

# Obedience Guidelines



# Obedience Guidelines

Obedience allows 4-H'ers the opportunity to show their dogs to the best of their ability. Judging is based on the ability of the handler and dog to perform standard exercises.

## **General Obedience Guidelines:**

1. Baiting of dogs with food, toys or other training devices is not allowed in the obedience ring. Exhibitor may carry no food or other training devices into the obedience ring.
2. All dogs must be kept on leash except when in the obedience ring. Dogs must be taken in and out of the ring on leash. Dogs must be kept on leash in the ring when brought in to receive awards and when waiting before and after the group exercises. The leash shall be six feet long and made of leather, nylon or cotton webbing.
3. Dogs in the obedience ring must wear plain, well-fitting slip collars of chain, nylon or leather or well-fitting, plain buckle collars. Fancy collars, spiked collars, special training collars or collars which are too tight or too loose are not permitted. There should be no objects hanging from the collar. Special training collars may be used for training, if desired, but must be removed at the show site.
4. When either a command or signal is mentioned in these guidelines, only that single command or signal may be given by the handler. Any extra commands or signals must be penalized, except when the guidelines specify that both may be given. When a signal is given, it must be a single gesture with one arm and hand only. The arm must immediately be returned to a natural position. Delay in following a judge's order to give a command or signal must be penalized, unless the judge because of some distraction or interference directs the delay. The dog's name is not considered a command except in exercises requiring signals only.
5. Loud commands by handlers to their dogs create a poor impression of obedience and should be avoided. Shouting is not necessary, even in a noisy place, if the dog is properly trained to respond to a normal tone of voice. Commands the judge feels are excessively loud will be penalized.
6. The suggested size ring for an indoor show is 35 feet wide and 50 feet long for all obedience classes. The floor surface or covering should provide firm footing for the largest dogs. Rubber or a similar non-slip material must be laid for the takeoff and landing at all jumps unless the surface does not require it. The judge should determine this.
7. At an outdoor show, the rings should be about 40 feet wide and 50 feet long. The ground must be clean and level, and any grass should be cut short. For open classes, the show committee is responsible for providing an appropriate place for the handlers to go completely out of sight of their dogs.
8. In 4-H obedience fouling the ring results in a 50% reduction in total score. If a dog repeatedly "marks" the ring, that dog may be excused from that class as determined by the judge.
9. The order of when long sits and downs are done will be at the discretion of the show committee and announced before the beginning of classes.

# Explanation of Obedience Classes

## Pre Novice Obedience:

The following is an outline of obedience exercises a 4-H member should learn during the first year in the project.

1. Heel on Leash	45 Points
2. Figure 8	25 Points
3. Stand for Examination	30 Points
4. Recall and Finish	40 Points
5. Long Sit (1 minute)	30 Points
6. Long Down (3 minutes)	<u>30 Points</u>
<b>MAXIMUM</b>	<b>200 Points</b>
<b>Qualifying</b>	<b>170 Points</b>

## **Explanation of the Exercises**

All exercises in Pre Novice Class are on leash.

### 1) **Heel on Leash**

Dog will walk at handler's side in whatever direction the judge commands. Dog will walk on handler's left side and sit when handler stops. The pattern shall be the same for each handler and will include changes of pace (fast and slow), left and right turns, and about turns.

### 2) **Figure 8**

The Figure 8 shall be a pattern of a figure eight around two posts (people) about 8 feet apart. The handler shall enter the ring with his dog on a loose leash and shall stand with the dog sitting in the heel position. The judge asks if the handler is ready and then gives the command "forward." The handler may give the command or signal to heel, and shall start walking briskly, with the dog on a loose leash.

For both exercises the importance of a slack leash cannot be over stressed during practice and showing. The dog shall walk close to the left side of the handler without crowding, permitting the handler freedom of motion at all times. At each order to "halt" the handler will stop within two steps, the dog shall sit straight and smartly in the heel position without additional command or signal, and shall not move until the handler again moves forward on order from the judge. It is permissible after each halt, before moving again, for the handler to give the command or signal to heel. The leash may be held in either hand, at the handler's option, provided the hands are in a natural position. However, the handler and dog will be penalized if, in the judge's opinion, the leash is used to signal the dog or give assistance.

