



AAC Position Statement: Hosting Trials and COVID-19

The AAC supports each club's decision to cancel or postpone their respective events. The AAC also supports clubs planning to hold events in locations that are open and permit gatherings. As restrictions are lifted or relaxed across the country, clubs need to take appropriate precautions when holding a trial, with the emphasis being on the safety of participants. Trial efficiency will likely need to take a back seat and the running of the event should not compromise safe hygiene practices.

With a situation that is continually evolving, it is up to the clubs to determine the guidelines and restrictions applicable to their event in their own township and Province and make an informed decision based on advice from the government health departments. Clubs should also consult with the scheduled judge before going ahead with the final event planning.

Trial hosts are free to set conditions limiting entry. Some examples could be: a limit in numbers, limit to club members only, or a limit based on place (province) of residence. Specific guidelines established by the club must be published in the premium list, distributed to competitors, and posted visibly at their event. Clubs MUST state their refund policy for all eventualities, including cancellation of the event, withdrawal of entry before closing and withdrawal at any time due to competitor illness. Competitors are required to sign an agreement with the host that they will follow all requirements imposed by the club, in particular all COVID-19 related practices.

The AAC emphasizes that Clubs, officials and participants are required to follow all local and provincial government public health guidelines that apply to the area and site where the event is held.

Policies that Have Been Temporarily Suspended or Modified Effective until December 31, 2021 unless otherwise stated

1. Trial cancellation and all change fees waived
2. Trial application Late Fees – Limit on late applications has been suspended and late application fees are waived. This provides clubs more flexibility in planning their events.
3. Judges will not be penalised for not meeting minimum judging assignments for this year.
4. Provisional judges will be given extra time to complete judging requirements.
5. Clubs cancelling trials due to COVID-19 are not required to pay judges for course design for the cancelled trial. Judges may use those courses at a later date.
6. Judges withdrawing from trials due to COVID-19 related reasons (reluctance to travel or travel restrictions, flight cancellation, fears for health of self or family members etc.) – If the trial is less than 6 weeks away, judges should fulfill their obligations to the club by supplying courses. These courses may be judged by one or more substitute judges following the hierarchy defined in motion 200406. Remuneration to be split between designing judge and substitute judge as per the Judge's Handbook. With agreement from all parties, if the substitute judge is willing and able to design their own courses,



the original judge is absolved of their responsibility and may choose to use any courses already designed at a later date.

7. Dog Measurement – Measurement stations should ensure safety precautions which will protect both the judge and the handler. These could include the use of Personal Protective Equipment, barriers or any other method to ensure safety. Judges will resume signing Dog ID cards. Dogs over 2 years of age must have at least one official measurement recorded on their Dog ID Card up to December 31, 2021.
8. In order to limit unnecessary contact and to eliminate the need for measuring at every trial, judges will provide a one-time measure for dogs under 2 years. A temporary COVID-19 measurement card will be e-mailed to the handler to be used during this time. Dogs under 2 years of age may compete with their temporary card until they reach 2 years of age, at which point they will require an official measurement.
Club must not tick “height card viewed” in Agility Rocks until the handler has a signed, permanent ID card.
9. Dog Measurement – 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.
10. 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.
11. Due to concerns for ring crew, (changing heights, handling an obstacle that numerous competitors have stood in close proximity to) use of the table in course design is temporarily suspended. Judges should consult with Course Approvers to make any necessary changes.
12. Ring crew – if using electronic timing, timer and scribe task may be carried out by the same person.
13. Clubs requiring new site and/or new equipment inspections should contact their Regional representative. Regional Directors may allow for flexibility with regard to inspection dates and method of inspection. Clubs due for re-inspection may apply to their Regional Director for an extension.
14. Junior Handler status for those turning 18 years of age in 2020 will be extended to December 31, 2021. Junior Handler status for those turning 18 years of age in 2021 will be extended to December 31, 2022.
15. Due to reduced numbers of trials and because of travel restrictions, the need to use (the same) local judges, the title requirement for earning legs under two different judges is lifted.
16. The minimum indoor ring area has been reduced to 7200 square feet from 8000 square feet while maintaining a minimum width of 60 feet. A 5% tolerance will be allowed on the specified dimensions.



The main reason is to allow existing hosts to reduce the course area in order give extra room for handler physical distancing.

This reduction also allows Hosts to find lower cost venues in order to hold and host limited entry trials in a cost effective manner. Larger venues may currently not be available and/or affordable for hosting trials with the numbers required for reduced number gatherings and distancing. It is NOT the intent that smaller venues should be accommodating large numbers of people. All Government health guidelines MUST be followed.

The reduction in minimum area is in effect until December 31, 2021, but may be made permanent once feedback has been received from hosts and competitors.

17. The reduction in allowable ring size to 7200 sq ft, as described above, has been made temporarily applicable also to outdoor rings.
18. Handlers who are planning to transition their dog to veterans category at five (5) years of age or older, and are unable to enter in the Special category for a minimum of twelve (12) consecutive months immediately preceding the move to the Veteran category due to lack of trials, will require the handler to notify the AAC via the appropriate Regional Director. A form will be available on the website for download to enable you to officially state your intention.
19. Clubs are to submit Trial Results to the Registrar via email only. Paper copies will not be accepted. Please submit documentation to: registrar@aac.ca
20. For the duration of the COVID concessions it is permissible for clubs to hire out-of-town AAC judges, to design courses that will be judged by local AAC judges of the same level. Board permission is not required for out-of-town AAC judges but all information (designer and judge) must be included in the premium list. Permission must be obtained for an internationally renowned non-AAC judge to design courses, by application to the Board with description of the judge's credentials. Requests to hire international judges are subject to the limits of one request per calendar year, as set out in rulebook section 2.4. Normal course approval procedure must be followed. Qualifying scores will be attributed to the designing judge.
21. For the duration of the COVID 19 exceptions, in order to increase the pool of local judges available due to travel restrictions, approved AAC Starters/Advanced judges may apply to the Board of Directors to judge at the Masters level. Judges applying for the temporary upgrade must provide references from two fully qualified Masters judges (not of the same household) endorsing their application, and must provide proof of relevant experience that would justify the temporary promotion in judging level. Examples of relevant judging experience could include: Judging at the Masters or International level for other agility organizations, international competition experience, high level judge's continuing education (auditing an AAC Master's clinic, attending a higher level Global Judging Program seminar). At the end of COVID 19 exceptions or Jan 1, 2022 (whichever is last), the Judge would revert back to a Starter/Advanced Judge. The aspiring Masters judges will still be required to attend a Masters upgrade



clinic, to continue to be a Master's judge. Masters courses judged during the COVID 19 exception period may be counted towards the requirements for an eventual permanent Masters upgrade.

Participants are expected to follow Federal, Provincial, Municipal, facility and event guidelines. Clubs should be prepared to enforce the guidelines that apply to their event.

Always refer to current Government health guidelines:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

The above policy changes are in effect until December 31, 2021 unless otherwise stated and may be reviewed at any time. Clubs are advised to continue to visit the AAC website for information and updates with regard to COVID-19 precautions.