

Smart Dog Training Covid 19 Trial Policy

With grateful thanks to Team Okanagan for providing some of the content of this document.

Our understanding of COVID-19 is evolving quickly, and COVID-19 information and directives change as our Public Health officials respond to new knowledge. These protocols are current at the time of writing but may be subject to change as the year progresses. The principles guiding the protocol, however, remain the same.

Safety is always the first priority.

Successful trialing in a COVID-19 environment is everyone's responsibility. It is not solely the host's responsibility to ensure the health and safety of individuals attending a trial.

The BC Ministry of Health's guidelines -- [*COVID-19: Going Forward*](#) -- identify physical distancing as the primary control along with hygiene/hand washing, and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

BC's Public Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, has issued a public health order that currently restricts public gatherings to a maximum of 50 people.

A Note about PPE

Non medical face masks have been determined to play a role in slowing the spread of the COVID virus in as much as they slow the droplet spread from an individual carrying the virus. This mechanism does not provide any protection for the wearer - and in situations such as a trial setting they will be effective only if everyone is wearing one so that we offer protection to each other. Masks are not a substitute for physical distancing.

Single use disposable gloves are of limited use, and in non-medical settings their use is so far not recommended since the virus can be transmitted as easily on the gloves as on the hand. Theoretically gloves provide some protection to the wearer; this assumes scrupulously correct use and disposal. Unless this is the case glove use may pose an increased risk to others since it tends to reduce the use of hand washing. Perspex barriers are in use in various areas to provide protection for individuals who are in prolonged indoor contact with a large number of people throughout the day, for example office receptionists, cashiers etc. Such a barrier at an agility trial should be unnecessary provided all guidelines are followed.

We are in this together, Be Safe, Be Calm, Be Kind - It is Everyone's Responsibility.

These messages have been the hallmark of the British Columbia response to the pandemic and they will be essential for a successful trial that is above all safe - and is also enjoyable for all.

Safe trials depend on everyone following the guidelines - no exceptions.

You must not attend the trial if you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or feeling unwell. You will be asked to leave the trial site immediately if you are visibly unwell.

COVID-19 symptoms mimic other respiratory ailments, especially in the early stages. The Provincial Health Officer has been very clear that individuals must err on the side of caution and anyone with respiratory symptoms must be assumed to potentially infected with COVID unless proven otherwise. This means that even if you are sure you have a common cold or seasonal allergies, if you are coughing persistently or have upper respiratory symptoms, you may not attend the trial.

Entry fees will be refunded for any individuals who cancel their entry due to illness.

However, anyone who attends the trial and who is visibly unwell or showing symptoms consistent with COVID- 19 infection will be asked to leave the trial site immediately and will not receive a refund.

Everyone attending the trial must comply with all COVID-19 precautions, guidelines, rules, and regulations developed by Smart Dog Training and in place at the trial. These are intended to ensure the safety of all participants. It may be a challenge to break old habits and every effort will be made to be calm and be kind, but we must also be safe. Anyone who is consistently failing to comply may be dismissed from the trial with no refund of fees.

Trial Entry

Only registered competitors, registered volunteers and trial officials may be on the trial site. No friends or family may attend.

Trial entry will be as follows:

- Entry will be limited to 45 competitors to allow for a comfortable buffer under the current 50-person limit and to allow for the judge(s) and potentially a few non-competing volunteers.
- Entry will be online and electronic payment is preferred.
- At the trial chair's discretion, competitors may add additional runs at the trial and pay for them by cheque, or by e-transfer the following day.

The following information will be referenced on the premium, which will include a statement that applying to enter the trial with a note that applying to enter the trial implies the entrant's acceptance of the guidelines. The trial confirmation sent to competitors will include a number of statements related to Covid 19. All competitors must forward these statements, and their agreement with those statements, to info@smartdogtraining.ca no

less than 24 hours before the start of the trial. (See appendix A for template).

Because incidental contact cannot be completely prevented ***all two footed participants, must wear a mask except:***

- ***While in the ring running a dog;***
- ***In their own physically distant crating area or car;***
- ***In the warm up ring and maintaining physical distance;***
- ***In the upper field walking their dog and maintaining physical distance;***
- ***The judge, while actively judging or in the ring running their dog.***

You may remove your mask when you set up to start your run, place it in a resealable plastic bag, and put it in your pocket or leave it at the finish line with your leash. Put your mask on again before you leave the ring.

If the trial is held indoors, access to the barn is limited to the judge, scorekeeper, active volunteers, the current competitor, and one spectator if the competitor wishes their run to be recorded. No other spectators will be permitted in the barn. Passing around devices for recording is strongly discouraged.

Eating and drinking can only occur in your crating area.

Please bring your own mask(s) and sufficient hand sanitizer for your personal use during the trial. Sanitizer will be provided for use before and after volunteer assignments.