### 3) **Stand for Examination**

Handler will stand dog in a comfortable position, give the dog a "stay" command and walk to the end of the leash. Judge will examine dog to determine if dog remains in position. When instructed to "return to your dog," the handler will return to the heel position on the dog's right side and remain there, without the dog moving, until judge says, "Exercise finished."

4) **Recall and Finish**

Dog is in a sit position. When instructed, the handler will give a “stay” command and go to the end of leash. On judge’s command, handler will call “Dog’s Name, come” and the dog will come to handler and sit in front of handler. When calling the dog the handler’s arms should be folded in front of the handler or hanging at the handler’s side. In addition, points may be deducted for tugging on the leash, bending at the waist, patting the legs or any other “double” command. Upon order or signal from the judge to finish, the dog must go to the heel position and sit. The method by which the dog goes to the heel position shall be optional with the handler, provided the dog goes smartly to the heel position. (Exception: A guide dog’s finish will be in accordance with guide dog regulations, finish is included in command “come.” At no time does the dog stop until in the heel position.)

5) **Long Sit**

In the long sit all competing dogs in the class take the exercise together, except if there are more than 12 dogs, they shall, at the judge’s option, be judged in groups of not less than six dogs nor more than 12 dogs. The dogs that are in the ring shall be lined up in catalog order (as they completed the previous 4 exercises) along one of the four sides of the ring. On order from the judge, the handlers shall sit their dogs (if they are not already sitting). On further order from the judge to “Leave your dogs,” the handlers shall give the command and/or signal to “stay” and immediately leave their dogs, go to the end of their leashes and line up facing their dogs. After one minute, the judge will order handlers, “Return to your dogs,” whereupon the handlers must return promptly to their dogs, each walking around and in back of his/her dog to the heel position. The dogs must not move from the sitting position until after the judge says, “Exercise finished”. A dog that breaks its sit must be quickly and quietly pulled to the handler and held until the end of the exercise.

6) **Long Down**

The long down in the pre-novice class is done in the same manner as the long sit, except that instead of sitting their dogs, the handlers on order from the judge will down their dogs without touching the dogs or their collars. The judge will order the handlers back after three minutes. The dogs must stay in the down position until the judge says, “Exercise finished.” A dog that breaks its down must be quickly and quietly pulled to the handler and held until the end of the exercise.

**Novice Obedience:**

The following is an outline of obedience exercises a 4-H member should learn after graduating from Pre Novice.

1. Heel on Leash and Figure 8	40 Points
2. Stand for Examination	30 Points
3. Heel Free	40 Points
4. Recall and Finish	30 Points
5. Long Sit (1 minute)	30 Points
6. Long Down (3 minutes)	<u>30 Points</u>
<b>MAXIMUM</b>	<b>200 Points</b>
<b>Qualifying</b>	<b>170 Points</b>

## **Explanation of the Exercises**

### **1) Heel on Leash and Figure 8**

Dog will walk at handler's side in whatever direction the judge commands. Dog will walk on handler's left side and sit when handler stops. Any tightening or jerking of the leash or any act, signal, or command which in the opinion of the judge gives the dog assistance shall be penalized. The judge will give the orders "forward," "halt," "right turn," "left turn," "about turn," "slow," "normal" and "fast." (These last three orders signify that both the handler and dog must change pace and move forward at noticeably accelerated or decelerated speed.) These orders may be given in any sequence and may be repeated if necessary. In executing the about turn, the handler will do a right about turn in all cases. The judge will say "Exercise finished," after the heeling.

Then the judge shall say "Are you ready?" before starting the Figure 8. The handler then gives the command "heel." With his/her dog in heel position, the handler shall walk around and between the stewards who shall stand about eight feet apart. The handler may begin in any direction. The Figure 8 in the Novice Class shall be done on leash. There shall be no turns in the Figure 8, but the handler and dog shall go twice completely around the Figure 8 with at least one halt before the end of the exercise.

### **2) Stand for Examination**

The judge will give the order, "Stand your dog and leave when ready." The handler, without further orders from the judge will stand or pose the dog off leash, give the command or signal, "Stay", walk forward about six feet in front of the dog, turn around and stand facing the dog. The method by which the dog is made to stand or pose is optional with the handler who may take any reasonable time in posing the dog in the show ring before deciding to give the command or signal "stay." The judge will approach the dog from the front and will touch the dog's head, body, and hindquarters only, and will then give the order "back/return to your dog," whereupon the handler will walk around behind the dog to the heel position. The dog must remain in a standing position until the judge says "Exercise finished." The dog should show no shyness or resentment at any time during the exercise.

