

## Section 5. General Rules

### 5.1 Watersports Etiquette:

1. Only non-aggressive well mannered dogs are welcome at Canine Water Sports events.
2. Dog owners are responsible for their dog's behavior and safety at all times.
3. Dogs who are not actively competing in a water event shall be confined or kept on a leash no longer than six feet in length.
4. Dogs shall not create disruptive noises such as continuous howling, whining or barking.
5. Dogs shall eliminate in designated areas only, or well outside the event area. Handlers shall pay particular attention to avoid inappropriate canine elimination or marking, especially near judging areas. Handlers shall clean up after their dog, disposing of all materials in a waste container.
6. Poorly supervised children and rambunctious puppies can quickly become a major distraction for teams. If guardians are unable or unwilling to set reasonable and respectful limits a steward may ask that the offender be removed from the immediate area.
7. Spectators and their dogs are not to enter the water while teams are being judged.
8. Only participating officials and dog/handler teams called for judging shall be permitted in water judging areas. Water judging areas shall be restricted from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. or until the end of judging during event dates.
9. Food & toys are prohibited inside or within ten feet of the designated judging areas.
10. Spectators shall not interfere, assist or communicate with teams who are inside a judging area.
11. Reporters, photographers, film makers and videographers shall be permitted to record a team's performance. However, they must have prior permission from each individual team and shall not enter a judging area.
12. Directives issued by the event secretary, judges, stewards or other event officials shall be obeyed.
13. Harsh handling of animals will not be tolerated. Any person deemed by an event official to be abusing or neglecting an animal shall be subject to expulsion from the event grounds.
14. Any person or animal engaging in conduct that an event official deems to be disruptive, offensive, abusive, reckless or dangerous may be expelled from the event grounds.

### 5.2 Environmental Protection

Our continued enjoyment of the great outdoors and canine water sports is dependent upon our efforts to preserve our living world. Help protect Nature by following these simple acts of respect and kindness:

- Obey all posted Municipal and State rules governing parks and public lands. They are guidelines for sharing and preserving nature.
- Prohibit dogs and children from chasing or threatening wild animals. Distressing or panicking an animal can make it vulnerable to injury and disease.
- Remove all garbage, including smoking materials and canine waste and dispose of it promptly and properly in waste containers.
- Restrict fires to regulated and or appropriate areas. Never leave a fire unattended.
- Shred and properly dispose of all plastic products that can entangle and kill wildlife.
- Stay on designated nature paths to avoid trampling delicate flora or snapping branches and saplings.
- Keep water play to designated areas and beaches to avoid silt disturbances. Silt kills water plants and small water creatures.
- Avoid walks over marsh grasses and sand dunes - marsh grass takes years to regenerate.
- Watch your foot fall -- many aquatic birds build camouflaged nests on the ground.

### 5.3 Safety

15. No person shall leave an animal unattended and exposed to conditions which may create a risk of injury or death. Canine confinement means a time for rest in a safe place. To keep it a safe place, canine care providers shall pay particular attention to temperature changes, sun exposure, ventilation and the duration of confinement.
16. No smoking in or around judging areas or on designated beaches. Proper disposal of all smoking materials is essential to fire prevention and to avoid toxic tobacco ingestion by animals.
17. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited
18. Glass containers are restricted to designated picnic areas and are prohibited within 60 ft of the water.
19. Dogs shall wear either a canine life jacket or a water durable, non restrictive sports harness when in the water. Collars, clothing, leads, tags or other such restrictions shall be removed prior to the team entering a judging area.
20. Any person entering the water or boarding a boat shall wear a government approved full body support personal flotation device and protective water shoes and shall possess an easily accessible water sports whistle.
21. Boats shall only be used for official event activity. No person shall stand on a boat platform while the boat is floating.
22. Dogs jumping from a boat shall do so off the stern working platform and shall only jump from the rear at the widest edge of the platform. The dog shall not jump from a corner or a short side of the platform.
23. If a water practice area has been designated for participating teams, there shall be at least two adults present when a dog or person is in the water.
24. A handler may withdraw from an event at any time for health, safety or other reasons; however, such decision shall immediately be brought to the attention of the presiding judge or the event secretary.
25. A Judge or Event Secretary may excuse a person or dog from an event for medical, safety or public welfare reasons.

