The AKC supports each club’s informed decision to reschedule, postpone or cancel their respective events, as well as support clubs ready to hold events in locations that are open and permit gatherings. As events start up across the country, people need to feel safe while enjoying their dog activities. The AKC urges clubs to take precautions for the benefit of their exhibitors. Events will need to be held differently as the safety of participants and event officials is prioritized over efficiency.

The following is a list of suggested best practices that may be helpful when planning or attending an event. Event locations, facilities and dates will differ - it is ultimately up to the clubs to decide what actions best fit their specific situation. In order to inform participants of the club’s expectations, host clubs should publish their guidelines with the premium, judging schedule and include signage/flyers at their event.

**General Practices for Clubs and Exhibitors**

1. Clubs, official and participants are required to follow state and local guidelines that apply to the area and site where the event is held.
2. Practice social distancing consistent with current guidelines. Avoid congregating to the extent possible.
3. Masks should be worn consistent with current guidelines.
4. Exhibitors and committee should consider wearing disposable or washable gloves.
5. Have plenty of hand sanitizer placed for people to use and soap in restrooms.
6. Wash hands as frequently as possible. Have disinfecting spray at bathroom facilities for people to spray door handles (or anything else they touch). Leave doors open if possible.
7. If you utilize portable toilets, please ask for a handwashing station to be delivered as well and make sure it is kept functional for the full event.
8. Avoid shaking hands or hugging.
9. Avoid touching dogs that are not your responsibility.
10. Avoid common use pens/pencils – bring your own.
11. Crating should be at least six feet apart, except for “family” groups of exhibitors and dogs.
12. Disinfect surfaces in common use areas as often as possible (tables, chairs, doorknobs, etc.) Clubs and facilities may consider not providing chairs.
13. Meals – no potlucks. No MACH cakes. Hospitality area should avoid community items such as salt and pepper shakers, condiments, creamers, etc. It is recommended that the club supply boxed lunches for judges and volunteers and a separate cooler for each judge. Participants should consider bringing their own lunch/drinks.

14. Parking areas – Park with sufficient distance between vehicles if possible.

Trial Planning

1. May need to limit the number of exhibitors based on federal, state or local guidelines.
   - Clubs may choose to limit trials based on the number of exhibitors allowed in the event space. For example, 50 people (exhibitors, volunteers, judges, event committee) and runs not to exceed 350 for the trial.
   - Consider running the trial in shifts in order to reduce congregating and accommodate more exhibitors.
   - Clubs consider grouping exhibitors by blocks and add expected time each block to start. One example would be Large Dogs (20, 24, 24C) Ex/M Standard & JWW then Small Dogs (4,8,12,16) Ex/M Standard & JWW. Then run all Open and Novice if the club is only having Standard and JWW classes.
   - Clubs may be able to have more people at outdoor events where people can spread out and not be in close proximity.

2. Crating
   - If possible, ask exhibitors to crate from vehicles.
   - If indoor space is limited the club may want to request the next group to not show up earlier than 30 minutes before their start time.

3. Awards area – Recommend that this area will need the space to have exhibitors line up 6’ apart to pick up ribbons and stickers. No self-serve boxes. Will need volunteer for awards area. If prizes are offered have them spaced out for people to pick up.

4. Trial Secretary Area – Recommend that it is set up with a minimum of six feet between the Trial Secretary area and exhibitors.

5. Judges Table – Judges should have a separate worktable that is not accessible to exhibitors.

6. Ring Set-Up – Evaluate current set-up and see if rings can be reoriented to allow for better spacing of exhibitors. This may include looking at entrance/exit doors of building to see if a different setup can help set up a one-way flow.

Trial Practices

1. Masks shall be worn as by required state/local guidelines. Clubs may require masks for all exhibitors and all trial help, even if not required by state/local guidelines. Judges must wear masks as required by state/local guidelines, the club or the facility. It is recommended that clubs also review CDC Guidelines for updates and best practices before each event and apply those recommendations.

2. Surfaces need to be wiped down. This includes agility equipment that is touched. Clubs will need to make sure that restrooms, doors, tables, chairs, etc. are clean/sanitized during the day.

3. Ring Crew –Masks must be worn if required by state/local guidelines. Clubs may choose to require even if not mandated in their area. Hand sanitizer should be available and easy to access ringside or at volunteer
positions. Ring crew may also wear gloves. Recommend that ring crew use their own chairs. If not, then they should be wiped down between use.

