



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUBSM

Earthdogs

Suggested Best Practices for the Well-Being of Dog Sport Participants

The AKC supports each club's informed decision to reschedule, postpone or cancel their respective events, as well as supporting clubs ready to hold events in locations that are open and permit gatherings. As events resume across the country, people need to feel safe while enjoying their dog activities. The AKC urges clubs to take appropriate precautions for the benefit of their participants. Events need to be held in a manner that emphasizes the safety of participants and event officials 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. With a situation that is continually evolving, it is up to the clubs to determine the guidelines that best fit their event. In order to inform participants, specific guidelines established by the club should be published in the premium, club website and posted on signage/flyers at their event.

General Practices

1. Clubs, officials and participants are required to follow state and local guidelines that apply to the area where the event is held.
2. Practice social distancing consistent with local guidelines. Avoid congregating to the extent possible.
3. Consider wearing masks when in close proximity to others.
4. Consider wearing disposable or washable gloves.
5. Have plenty of hand sanitizers placed for people to use.
6. Wash hands as frequently as possible. Have disinfecting spray at bathroom facilities for people to spray door handles (or anything else they touch).
7. If you utilize portable toilets, please ask for a hand washing station to be delivered as well.
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. Disinfect surfaces in common use areas as often as possible (tables, chairs, doorknobs, etc.)
12. Meals - Avoid or stagger group lunches/dinners if possible. It is recommended that clubs supply boxed lunches for judges and volunteers. Hospitality areas should avoid community

items such as salt and pepper shakers, condiments, creamers, etc. Participants should consider bringing their own lunch/drinks.

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

Earthdog Event Practices

Secretary/Committee

1. Provide two secretary tables with one person at each, one for regular secretary duties and a second for day-of-entry duties and questions. These tables should be separated sufficiently. Limit access to each table to one person at a time.
2. Both Secretary Tables should have hand sanitizer for use by anyone handling paper, forms, ribbons, pens, etc. Keep potential need to touch to a minimum. Have self-service or verbal check-in for pre-entry numbers and Master Check-In/Brace Drawing. Provide small note pads or post-it pads for handler to write down numbers.
3. Day-of-event entries – Assign day-of-event entries to the end of the run order in each class. In order for participants to anticipate their times, follow run order.
4. Pre-announce a time for orientation by the judge to occur at the start of each class. Hold it in a large, open area for easy distancing.
5. Safe handling of paperwork and payment for day-of-event entries.
 - Go cashless as much as possible – encourage use of PayPal, Google Pay or EWallet.
 - Cash for day-of-event entries – inform participants they should have correct change.
 - Scheduling – consider scheduling participants in blocks in order to reduce crowds.
6. Ask participants to wait by their vehicles until immediately prior to their block time.
 - Use a bull horn, a PA system or Remind (free app) to inform participants when to line up.
 - Participants provide cell phone numbers for the event secretary to call or text if necessary.
7. Designate one steward at the ring entrance to open and shut the gate and one steward with the judge to assist as necessary.
8. In order to keep people from assembling, it is suggested that qualifying ribbons and awards to be handed out at the ring immediately after each qualifying performance.
9. All Committees should modify the removal doors on tunnels so that the door can be fastened tight when the judge leaves and stay in place until the owner opens it to get the dog. (see #15)
10. The Committee should provide hand sanitizer for each judging area and gate steward and a low or no odor spray disinfectant for the tunnel touch points.
11. The holding area for dogs waiting for their turn can be managed by blocks of handler/dog teams to minimize the size of groups waiting. These suggested sizes of blocks reflect a general wait time up to 15 or 20 minutes per block.
 - Junior Earthdog Class: 5 dogs per block
 - Introduction to Quarry and Senior Earthdog Classes: 3 dogs per block
 - Master Earthdog: 2 dogs per block (one brace).

Judges

14. During your orientation, remind people to maintain distancing. Keep orientation as short as possible while covering your critical judging expectations. If it is a large class, you may have to repeat the orientation to each group separately. Tell handlers not to touch the entrance of the tunnel or the release line marker. Describe how the removal hatch for that class is designed and how to open it.
15. Judges should lock the retrieval door and move 6 feet away before handler arrives to retrieve the dog. Let the handler open the retrieval door. Judges should not assist handler with dog retrieval. Ask judges steward to sanitize anywhere the judge or the handler touched before the next dog enters the ring.
16. Judges and steward should consider wearing a mask and sanitize hands after each dog's run.
17. Master Earthdog Judge: Maintain correct distancing during hunt and at the earth.

Stewards

18. Gate Steward assigned at ring gate to open and close entrance. Steward should not handle leash or collar. These items stay with the handler.
19. Judge's Steward should sanitize any touch points after every team.

Handlers

20. Prepare to be self-sufficient: bring sanitizer, personal use masks and pens.
21. Handlers should practice social distancing while in the designated holding area awaiting their turn.

Policies that Have Been Temporarily Suspended

1. Event Application Late Fees – Event application late fees are waived through the end of October. This provide clubs more flexibility in planning or rescheduling their events.
2. For events cancelled in 2020, AKC will apply Event Application fees to the club's next event of the same type.
3. Award ceremonies at the conclusion of the class should be discontinued for 2020 events.

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

These Suggested Best Practices may be periodically updated. Please check the AKC Earthdog website (www.akc.org/sports/earthdog/) for the most up-to-date version.

CDC - How to Protect Yourself and Others:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

For questions or additional suggestions, please contact the Performance Events Department at performanceevents@akc.org.

Stay Safe – Enjoy Your Dogs