



Established 1957

AUSTRALIAN SHEPHERD CLUB OF AMERICA

6091 E State Hwy 21, Bryan, TX 77801

P: (979) 778-1082

F: (979) 778-1898

www.asca.org

Office Contact: manager@asca.org

Board Contact: asca.execsec@gmail.com

COVID-19 Related Guidelines for ASCA Sanctioned Events

May 28, 2020

Fellow ASCA Members,

The coronavirus outbreak is still a serious situation and ASCA recognizes the potential for spreading the virus in the environment of dog shows and trials. The safety of all our members and competitors is of utmost importance to ASCA, and the Board continues to monitor the situation closely. The Business Office has resumed regular operations and, as states open or loosen restrictions, many affiliates may choose to have events. The committees have worked on some changes to some of the protocols and exercises conducted in their sport. Those changes are included here.

The following are general ASCA guidelines that will remain in effect until further notice:

1. ASCA is still leaving the decision on whether to conduct events or not to the affiliates. However, affiliates must follow state and local rules and orders. Disobeying local/state orders reflects negatively on the affiliate and ASCA.
2. ASCA will provide affiliates that decide to cancel events already sanctioned with refunds for the sanctioning fees if they cancel events due local/state orders, the closing of sites due to the present situation, etc. If affiliates decide to postpone sanctioned events rather than cancel, the Business Office will work with show coordinators to make those changes as smoothly as possible. Affiliates should immediately establish a refund policy and communicate with competitors who have already entered.
3. Until further notice, ASCA affiliates should add to the premium any restrictions that the show site has imposed, if the site requires that competitors sign a waiver, if judges will be wearing masks, etc. It is important that competitors have this information before they send their entries and travel to the site.
4. A revised entry form will become effective on June 1st, 2020. All affiliates having events after this date should only accept the new entry form.
5. ASCA recommends that shows and trials be conducted outdoor whenever possible. Exposure can increase when a large group gathers indoors with recirculating ventilation and it is often more difficult to maintain social distancing. If indoor events are held, then further measures to prevent exposure may have to be taken in order to protect everyone (i.e. requiring masks in the building, prohibiting the use of blow dryers, maintaining social distance and appropriate distance in crating areas, limiting the number of people inside at one time, etc.).
6. Competitors showing any symptoms or with relatives showing symptoms must stay home and not participate in events. People who test positive or have relatives who test positive for coronavirus should follow state and local quarantine rules.
7. When different events take place in the same indoor facility, affiliates should establish the same guidelines/protocols for all.

8. While masks are not required, ASCA encourages their use, particularly in indoor events. This is to prevent/decrease the possibility of anyone spreading the disease, even when asymptomatic.
9. ASCA recommends the following hygiene practices at events:
 - a. When hiring judges, affiliates should inquire from them if they are planning to wear a mask and of any specific procedures that they would like the affiliate to implement.
 - b. Affiliates should disinfect surfaces such as, but not limited to, tables at the rings, tables for taking entries, timers, and pens.
 - c. ASCA recognizes that day-of entries are an important source of income. Affiliates should establish protocols to minimize exposure while taking entries (i.e. checks only, electronic payments when possible, requesting that the competitor fills the entry away from the table, etc.).
 - d. Social distancing should be observed at the show/trial tables, line-ups, people sitting ring side, between timers and stockdog judges, etc. This means observing the 6 feet distance from all tables.
 - e. Paperwork, ribbons, and prizes should be handled only by the judge, steward, and show coordinator/course director.
 - f. Affiliates should have hand sanitizer available for stewards, entry clerks, and judges.
 - g. Affiliates should have a plastic container available where competitors can return flat ribbons and rosettes if they so desire. Do not reuse ribbons for at least 14 days.
 - h. Wash hands often and keep hands away from the face.
 - i. ASCA highly recommends training dogs to accept that people and judges may wear masks.
 - j. Handlers should wash and sanitize equipment such as gloves, dumbbells, obedience articles, etc. as often as possible.
 - k. Avoid hugging, shaking hands, high fives, etc.
 - l. Avoid sharing equipment and chairs.
 - m. ASCA strongly suggests that affiliates refrain from having potlucks and communal beverage dispensing, such as coffee pots. The best thing to do in providing meals for workers and judges is to purchase prepared meals.

