

AGILITY GUIDELINES



Pima County 4H Dog Project
Rev. Sept 2022

MISSION STATEMENT:

Agility is to be a fun, safe opportunity to train and develop a trusting relationship between 4H 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 4H'er 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 handler 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 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 4-H'ers 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 sign 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- The Project Coordinator is the final authority regarding 4H 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
- Dogs On Course North America (DOCNA) rules will be used for Pima County 4-H events
- Scoring will be time plus faults
- Youth may show two dogs per level
- Training aids and treats are not permitted on the course.
- Dogs may be brought to the start line on slip leads, slip chains, 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.
- 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. Vinegar, 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 again.
 - 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.
 - Vinegar, 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.

Disabled Handlers

- 4H 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
- Pregnant dogs will not be allowed to participate. Female dogs in season will run last

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
- Participants
- 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
- Level 1 (Hoops and Tunnels) no pulling your dog through or over an obstacle

Competition Class / Trials Descriptions

Level 1 Hoops, Tunnels, Pause Table

- Open to any dogs not trained on Contacts
- One entry per youth
- May use quick release collar (with no attachments i.e. license)

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

Level II (off leash)

- Open to dogs and handlers that have been trained on contacts
- A Frame 42" AT APEX
- Teeter at its lowest height
- Sit on pause table

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

Level III

- Open to Advanced dogs and handlers that have been trained on contacts and have Leaders approval to enter class
- A Frame 66" at apex
- Teeter at full height
- Down on pause table

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

Jump Heights

- 4", 8" or 12"
- All dogs will be measured at the withers by a leader
- Veteran dogs (7 years old or over) will jump 4" lower than their normal height

Course Familiarization & Warm-Ups

- Youth are allowed and encouraged to walk the course prior to the class (without dogs)
- Youth are encouraged to ask question during the walk- through
- Walk through is for handlers only
- Warm -up jumps may be provided in designated area

Collars/Leashes

- Flat quick release collars without hanging tags are permitted (Level I only)
- No choke collars or training devices
- Leashes are not allowed

Handlers Position

- Handlers are permitted to be on any side of the dog

Obstacle

- 5 to 18 feet between obstacles/jumps
- Obstacles should stand alone

Time

- Time restrictions will be placed on all classes
- Level II will be designated with a longer running time
- Level III will have a shorter running time than Level II
- Faults will be added for going over running time
- Time will be scored to the nearest 100th of a second
- Time will start and end when dogs crosses the Start and Finish
- In the event of a tie, tie will be broken by a tie breaker

Scoring

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 any paw of a dog touches an obstacle not in sequence or in the wrong direction will be charged with a wrong course.
- Refusal – Dog runs past the current obstacle or stops forward progress very near the obstacle.
- On and off the table - Charged for the first occurrence only.
- Knocking a bar off a hurdle - Applies whether it was the dog, the handler, or the leash 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
- Dog goes between the tire and the frame (dog must complete the tire jump properly to avoid the major fault of omitting the obstacle)
- Anticipation of table count - Dog gets off before the judge finished saying the word "go".
- Missed Contact Zone when exiting the equipment. (Yellow or contrasting color zone)

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.
 - Three refusals of a single obstacle. Note that the 5 points charged for each refusal shall be superseded by the 20 point deduction here.
- Uncorrected improper entry to weave poles
- Failing to correct a skipped weave pole
- Bailing off the see-saw - Before it tips down and touches the ground.
- Bailing off the dog walk - Before beginning the descending plank
 - Failure to correct on pause table - For any dog that jumps off before the beginning of the word "go".

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.
- A dog that attacks or threatens to attack a human or another dog.

Time Faults:

- 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 (or fraction). Times will be rounded down to whole seconds.
- No bonus points are added for completing the course faster than required.

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.
- The dog and handler team with the highest score is the winner.
- If a run-off is required, both dogs will re-run the entire course again, in the reverse direction and the original scores will not be changed. 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 to Level II and Level III. There will be no Champion or Reserve Champion award in the Level I Class.
- *For the 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

Dog Walk
A-Frame
Teeter
Pause Table
Open Tunnel (2)
Chute (closed tunnel)
Tire Jump
Weave Set (1)
Standard Jumps (4)
Hoop Jumps (4)
Equipment Trailer/Vehicle registration B

Equipment Use (policy)

Request to check out equipment should be addressed via email to the Dog Project Coordinator: pimacountydog@gmail.com. After written email approval with cc to Extension Agent, equipment may be checked out by 4-H youth or leaders from the Extension Office (520)626-5161.

