



Canine Showmanship

Notes

Age of Members: The canine project is open to junior, intermediate, and senior members.

Age & Type of Dogs: Dogs can be of any age, but members and leaders need to use caution with puppies to make sure they are not being overworked.

Ownership: Members need not own their own dog but can borrow a dog to use in the project. However, it is important that the member have access to the dog for practice purposes. Dogs may be purebred or crossbred.

Grooming & Condition: Dogs must be clean and groomed for each practice session and for showing. Dogs also must be healthy and sound enough that the demands of obedience training does not cause them undo distress.

Vaccines: Dog must be up-to-date on Distemper & Parvovirus vaccinations to participate in project meetings & shows.

Crates: Crate training and dog etiquette a necessary requirement of the project to be done at the first meeting. Crates are mandatory in order to participate in the project. Dogs do not necessarily have to always be in their crates when not working, but it allows for them to have a place to go to rest the dog or free up the member for other activities. At exhibitions it will be mandatory that water bowls for dogs be in all crates.

Un-spayed Female Dogs in Season: If an un-spayed female is in season it cannot participate in a meeting with other dogs, and at a show must be the last dog in the ring so as to not distract the other dogs.

Aggressive Dogs: At any signs of aggression (either dog to dog, dog to human, or dog to other animals), the project leader can ask that the dog be removed from the group. The member is welcome back to the project with another dog. At shows it is the judge's discretion to dismiss any dog they feel is showing signs of possible aggression. If other 4-H officials or staff see behavior outside of the show ring that causes them to question if the dog may become aggressive they are to ask the member to isolate the dog until the judge can be asked to assess the dog's state mind.

Dress Code for Handlers: Skirts, dress pants or jeans (without holes) are acceptable, but not shorts, tights, very short skirts or sweat pants. Shirts with collar & sleeves (short or long) or a blouse are encouraged, whereas tank tops and sleeveless tops are not. Sneakers are allowed, but hard soled/closed toed boots or shoes are preferred. No sandals, flip flops, etc.

Leashes: Dogs must be leashed at all times. Leashes are to be 2 meters long (or 3-5 meters for recall) and in good condition. Retractable leashes not allowed. Collars must be used and need to be in good condition. Choke collars are allowed, but leaders need to be especially careful that junior members have the knowledge and timing to use them correctly. If choke chain is used it must be put on correctly or the member will be disqualified.

Touching the Dog: Members are not to physically manipulate their dogs to perform a maneuver in the show ring.

Urination or Defecation: Dogs that relieved themselves in the show ring will have points deducted from their score.



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Rewards: A handler is not permitted to carry or offer food or toys in the show ring. Food and toys are encouraged as training aids to be used for training and practice only.

Rally Obedience: 4-H canine classes are inspired by rally obedience competitions. The chief objective of rally is to provide a fast-moving and motivational activity that demonstrates the competency of handler and dog in performing basic obedience exercises without requiring exact precision for success. Dogs in rally events should demonstrate willingness and enjoyment. To that end, handlers may use praise, encouragement, and petting throughout a rally course. Unlike regular obedience, instead of waiting for the judge's orders, the competitors proceed around a course of designated stations with the dog in heel position. The course consists of 10 to 20 signs that instruct the team what to do. Similar to rally, 4-H canine classes will utilize signs that will show the handlers what maneuvers are expected at each part of the pattern. Signs will be placed to the right of the handler's path, except for change of direction which will be directly in front. At shows the handlers will be permitted a walk through the course 10 minutes prior to start time without the dog.

Heel Position: Heel position can be used whether the dog is sitting, standing, lying down, or moving at heel. Heel means the dog should be in a straight alignment and facing the same direction as the handler. The dog should be close to the handler's left leg without crowding. This permits the handler freedom of movement. The area from the dog's head to shoulder should be in line with the handler's left hip.

Finish: In this exercise, the dog moves from a sit position in front of you, to a sit position in the heel position on your left side.

Stand for Examination: The handler stands the dog for the judge to examine. The judge will first give the order for examination. The handler will stand the dog and command and/or signal the dog to stay. The handler will walk six feet in front of the dog, turn and face the dog. The handler may choose the method for posing the dog, within a reasonable time limit, before giving the command and/or signal to stay. The judge will approach the dog from the front and will touch its head, back and hindquarters only. The judge will then give the "back to your dog" command. The handler will then return to the dog and stand in heel position. The dog must remain in standing position without moving its feet until the judge says "Exercise finished". The dog must show no shyness or resentment during this exercise.