There will be no concession stand.

Dog cooling stations (pools) will be set up.

Guidelines for Running a Smart Dog Trial

Physical Distancing.

The default is a physical distance of 6 feet at all times unless engaged in an activity that makes this impossible - e.g. setting the contact equipment, building the ring.

Cars will be parked 6 feet apart.

Shade tents are permitted but must have a space of 6' between them and may not be shared except by a family unit.

General information usually covered in the "general briefing" will be emailed with the trial confirmation. A very short briefing update will be provided outside the barn on each day, during which people must stay 6 feet apart as they gather to listen.

Course maps will be available via email on each day of the trial. In addition two copies will be posted at the trial. One person only to be at the map station.

Walk throughs will be adjusted depending on the number of entries per class and to provide smaller numbers of people walking at one time. Be courteous to fellow competitors.

Competitors will receive a running order for the trial by email. Remember that it may change as the trial progresses. Entrants are responsible for listening for their name being called out and for being at the gate on time.

No leash runner. Competitors have the option of placing their leash at the exit or if that is not practicable for their dog the AAC is permitting competitors to carry a leash onto the course for the duration of the run, tucked into a pocket. Please read their instructions carefully. Competitors should not remove their dog's leash until they are sure the person ahead of them has their dog's leash on.

As per AAC Position Statement May 25th 2020 “Competitors may place the dog’s leash in their pockets when running the course. The leash must be small enough to fit completely inside the pocket. Note: if the dog grabs the leash while running or jumps at the handler’s pocket, this will be scored as an “E” (toy in the ring). If the leash falls out of the pocket during the run and the dog does not interact with it, there will be no fault. This in effect until December 31, 2020.”

When a dog is in the ring, two dogs 6 feet apart may wait in line on the marked spots (or further if your dog requires).

Volunteers.

No signup sheets. The call for volunteers will go out ahead of the trial. Additional volunteer roles will be necessary to maintain the site - please ensure that you sign up to help.

Volunteers will wear masks during their assignments.

All volunteers will hand sanitize immediately before and after their assignment. Sanitizer will be available in several places around the ring.

Course builders. Hand sanitize immediately before and after the course build. Work gloves are not a substitute for hand washing or sanitizing and the crew should remove their hand gloves and ensure they are stored at their own crating area between course builds.

The gate, timer and scribe should use their own writing implements.

The gate volunteer will continue to be responsible for calling the list and ensuring teams enter the ring in a timely manner. The gate volunteer will be positioned 6’ away from the gate and will have a copy of the running order. **No gate list will be posted at the gate.**

No one may enter the six foot bubble around the gate person.

The timer and scribe will be seated 6 feet apart from each other.

Ring crew volunteers will be seated at a greater distance apart (as usual). At the beginning of their assignment, they should determine who will be responsible for each piece of equipment and only handle “their” pieces. Two people who wear masks while adjusting the A frame can be considered low risk since the task takes a minimal amount of time. Ring crew members who chose to wear work gloves must adhere to the guidelines that apply to the course builders.

Only the head timer will manage and handle the timing equipment (except for the timer pad) for the duration of the trial or at least one person for each day. This will include all instances which require touching the equipment during course builds and trouble shooting.

Judges

The judge’s table will be set up with a 6 foot buffer from the score keeper and a second judge if present. The judge should be asked to bring their own masks and office supplies (pens calculators etc.) Smart Dog Training will supply hand sanitizer.

Scorekeeper

The scorekeeper’s seating will have a 6-foot buffer zone. Competitors may not enter the scorekeeper’s bubble. For questions about scores or results, **please text the scorekeeper at 250-744-3017.**

Hand washing and sanitizing.

Frequent hand washing and sanitizing has been identified as the most important way to prevent the spread of COVID 19 together with physical distancing and refraining from touching your face.

There will be a sanitizing solution outside the porta potty and there is a sink for handwashing in the benching barn. Please wipe off the inside and outside door handle of the porta potty after use. Both the porta potty and sink will be sanitized at frequent intervals throughout the trial.

Competitors are asked to bring sufficient hand sanitizer for their own use throughout the weekend. In addition, Smart Dog Training will provide sanitizer for all ring crew before and after each assignment.

The timer pad will be sanitized after each event. Pens will be sanitized as necessary (i.e., if the volunteer is not using their own pen).

The scoring binders will be wiped down after each use. Scribes should handle the score sheets as little as is practical.

The score keeper should be especially vigilant in handling score sheets as little as possible and hand washing or sanitizing immediately before and after each episode of entering scores.

Dog Measuring

As per the AAC Position Statement May 25th 2020.