- Gate Steward shall be provided at least a 6’ buffer around them. Recommend using gating or flagging tape to designate gate steward’s space. They should be the only one to mark the gate board once the boards are at the ring entrance. Recommend they do not leave their pens unattended.

- Gate boards can be laid out before class for exhibitors to check in – but exhibitors must use their own pens.

- Leash Runner – Can either use and then dispose of a paper towel used to handle each leash or can apply hand sanitizer between handling of each leash. If using a “grabber” then between leashes the grabbing part should be wiped down/cleaned between leashes. Note: For the rest of 2020 exhibitors may place leashes in their pockets when running the course. Leash must fully fit in pocket.

- Course Builders – Recommend gloves or hand sanitizer for them. Do not share course maps with others. Make sure to wipe down the measuring wheel before/after use.

- Timer/Scribe should sit at the ends of the table. Scribe should only use their pens. The table, timer console and chairs should be wiped down with each shift change. If more than 2 people working than proper spacing should still be adhered too.

4. Score Sheet Runner – Recommend the use of gloves and limit the number of pick-ups from the Scribe area. Suggest that the scribe puts sheets in a basket and score runner carries basket over instead of having the score runner touch each individual sheet. Suggest not using duplicate scribe sheets.

5. Briefings may be done in the parking lot or over a PA system/ring speaker so exhibitors may stay spread out. Exhibitors do not have to come into the ring for briefing – they may stay outside of the ring. Briefings will not be required for Excellent/Master level classes.

6. Recommend only VMOs will measure dogs. No measurements will be done by the judge of record. VMOs may choose to not measure dogs. If they do, the measuring devices and table should be wiped down between dogs. VMOs must sanitize their hands between dogs.

7. Walk-thru group sizes should be reduced. Suggest a maximum of 25 exhibitors per walk-thru.

8. Space out exhibitors when lining up to run. Place cones or tape lines at intervals in the area that dogs are lined up in to stand at. May also set up holding areas for the on-deck team, in the hole and third team in line.

9. Suggest using chutes for dogs to enter and leave the ring to reduce contact with gating. If the club wants to use gates add “Gate Opener/Closer” ring crew position since exhibitors would not have gloves on at that point or available hand sanitizer. They could wear gloves, use a paper towel to open/close gates or sanitize gate/hands as needed.

10. Recommend that results be posted to a wall so that exhibitors are not all trying to flip thru results notebooks. This will help exhibitors stay spread out and not touching items.

11. Course maps must be posted per AKC Agility Regulations. Suggest not printing copies for all exhibitors. Recommend that exhibitors take pictures of the maps. To help facilitate the process and physical spacing post course copies in two locations minimum. Trial Secretaries could also email out or post to their website the morning of the trial the course maps for exhibitors to access. It is recommended that there are 5-10 course maps per course available for those that cannot take photos or access website with course maps and that these are passed out by a club volunteer if needed.
12. Judges should not have the next team come into the ring until the finishing dog is leashed up if leashes are not at the finish area.

13. If the trial is being held in a building, consider designating one-way entrance and exit doors.

Policies that Have Been Temporarily Suspended

1. Application Late Fees – Event application late fees are waived through the end of October 2021. This provides clubs more flexibility in planning or rescheduling their events.

2. Judges - Waive the judge’s assignment limitations of 30 days within 200 miles until December 31, 2021

3. Leashes - Exhibitors may place leashes in their pockets when running the course or wear on themselves (i.e., clip like a belt around the waist) through December 31, 2021. Note: if the dog grabs the leash while running this will be scored as an “E”.

4. Title Requirement - The two-judge requirement to title in the Novice through Excellent level agility classes was suspended as of July 1, 2020 through December 30, 2020. It is being extended through December 31, 2021.

Permanent Regulation Change to Trial Closing Date:

1. Chapter 1, Section 14 and Section 16 – Events may close not less than seven (7) days prior to the trial. This is a change from fourteen (14) days prior to the trial. This change will be effective January 1, 2021.

Participants are expected to follow state, local government, facility and event guidelines. Clubs should be prepared to enforce the guidelines that apply to their event.

These Suggested Best Practices by be periodically updated. Please check the AKC Agility website (www.akc.org/sports/agility/) for the most up to date version.

CDC - How to Protect Yourself and Others:

For questions or additional suggestions, please contact the Agility Department at agility@akc.org.

Stay Safe – Enjoy Your Dog!