Agility Specific Guidelines

Leashes & Leash Runner:

1. During the Covid-19 timeframe, leash runners may touch the leash with gloves, wipes, or a grabber.
 - a. If a grabber is used it should be disinfected after each leash.
 - b. If gloves are used, they should be disinfected or changed after each leash.
 - c. If wipes are used, they should be disposed of after moving the leash.
2. If practical, disinfect the surface where the leash is placed at the end of the run.
3. If placing leashes on the floor, an area can be marked off by tape so leashes can be placed in the same spot.
4. Exhibitors may choose to wear or pocket the leash, so long as it is attached tightly or completely inside the pocket. If the leash falls out or the dog grabs for the leash to play, it will be considered a toy and the run will be eliminated. ASCA assumes no responsibility if the handler chooses to wear or pocket their leash and it catches on obstacles and/or causes the handler to trip.

Conformation Specific Guidelines

1. Exhibitors and others should wear a mask they personally provide. It is too much of a hardship to require a club to provide masks.
2. The affiliate should provide masks to the show committee and judges if they personally do not bring their own. But the judges and show committee should bring their own.
3. Gloves - it would be impossible for a judge to wear gloves to examine the dogs. But the show committee is recommended to wear gloves when handling books, pens, ribbons, etc.
4. Restrict number of people at the shows to only the exhibitors, show committee, and judges. All other family members should stay home!
5. Keep social distancing between dogs while in the ring and while waiting to enter the ring. If a class is large, split the class.
6. The ring shall have an entrance and an exit to provide additional social distancing.
7. The exhibitors will show the bite to the judge.
8. The show committee has the right to ask anyone not exhibiting a dog to leave the grounds.
9. The show committee should provide hand sanitizer for the judge and show committee. Exhibitors should bring their own.
10. Ultimately it is up to the judge to accept any assignments if they feel uncomfortable with travel and judging. If a judge has an underlying condition, they should not accept assignments. Maybe recommend that clubs use as many local judges as possible.
11. Each state and even counties in those states have their own guidelines they have mandated. And each club must follow those guidelines for the time of the event.
12. Recommended that each club include in the premium that each exhibitor must bring their own PPE.

Obedience Specific Guidelines

These temporary measures were developed to enact procedures for safely holding ASCA obedience trials during the Covid-19 pandemic. Regulations differ across the many jurisdictions where ASCA trials are held, and it is the host club's responsibility to know the laws affecting the trial site. Judges and stewards are the most at risk of exposure (handlers are only in the ring for a short time). These measures are in effect immediately, until further notice.

Ring Conditions:

1. The judge will ensure that a 6' distance is maintained between themselves and the handler, including when welcoming a team into the ring, and between all handlers in the ring at the same time.
2. A chair will be placed inside the ring. Handlers will place their own dumbbells, directed retrieve gloves, and article bags on this chair; leashes will be placed by the handler either on the chair or at another designated location. Stewards and judges are not required to handle leashes and dumbbells and may use tongs or wear gloves to handle directed retrieve gloves and scent articles. Handlers will be allowed to enter the ring (with or without their leashed dog) to lay their dumbbell, articles and/or gloves on the specified chair or table, then exit the ring to prepare to enter with their dog for judging.
3. For all classes not concluding with the Sit Stay - Get Your Leash, Stand Stay - Get Your Leash, or Beginner Novice Recall, after performing the last individual exercise, the handler will pick up the leash and attach it to their dog's collar. After leashing their dog, the handler will gather all personal belongings from the chair before exiting the ring.

4. Stewards should each carry a slip lead at all times in the event that a dog is out of control.
5. Stewards should maintain their distance while setting jump heights, bringing jumps in and out of ring etc. Host clubs should consider arranging armband order by jump height, to minimize jump changes.
6. Stewards may prefer to have only one person touch a piece of equipment (Beginner Novice signs and holders; ODX cone etc.), and/or to wear gloves when touching equipment.
7. Judges may announce scores from inside the ring, with class entrants remaining outside the ring, spaced 6' apart. If handlers enter the ring for awards, they should remain 6' apart. Awards may be self-serve after scores are announced.
8. Judges may choose to disallow win photos to be taken inside the ring.