Dog Measurement – In order to limit the transfer and handling of documents, for the remainder of 2020, dog ID cards will not be signed by the officiating judge. Judges will provide a one-time measure for dogs under 2 years or dogs with no measurement recorded on their card. A temporary COVID-19 measurement card will be given to the handler to be used during this time until normal measuring procedures can be resumed. Club must not tick “height card viewed” in Agility Rocks until the handler has a signed, permanent ID card.

If a dog has one measurement on their ID card, they can continue to compete in the height indicated by that measurement. In order to limit close contact between handler and judge, the final measurement should be completed at a later date. This in effect until December 31, 2020.

For the measuring that will occur: Minimize contact as much as possible. While every effort will be made to accommodate dogs that are nervous, if the measurement cannot be completed in a reasonably efficient manner the attempt may be aborted at the judge’s discretion and the handler has the option of running FEO or withdrawing from the trial with a full refund.

The measuring wicket will be sanitized between each dog.

Results

Results will be posted each night. We may attempt to e-mail results during the day if time permits.

To be determined whether there will be results binders available at the trial.

Ribbons

Ribbons will not be self-serve. Ribbons will be handled by one designated person, who will hand sanitize before doing so, and handed out twice per day. This includes Q and placement ribbons. If you miss the ribbon presentation times, please ask at the end of the day. (Note the ribbons are currently in a sealed plastic box and have not been handled since the November trial). A title sheet will be available on the counter in the benching barn. Only one person at a time may be at the counter. People should hand sanitize before and after handling the title sheet. If competitors wish to defer receiving a ribbon it can be claimed at a later date.

Important Reminders

At all times avoid unnecessary or inadvertent touching of equipment on course or surfaces anywhere on the trial site.

Anticipate that many of the usual routines we have come to expect at trials are changing. Be gracious and kind in adapting to the 'new normal' of agility trialing. Without changes we will be unable to continue with any trials.

Remind one another to adhere to the protocols and measures that are in place at this trial to ensure everyone is safe. This is a shared responsibility. Recognize that people may inadvertently slip up and offer a gentle kind

reminder, if necessary.

If any individual consistently disregards the guidelines, whether inadvertently or intentionally, it is everyone's responsibility to make sure unsafe behaviour is not permitted to continue, since it places everyone at risk. People not complying with the trial protocols and measures may be asked to leave the trial.

References

BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) (2020). [Symptoms of COVID-19](#). (webpage).

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BC Ministry of Health & BCCDC (n.d.). [Coronavirus COVID-19 Hand Hygiene](#) (poster).

BC Ministry of Health & BCCDC (n.d.). [Coronavirus Prevention](#) (poster).

BC Ministry of Health & BCCDC (April 28, 2020). [Protecting workers at large industrial camps during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). (Guidelines).

Appendix A.

BC Ministry of Health & BCCDC (n.d.). [Reduce the spread of COVID-19](#) (poster). BC Ministry of Health & BCCDC (n.d.). [Sick or self-isolating? Do not enter](#) (poster).

BC Provincial Government (May 13, 2020). [Key steps to safely operating your business or organization and reducing COVID-19 transmission](#).

BC Public Safety and Emergency Services (May 15, 2020). [BC's Restart Plan](#).

Bromage, Erin PhD (May 6, 2020). [The risks – know them - avoid them](#). Online blog.

Health Canada (May 9, 2020). [Hard surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers \(COVID-19\)](#).

“Please, go outside”: COVID-19 much less likely to spread outdoors, Dr. Bonnie Henry says. (April 29, 2020). CBC News.

Policy for Pandemics. Issue 21: [A harm reduction approach to physical distancing](#) (April 21, 2020). Edited by Andrew Potter PhD, Paisley Sim & Charlotte Reboul. Online newsletter.

Samuel, Sigal (April 24, 2020). [Why you're unlikely to get the coronavirus from runners or cyclists](#). Online publication by Vox.

ViaSPORT British Columbia (May 13, 2020). [British Columbia's return to sport. Frequently asked questions](#).

APPENDIX A

Email to be sent to registered competitors and volunteers before the trial:

Welcome to our trial - we are excited to gather together and celebrate with our friends and our pups!

These are not our usual times - so as part of our “new normal” we need to hear from you **before** the trial.

Looking forward to a great weekend!

Please forward the following statements and your agreement to them to info@smartdogtraining.ca no later than 24 hours before the trial start date:

I confirm that I have read Smart Dog Training’s Covid Trial Guidelines and agree to comply.

I am currently free from any COVID-19 symptoms including, sore throat, coughing, sneezing, fever, chills.

I have not been in contact with anyone with COVID-19 symptoms in the past 14 days.

I have not travelled outside of BC, nor spent any time in contact with anyone from outside of BC in the past 14 days. (Persons from outside of BC who have completed a 14-day isolation period are exempt).

I have completed and returned the volunteer sign up email.