie for champion with more than two participants a run-off will be conducted as specified under “Scoring”. The winner of the run-off shall receive the champion award and the second-place winner receiving the reserve champion award, with no additional awards given. If there is a tie for reserve champion with more than two participants a run-off will be conducted as specified under “Scoring”. The winner of the run-off shall receive the reserve champion award and no other awards will be given.

**Equipment Inventory - revised May 2024**

Dog Walk – height 37” – approximately 27’ in length (3 sections @ 8’10” each)

A-Frame – height – each side 9’3” approximately 3-4’ wide

Teeter – length 12’ – base heights 17”, 21”, 25”

Pause Table

Open Tunnel (4) 3 - approximately 10’ each; 1 - 15’

Tire Jump

Weave 6 pole Set (1)

Standard Jumps 4’ bar (5); includes (2) with wings

Hoop Jumps (4)

Broad/long jump (1) - doubles as an obedience jump

Tunnel Bags (7 sets)

NADAC Hoop Jumps (10)

Equipment Trailer

Equipment Use Policy: Request to check out equipment & trailer should be addressed via email to the Dog Project Coordinator: [pimacountydog@gmail.com](mailto:pimacountydog@gmail.com). After written email approval from the Dog Project Coordinator, with cc to Extension Agent, equipment may be checked out by 4-H youth or leaders from the Extension Office (520)626-5161. Equipment may be checked out for a two-week time period. Equipment may not be checked out during April or any other shows/events. Individual checking out and using the equipment & trailer are solely responsible for all contents. Equipment may only be checked out for 4-H purposes.