Beginner Novice:

1. Walkthrough: only 2 handlers are allowed in the ring at a time, maintaining a 6' distance at all times; judges may limit the number of times each handler gets to walk the course, especially for large classes. Host clubs should consider the additional time needed for walkthroughs when determining entry limits.
2. Figure 8: Tall cones (minimum 18" height) should be used as posts, instead of stewards. Cones will be set out prior to the Beginner Novice classes and left in the ring until the end of the Beginner Novice classes.
3. Sit for Exam: The judge is to ensure that the handler walks the full 6' away from the dog. The judge will approach the dog from an angle between the dog's side and its front, maintaining 6' from handler at all times but allowing the dog to see the judge approaching. The judge may wear a glove to examine the dog.

Novice:

1. Figure 8: Tall cones (minimum 18" height) should be used as posts, instead of stewards. Cones will be set out prior to the Novice classes and left in the ring until the end of the Novice classes.
2. After the Figure 8 and the judge's order "Exercise finished," the judge will direct the handler to place their leash at the specified location before setting up for the Stand for Exam.
3. Stand for Exam: The judge is to ensure that handler walks the full 6' away from the dog. The judge will approach the dog from an angle between the dog's side and its front, maintaining 6' from handler at all times but allowing the dog to see the judge approaching. The judge may wear a glove to examine the dog.
4. Group exercises: handlers should maintain 6' spacing at all times, including when lining up to enter the ring, and when exiting the ring.

Open:

1. Figure 8: Tall cones (minimum 18" height) should be used as posts, instead of stewards. Cones will be set out prior to the Open classes and left in the ring until the end of the Open classes.
2. The ODX ring should be designed so that the dog does not confuse the Figure 8 posts with the Directed Open Exercises (DOE) cone. An alternate ODX ring set-up is to use one of the two Figure 8 cones as the DOE exercise cone, and to remove and replace the other Figure 8 cone during the DOE exercise; if this option is chosen, then the placement of the cone to be removed should be marked on the ground. If this option is used, then an 18" or taller cone is to be used in the DOE exercise.

3. Handlers are to pick up their own dumbbell from the chair by the ring gate and place it on the chair after the retrieve exercises. Preferred orders for Open B classes are those in which the two retrieve exercises are consecutive (Orders I, II, and IV).
4. Only one steward should set each jump height. Only one steward should place and remove the ODX cone.

Utility:

1. Scent Discrimination: stewards may wear gloves and/or use tongs to set out and pick up scent articles and to handle the article container, and/or may use hand sanitizer after handling each set of articles.
2. Directed Retrieve: stewards may use gloves and/or tongs to set out and pick up gloves, and/or may use hand sanitizer after handling each set of gloves.
3. Moving stand and Examination: The judge will approach the dog from an angle between the dog's side and its front, maintaining 6' from handler at all times but allowing the dog to see the judge approaching. The judge may wear gloves to examine the dog. Should the dog travel forward toward the handler such that the judge cannot maintain a 6' distance from the handler when approaching the dog, then the judge should give the order "Call your dog to heel" without approaching and examining the dog, and a non-qualifying score will be given for the exercise.
4. Only one steward should set each jump height.

Rally Specific Guidelines

These guidelines were developed with the most stringent requirements, to account for regulatory differences between different jurisdictions where ASCA trials are held.

General:

1. All maps should be available outside in the crating area. When also posted, each should be 6 ft apart, only 1 handler at a time may review or take a picture of the map.
2. Judges are encouraged to provide sufficient maps so that there is no sharing needed.
3. Ring armband order should be strictly observed at all times.
4. In the case of indoor trials, the affiliate should determine the maximum number of handlers, with their dogs, that may be in the building at one time, according to the size of the building and the need to maintain the six feet social distance. Handlers may remain in the building only until their score is announced or posted. On exiting the building, the handler should notify the next handler that they may enter the building.
5. Separate entry and exit gates are required for all classes, with a minimum of 40 ft between. Judge will not greet handler upon entering the ring, they should only ask "are you ready?"
6. If the building is large enough to accommodate crating, there should be 6' between set-ups, and handlers should maintain physical distancing at all times.
7. Social distancing should be maintained outside the building, and in parking area.
8. When establishing entry limits, extra time for multiple walk-throughs should be allowed. 10 minutes per group of 3 or 4 should be observed. An area for waiting to walk should be designated, but sufficient to allow proper social distancing.
9. Judges, stewards, and competitors should wear masks within 10' of the ring and the judge/steward table; club should provide judge and stewards with masks; handlers should bring their own masks and gloves. Judges and stewards are the most at risk of exposure (handlers are only in the ring for a short time).

