



Below is the next installment of Random Little Tidbits of information (from me) in regards to the AKC Obedience Regulations. Knowledge of the Regulations provides you the power for...

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – **Dinosaurs, & now measuring is one step closer to total extinction!**

**As for the Dinosaurs...** “The causes of the end-Cretaceous extinction are still being debated by paleontologists. Researchers agree that a major factor was an asteroid about 10 kilometers in diameter that struck what is now the Yucatán peninsula in Mexico. The effects of the impact were catastrophic, probably including global forest fires, possibly a period of cold weather due to sunlight-blocking dust and smoke, and a subsequent period of hot climate caused by the high levels of CO<sub>2</sub> released into the atmosphere by the impact.”

**As for measuring dogs in obedience...** The causes of the end of all judges measuring jump heights are also still being debated by paleontologists. Researchers agree that a major factor was a change in the 2000 Obedience Regulations that struck what is now the AKC Headquarters in Raleigh, North Carolina. The effects of the impact were *hardly* catastrophic, probably did *\*not\** include global forest fires, or possibly a period of cold weather due to sunlight-blocking dust and smoke, and a subsequent period of hot climate caused by the high levels of CO<sub>2</sub> released into the atmosphere by the impact.” ☺

I am not sure if the 1999 Obedience Advisory Committee (OAC) made the change or if it was an “in-house revision”; but the decades-long wording in regards to measuring dogs was changed in 2000 with the added verbiage, “Judges may, at their discretion, verify the height of any dog at the withers.” From that point on, judges who measured all dogs to verify jump heights started to become extinct.



I resisted extinction for the following reasons:

***As judges we check and verify other items to make certain they conform with the Obedience Regulations and meet the minimum standards, such as:***

- 1) the dumbbell
- 2) the gloves
- 3) the scent articles
- 4) the collar
- 5) the leash
- 6) no identifying items on handler or dog
- 7) the jumps themselves before judging commences
- 8) the ring size
- 9) length of grass or surface of the floor
- 10) and the list goes on and on....

Checking the dog for the correct *minimum* height is just another part of my job in making sure *\*minimum\** requirements are met before the team competes, so I believed.

***Do I trust the exhibitors? Well of course I do! I also know there is confusion amongst some, such as:***

- 1) Where the withers actually are on a dog and where the highpoint is on the withers.
- 2) Confusion between Obedience jump heights and Rally jump heights.
- 3) Confusion with one's *\*measured\** jump height agility card and obedience jump heights.
- 4) Confusion between countries (I am close to Canada); requirements can be different.
- 5) Stewards can error on occasion and have the jumps set for the wrong dog entering the ring; measuring verifies the correct height for the team entering the ring. At breed specialties jumps can look the same for a particular breed and still be incorrectly set for the individual dog.
- 6) Of the over 50 breeds jumping 3/4ths of their height, it is almost impossible to know the correct jump height by just looking at the dog.
- 7) In the Preferred-classes, all dogs jump ½ their height at the withers, unless the handler opts for higher jumps.
- 8) Verifying also makes sure the jumps are set higher if that is the handler's request.

As time marches on, opinions about different ways of showing, training and judging a dog also change with the times. Over the years there have been many tweaks in various exercises, plus verbiage being adjusted to meet the changing times in our sport. In particular, it has become apparent that with the 2000 additional wording allowing a judge an option to measure, few judges measure all dogs today. The ones who do measure seem to be viewed in somewhat of a negative persona in the eyes of many in our sport. My guess would be this is partly due to trainers and their students who rarely train their dogs to accept measurement (as in the past) since so few judges now measure due to the verbiage change. I have been one of the few “dinosaur judges” who continued to measure all dogs for the last 15 years after the

change based on the two outlines above. Measuring was done quickly and 99% of the dogs did not react to my measuring.

Come December 1, 2015, "slip" leashes (a leash not physically attached with the clasp) will be better defined in regards to their usage, and will be allowed only in a class where *all* the individual exercises are off leash. They may *not* be used when coming back into the ring for Groups or Awards. A leash must then be "attached" to the dog's collar with the clasp. In the past, slip leashes were used but no words defined how or when they were to be used. This led to some confusion amongst handlers and judges in regards to the leash being attached to the collar, or not. The recent OAC suggested a change in wording based upon input from the fancy and the AKC Board of Directors (BOD) went along with the suggestion and implemented the change. My reasoning for the change would be that the handlers of today in the advanced classes wish to enter the ring, slip the leash out from under the collar, and go directly to the starting point of the first exercise in one flowing motion without interruption, staying engaged with their dog. Stopping to have a dog measured by the judge would, now in a way, negate the handler's choice of leash usage to go directly to the first exercise. Training and showing today is different from the past in many ways. The now *defined* usage of a slip leash indicates one such desired change in showing dogs today.

With this enhanced leash regulation verbiage being *clearly* defined to reflect a desired change in showing and with so few judges now measuring dogs, measuring takes on more negative connotations than in the past. I see the measuring of all dogs in obedience *when entering the ring* as not in the wave of the future. This procedure has now morphed itself into an "exercise" of our past and I am okay with that as times and concepts are continually changing. Therefore, I will stop measuring *all* dogs on December 1, 2015 (as will my wife Suzanne Cox) when all the new Obedience Regulations come into effect. However, as with all judges, we still have the option to measure a dog that may appear not to be meeting the *minimum* standards in regards to jump heights. *If requested by a handler* I will comply and measure their dog. There have been times in the past where I have lowered the jumps since the handler was not sure of the actual *minimum* required height for their dog.

**With that all said, let's move on to another subject. A dog's jump height *should be confirmed at some point* for the sake of assuring minimum standards are met as required by the Obedience Regulations for earning a qualifying score.**

**Jump Height Cards for Obedience/Rally need to be implemented on one card! It is now time!**



I am still of the opinion we need to take another good look into having jump height cards for our sport. A precedent has been set as Agility requires such cards and their jump heights are in **4-inch** increments. Obedience jump heights are in **2-inch** increments for seven (7) classes requiring full wither height; 50+ breeds with  $\frac{3}{4}$  withers height requirements, plus two (2) classes with  $\frac{1}{2}$  withers height requirements!

From my understanding, in the past IAMS sponsored the Agility jump cards and had their name on the cards as a form of advertising. Since I am no longer competing in Agility I am not sure how the program is now supported, corporate or AKC. If sponsors are needed to get the ball rolling for obedience jump height cards, we surely can find a dog food company or obedience equipment supplier to step up to the plate, don't you think? I see no reason we cannot adopt, tweak, and implement such a system to work for Obedience. It is overdue for our sport with so many classes and breeds with different jump height requirements for meeting the minimum standards outlined in our regulations.

**Links to how the Agility Jump Height Card system works:**

<http://www.akc.org/events/agility/jump-height-card/>

<http://images.akc.org/pdf/MassMeasurementRequest.pdf>

**AKC Blog Address: <https://akcbedrlyjudges.wordpress.com/about/> Sign up to receive updates.**

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