### **3) Heel Off Leash or Heel Free**

This shall be executed in the same manner as Heel on Leash, except that the dog is off leash. The dog must remain in the heel position. Minor deductions, (1/2 to 3 pts.), shall be made for lagging, forging, crowding, heeling wide and poor sits. Substantial deductions (3-5 pts.) shall be made for additional commands or signals and for failure to change pace.

### **4) Recall**

Upon the order or signal from the judge "Leave your dog," the dog is given the command or signal to "stay" in the sitting position while the handler walks forward about 35 feet towards the other end of the ring, turns around, and faces his dog. Upon order or signal from the judge, "Call your dog" the handler calls or signals the dog. When calling the dog the handler's arms should be hanging naturally at the handler's side. In addition, points may be deducted for bending at the waist, patting legs or any other "double" command. The dog must come straight forward at a brisk pace and sit in front of the handler's feet, close enough so the handler can readily touch its head without moving either foot or having to stretch forward. The dog should not touch the handler nor sit in between his feet. Upon order or signal from the judge to finish, the dog must go to the heel position and sit. The method by which the dog goes to the heel position shall be optional with the handler, provided the dog goes smartly to the heel position. (An exception is made for guide dog puppies: the dog will not stop at front, but shall move around behind the handler into the heel position with no extra commands.)

### 5) **Long Sit**

In the long sit all competing dogs in the class take the exercise together, except if there are more than 12 dogs, they shall, at the judge's option, be judged in groups of not less than six dogs nor more than 12 dogs. The dogs that are in the ring shall be lined up in catalog order (as they completed the previous 4 exercises) along one of the four sides of the ring. Handler's armbands weighted with leashes shall be placed behind the dogs. On order from the judge, the handlers shall sit their dogs (if they are not already sitting). On further order from the judge to "Leave your dogs," the handlers shall give the command and/or signal to "stay" and immediately leave their dogs, go to the opposite side of the ring, and line up facing their dogs. After one minute, the judge will order handlers, "Return to your dogs," whereupon the handlers must return promptly to their dogs, each walking around and in back of his/her dog to the heel position. The dogs must not move from the sitting position until after the judge says, "Exercise finished". A dog that breaks its sit must be quickly and quietly pulled to the handler and held until the end of the exercise.

### 6) **Long Down**

The long down in the novice class is done in the same manner as the long sit, except that instead of sitting their dogs, the handlers on order from the judge will down their dogs without touching the dogs or their collars. The judge will order the handlers back after three minutes. The dogs must stay in the down position until the judge says, "Exercise finished." Points may be deducted for minor movements and barking or whining. A dog that breaks its down must be quickly and quietly pulled to the handler and held until the end of the exercise. Before leaving the ring, dogs shall be placed on leash.

## **Pre Graduate Novice Obedience:**

The following is an outline of obedience exercises a 4-H member should learn after graduating from the Novice class.

All off leash:

1) Heel on Leash	40 Points
2) Stand for Exam	30 Points
3) Heel Free and Figure 8	40 Points
4) Drop on Recall	30 Points
5) Long Sit (3 minute)	30 Points
6) Long Down (5 minutes)	<u>30 Points</u>
<b>MAXIMUM</b>	<b>200 Points</b>
<b>Qualifying</b>	<b>170 Points</b>

## **Explanation of the Exercises**

### 1) **Heel on Leash**

Performed in the same manner as the Heel on Leash in the Novice Class with the exception of the Figure 8.

### 2) **Stand for Examination**

Done in the same manner as the Stand in the Novice Class.

### 3) **Heel Free and Figure 8**

Executed the same as the Novice exercise except that the figure 8 in this class is done off leash.

#### 4) **Drop on Recall**

Same as the Novice Class recall except handler leaves dog in a sitting or standing position, handler moves approximately 15' away, turns towards dog, judge instructs handler to call dog, while dog is moving to handler the judge instructs or signals to down dog, handler downs dog, the dog must drop completely to a down position until an order or signal from the judge. The handler calls or signals, and the dog must rise and complete the exercise as in the Novice Class.