10. Only one person should fill out the judge's books. To save time, the table steward should complete the judge's books.
11. Calculators, pens, and pencils should only be used by one person, and should be sterilized after use by one person.
12. The steward table should be set perpendicular to the ring to maximize distance between judge & table steward.
13. All judges score sheets should be given to the judge at the beginning of each class, including A, B & C scoresheets. Score sheets should be given to the judge in run order & only the completed scoresheet at the end of each run will be passed to the table steward. Only one clip board will be used and only handled by the judge. The table steward should wait until the judge moves away from the table to retrieve each score sheet.
14. Scores should be given verbally to the handler by the table steward at the end of the run and should be called out to the person writing scores on the board.
15. Clubs should limit the supplies at the table to only those required. Extra items should be kept in a separate location to avoid contamination.
16. Judges books for A, B & C classes should be kept by the trial secretary until all runs are completed before returning to the judge to announce. The judge will announce winners, then leave the sheets in the middle of the table to be picked up by the table steward.
17. The timer should remain 6 ft from the table steward, times shall be called out orally.
18. If more than 1 timer is used during the trial, the stopwatch should be thoroughly disinfected.
19. Powder-free nitrile gloves should be provided for judges and stewards.
20. Hand sanitizer, soap, spray disinfectant and disinfectant wipes should be provided each day.
21. Judges should plan their ring to minimize jump changes.
22. Only one steward can touch a piece of equipment (signs, cones, etc.). Gloves should be worn.
23. Only 1 person may pull and change signs.
24. Gloves worn by stewards should be changed if the steward leaves, then returns to the ring area, or as often as the steward feels necessary.
25. Judges should nest all courses to eliminate the need to move numbers between classes.
26. All equipment should be sanitized at the beginning and end of each trial on each day by one designated club member.
27. Judge will announce scores at the end of each class. The class will be called back into the building for the announcements. Exhibitors will remain outside the ring, spaced 6 ft apart, and should wear masks.
28. Ribbons and awards are to be placed on a separate table at least 6' from the judge/steward's table; awards are self-serve after scores are announced.
29. Score sheets will not be available for review at trials where these rules are be utilized.
30. A chair, leash holder, or designated location on the ring gating is required for leashes. Handlers should place their own leash at the designated location, while maintaining control of their dog, either in a stay, or at their side. Stewards and judges are not to handle leashes items.
31. Judges are encouraged to design courses that eliminate the need for a leash runner for all classes.
32. A stay exercise is encouraged.
33. A club member/volunteer should disinfect all surfaces using an EPA approved disinfectant in the immediate ring area, or inside a building, on a regular basis.
34. Non-aerosol disinfectants should be used to eliminate the possibility of particles spreading into the ring where dogs are working.

Judges Books:

1. Clubs are encouraged to group dogs by jump height on the judge's books. This will minimize the number of jump changes required.
2. If entries in A, B and C, consideration might be given to doing all of one height, then the other to further reduce the number of jump heights. Be sure the run order posted for the handlers reflects this change to avoid confusion & delays.
3. If the Table Steward did not take entries, all paperwork should remain untouched in a binder, box, or envelope five (5) days before giving to the Steward. The same waiting period is needed if the final paperwork will be completed by other than the Table Steward. Per sources, the virus lives only a few minutes on most paper, but could last up to 5 days on a few types of paper.

Walkthroughs:

1. Only one steward, wearing gloves, is to touch signs. If the judge wants a sign moved, the steward should make the change.
2. Only 3 - 4 handlers in the ring at a time. 6 ft distance is required at all times. If handlers request a sign be moved to accommodate a larger dog, the steward should return to make the actual change to the sign. The judge, steward and any exhibitors should maintain a 6 ft distance at all times.

Stockdog Specific Guidelines

All affiliate clubs, their members, contestants, and spectators will follow any and all guidelines set forth by the Local, State, or Federal Government in which the event will take place.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors of the Australian Shepherd Club of America