### 5.4 Risk

26. Persons entering a water sport event do so at their own risk and agree to assume responsibility for any damage or injury caused to or by them or to or by their dogs. Entrants shall agree to and sign a Hold Harmless and Indemnification Agreement.
27. Owners and Handlers are responsible for the health, fitness and safety of their dog. It is the sole responsibility of the owner and or handler to decide whether to compete in a water sport event. Handlers shall not compete or continue to compete if they or their dog is at risk of injury.
28. Owners and handlers agree to abide by the Canine Water Sports Event Regulations.

### 5.5 Handling

29. **Acclimate to site:** Each handler shall be permitted one minute to acclimate the dog to the site once the team enters the judging area. Entered teams may warm up or practice in a separate designated water or land area anytime before their judging.
30. **Anticipation:** Dogs shall not anticipate the handler's command. Unless otherwise defined in a task, anticipation shall mean the dog, before commanded to do so, leaves a starter's box, platform or boat.
31. **Assisting:** Unless specifically permitted by a task definition, handlers may not physically lead, guide, restrain or deliberately touch the dog after entering the starter's box, until the completion of the task. A handler may physically assist a dog in boarding a boat or platform and may prevent the dog from falling off a boat. A handler may offer physical affection after the completion of a task.

32. A handler shall not direct or mark a location for a dog by throwing objects or by deliberately splashing.
33. The handler may instruct a boater or a swimmer as to how and what to communicate (verbal or hand) to the dog during a task. Stewards may not communicate (verbal or hand) with a working dog during a task unless: (1.) The handler so requests it and the dog is within 6 feet of the steward. (2.) The rules instruct the steward to communicate with the dog, (3.) The the judge orders the steward to communicate, or (4.) An immediate communication is needed to prevent an injury.
34. Verbal encouragement, repeat commands and repeat signals are permitted during each task unless otherwise regulated by the task definition.
35. The handler shall not communicate with spectators after entering the judging area. All questions shall be directed to the judge and should be done prior to the start of the task.
36. **Boatwork:** Once a team has boarded a boat and the boat is underway, the team shall not leave the boat until directed by the judge or the task has ended.
37. Boaters may anchor their boats as needed for safety and securing a standardized distance or position for a task.
38. Handlers shall position themselves on the stern working platform or inside the boat when the boat is floating. Handlers shall not extend their torso or legs over the stern, bow or side gunnels of the boat during a task. Handlers may never stand on a boat platform while the boat is floating.
39. Handlers may extend only their arms over the gunnels of the boat to receive a delivery from a swimming dog. The handler shall not change his/her location while a delivery is imminent - the dog is expected to seek the handler.
40. Dogs jumping from a boat shall do so off the stern working platform and shall only jump from the rear at the widest edge of the platform. The dog shall not jump from a short side of the platform or side of the boat .
41. Dogs boarding a boat shall do so at the stern where they shall board and remain on the working platform until otherwise directed by the handler.
42. **Control:** Dogs shall be under the control of the handler at all times. A Judge may deem a dog to be out of control if, after entering the designated judging area, the dog **eliminates** anywhere, the dog **fails to respond** promptly to a comeback request from the handler, (*promptness* shall be based on the judge's assessment of the circumstances), the dog leaves the designated judging area to pursue or **chase an animal** or during a tow or delivery task the dog **climbs on a swimmer**. A dog so judged to be out of control shall not qualify.
43. **Equipment:** Handlers shall not bring food, inappropriate toys or training devises into the judging area. Only approved and regulation equipment is permitted in the judging area. See section 6 for equipment regulations.
44. Unless otherwise stated in the task, water articles may have an attachment of a short throw line for the purpose of tossing or pulling the article.
45. Handlers shall submit their equipment for inspection to the judge or the designated equipment steward at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled judging of the task, game or trial if they are unsure about its compliance to the regulations.
46. Handlers shall remove all collars, clothing, leashes, tags or other such restrictions from the dog before entering the judging area. The dog shall wear only a harness and or a canine life jacket.
47. **Judging:** The decision of Judges shall be final in all matters affecting the working of dogs and handlers and the evaluation of their performance.
48. The dog must complete the task or game within the **time limit** established for each task or game. The judge shall indicate the start and end of each task or game.
49. Start Position: Unless otherwise stated in the task definition, all tasks and games shall start with each team waiting inside a designated starter's box and the team shall not leave the starter's box until directed by the judge. If the judge temporarily excuses a team from the starter's box the

handler may gently hold the dog's harness or life jacket until the judge instructs them to return to the box. One paw or foot placed outside the boundary marks for the box shall constitute leaving the box. The term returned to the box requires the dog to have all four paws and the handler to have both feet inside the boundary marks for the box.