#### 5) and 6) **Long Sit and Long Down**

3 and 5 minute respectively: These exercises are performed in the same manner as in the Novice Class except that after leaving their dogs, the handlers must cross to the opposite side of the ring. After three minutes for the sit, or five minutes for the down and return to their dogs on order from the judge. Handlers will remain in position until the judge says, "Exercise finished" at which time the handler may praise their dog. A dog that breaks its sit or down must be quickly and quietly pulled to the handler and held until the end of the exercise. Before leaving the ring, the dogs shall be placed back on leash.

### **Graduate Novice Obedience:**

The following is an outline of obedience exercises a 4-H member should learn after graduating from the Pre Graduate Novice class. This class and subsequent classes are judged based on AKC Rules regulating these classes.

1) Open Heel Free	40 Points
2) Moving Stand and Exam	30 Points
3) Moving Drop on Recall	30 Points
4) Dumbell Recall	40 Points
5) Recall Over Broad Jump	30 Points
6) Long Down (3 min)	<u>30 Points</u>
MAXIMUM	200 Points
<b>Qualifying</b>	<b>170 Points</b>

### **Explanation of the Exercises**

#### 1) **Open Heel Free**

This exercise and scoring will be executed in the same manner as the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure 8 except that the dog is off leash.

#### 2) **Moving Stand and Exam**

The principal features of the exercise are that the dog heel, stand and stay as the handler moves away, accept the examination without shyness or resentment, and return to the handler on command.

The handler will stand with the dog sitting in heel position at a point indicated by the judge. The judge will ask, "Are you ready?" and then order "Forward". The handler will command or signal the dog to heel. After the handler has proceeded about 10 feet, the judge will say, "Stand your dog". Without pausing, the handler will command and/or signal the dog to stand, and continue forward about 10-12 feet. He or she will then turn either to the right or left to face the dog, which must stand and stay in position. The judge will approach the dog from the front to examine it as in dog show judging. The exam will not include the teeth or testicles.

When the judge orders, "Call your dog to heel," the handler will command and/or signal the dog to return to the heel position. The dog should return to heel position in a brisk manner.

### 3) **Moving Drop on Recall**

The principle features of this exercise, are that the dog heel, execute a prompt response to the handler's command and/or signal to down and remain in the down position until called or signaled to come, and come on command.

The handler will stand with the dog sitting in the heel position at a point designated by the judge, who will then ask "Are you ready?" and order "Forward". The handler may command or signal his or her dog to heel, and will walk briskly and naturally. After he or she has gone about 15 feet, the judge will order "Down your dog". Without pausing, the handler will command and/or signal the dog to down. He or she will continue forward to the end of the ring, turn around and stand in a natural manner facing the dog. On the judge's orders or signals, the handler will command or signal the dog to come and to finish.

### 4) **Dumbbell Recall**

This exercise will be performed like the Novice recall, but with the dog holding the dumbbell. In addition to the Novice Recall, the additional features are that the dog promptly take, hold and deliver the dumbbell when commanded.

The handler will stand with the dog sitting in the heel position in a place designated by the judge. When the judge orders "Give your dog the dumbbell," the handler will present the dumbbell with one command. The dog must accept it readily and hold it. When the judge orders, the handler may give the command and/or signal to stay while he or she walks forward to the other end of the ring and turns to face the dog. On the judges' order or signal, the handler will command or signal the dog to come. When the dog is sitting in front of the handler, the judge will order, "Take it," and the handler will give a command and take the dumbbell. The finish will be done as in the Novice Recall.

### 5) **Recall Over Broad Jump**

The principle features of the exercise are that the dog stay until directed to jump, clear the jump on a single command or signal, and immediately return to sit in front of the handler.

The handler will stand with his or her dog sitting in the heel position at least eight feet from the jump, facing the lowest end of the lowest hurdle. When the judge orders "Leave your dog," the handler will give command and/or signal to stay, go at least 8 feet beyond the highest edge of the last hurdle, turn and face the dog as in the Novice Recall. On the judge's order, the handler will give the command or signal to jump. The dog must clear the entire distance of the broad jump without touching it and, without any further command or signal, immediately sit in front of the handler and finish as in the Novice Recall.

### 6) **Long Down**

This exercise will be performed and scored as in the Open group exercise, except that the judge will order the handlers to return after 3 minutes.

## **Open and Utility Classes:**

Refer to the American Kennel Club obedience regulations for specific exercise directions for Open and Utility classes.