50. Selection of Task Articles: Unless stated otherwise in the task, when a judge is required to select the article(s) for a task the judge may do so anytime after the group briefing for the task, but before the team enters the starter's box. The judge may instruct a steward to convey this choice to a team.
51. If a team does not qualify in a particular task, generally the task performance shall not be rejudged. However, if, in the judge's opinion, the dog's performance was prejudiced by unnatural, significantly unusual or dangerous circumstances, the judge may, at their discretion, rejudge the dog on a portion of or the entire task.
52. Teams are expected to perform in an environment which may be effected by human recreational activities and which is always defined by "Nature". A Natural environment may include, wind, rain, cool temperatures, heat, sun glare, water currents, wake action, water thermal changes, wildlife activity and other normal visual, auditory and olfactory distractions for the terrain. Dogs are expected to work with the presence of spectators including the sights, sounds and smells they bring to the perimeter of the judging area.
53. Reasons for disqualification of a team by a judge: Violation of the regulations. The team fails to report for judging when called by a steward. Team fails to complete the task according to the regulations and to the satisfaction of the judge. The dog is declared out of control. The dog is fearful of the handler. The dog aggressively growls, snaps at or bites any person or other animal during judging. The handler uses compulsion or intimidation to gain canine compliance at any time while in the test site. The dog climbs on a swimmer, other than the handler, during a test.
54. A dog is out of the water when the dog's four paws are on land and no longer in contact with the water. A person shall have left the water when the person's two feet are on land and no longer in contact with the water.
55. **Retrieve work:** Unless otherwise defined in a task, all retrieve articles shall be thrown, tossed or placed in the water by a steward. The steward may enter the water on foot or by boat to make such placements.
56. If the judge is not satisfied with an article's landing/placement the judge may excuse the team from the starter's box while the article is recovered by a steward and made ready for another toss.
57. Unless otherwise defined in a task, dogs shall not be faulted for dropping an article. Handlers may command the dog to pick up the article to complete the task within the time limit.
58. Dogs shall deliver to hand when delivering to a person unless otherwise stated in the task. When delivering to hand the dog shall bring the article to the steward/handler and either deposit it in the steward or handler's hand on command or shall allow the steward/handler to remove the article from its mouth.

#### **Shoreline Skills Rules:**

59. The team shall always begin and end in the Starter's Box.
60. Handlers may wade or swim when in the water.
61. Unless otherwise regulated by a skill description, swim skills shall be performed at or beyond a parallel line in the water, which is set 15 ft from the shoreline.
62. Unless otherwise specified, all retrieve and delivery articles shall be provided by the handler. Such articles shall be inspected for safety and appropriateness and approved by the judge.
63. Dogs shall not unnecessarily deviate (judge's call) from a direct path when given a water course direction.
64. Unless otherwise regulated by a skill description, the dog shall swim while working or traveling along side the handler at or beyond the 15 ft. line from shore.

65. The dog may only return to shore when and where specified in the skill's description.
66. The dog shall maintain a proximity to the handler no further than an arms length away once the team enters the water.
67. The handler shall not physically touch the dog nor the dog's jacket to gain control or compliance during a test; however, the handler may signal, hand-lure and speak to the dog as needed throughout the test. The dog may not climb on or inhibit the handler's movement.
68. Once the dog begins a weave or figure-8 pattern they may not deviate from that pattern until it is completed.
69. Platforms shall be placed at a depth that allows the dog to swim and board the platform without assistance. Platforms shall be removed from the swim zone when not in use for a skill.
70. Tagging: Tagging shall be when the dog moves to and touches the handler's fingers or palm with her nose, muzzle or chin. The handler shall not reach out to touch the dog, the hand shall be presented as target for which the dog has a choice to touch or follow. The handler may use hand tagging or luring to guide the dog during travel or to guide the dog into a different proximity or position.
71. The handler may hand deliver food to the dog when the team has completed their skill and are in the starter's box. The handler may carry food on their person during the test, but it shall be stored so as not to appear as a lure and shall be secured against any accidental release during the test.
72. Destination targets. The dog must have all four paws on the platform or inside the starter's box for dog to be considered at the destination target.
73. Whenever a skill requires a team to travel to or past the center marker the team shall pass the marker on the waterward side.
74. Time limits. The general time limit for a shoreline skill performance shall be two minutes; however, the judge shall have discretion as to qualifying a team. If the dog has remained focused and working on the task, but test conditions or unusual circumstance, as determined by the judge, has interfered with the dog's completion within the two minute limit, the judge may afford the team extra time.