



Below is the next in a series of Random 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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Back in April of 2015 I came up with the idea of a series of articles to supplement the Dog-Talk articles. The Dog-Talk series delved into the intricate scoring details of an exercise at the three levels, Novice, Open and Utility. The Random Little Tidbits articles are designed to focus on a particular subject matter in the AKC Obedience Regulations to maybe provide a better understanding. At the time I had NO idea there would be 50 Tidbits, a milestone for sure.

Today's Random Little Tidbit – Does Your Equipment Get the Green Light to Enter the Ring?

You have trained your dog and have now entered a show. You are ready to go, **or are you?** Have you taken the time to check the equipment you will be using to see if it conforms to the AKC Obedience Regulations? It would not be a good thing to get to the ring and find out the equipment you planned to use does not conform to the Regulations. Let's take a close look at the Regulations in regards to the equipment used in the various classes (+ Chapters 1 & 2).

What does it take to get the green light and past the ring gate?

Chapter 1, Section 10 "Identification. Club clothing, AKC event clothing, or breed clothing may be worn by anyone exhibiting a dog or by ring stewards. Clothing may display the person's name, the dog's call name and/or the dog's picture. Titles may not be displayed. Writing or graphics on the clothing must not be in poor taste or contain profanity. Clothing must not display any information that would be in conflict with a sponsor of the trial."

Chapter 1, Section 17 "Disqualification, Ineligibility, Excusal and Change in Appearance of Dogs. No dog will be eligible to compete if it appears to have been dyed or colored in any way, if its coat shows evidence of chalk or powder, or if the dog has anything attached to it for protection or adornment. Such a dog may be judged later if the condition has been corrected and if the judge desires to do so."

Chapter 2, Section 3 "Qualifying Performance. Handlers who carry or offer food in the ring or discipline or abuse their dogs in the ring must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score. Handlers are not permitted to wear such things as waist packs/pouches or any item that, in the judge's opinion, appears to be a training device or aid."

Chapter 2, Section 16 "Use of Leash. All dogs must be kept on a leash except when in the obedience ring, warm-up ring or exercise area and must be brought into and taken out of the ring on leash. Leashes must be clipped to the collar when dogs are brought in for classes requiring an on-leash exercise, a group exercise and awards. In a class where a leash is not required for the performance of the individual exercises, the dog may be brought into and taken out of the ring on a leash that slips/attaches through the dog's collar. The leash must be made of fabric or leather and need only be long enough to provide adequate slack during the Heel on Leash exercise, unless stated otherwise in these regulations. The Novice Group Exercise – Sit and Down Stay, and the Beginner Novice Sit for Exam must be performed with the dog on a 6-foot leash."

Chapter 2, Section 17 "Collars. All dogs in the obedience ring must wear a properly fitted collar approved by the judge. No dog may enter the ring, either for judging or for awards, with unacceptable equipment. No special training collars, such as electronic collars or prong collars, will be permitted. Nothing may be hanging from the dog's collar."

NOVICE:

Beginner Novice A & B; Novice A & B; Preferred Novice; Veterans; Brace; Wild Card Novice & Team

Chapter 1, Sections 10 & 17; Chapter 2, Sections 3, 16 & 17 apply.

1. In regards to the leash in the Beginner Novice Heel on Leash exercise, the Regulations do not state a 6-foot leash is required for this exercise. The handler *may* choose to use a shorter leash during the Heel on Leash and Figure Eight exercise. For example, a handler with a GIANT breed may not want to use a 6-foot leash all wadded up in their hands during the heeling portion; instead, use a shorter leash which provides adequate slack as stated in Chapter 2, Section 16. However, the leash would need to be swapped out for a 6-foot leash for the other exercise which requires a 6-foot leash, the Sit for Examination. Keep in mind, if this is a chosen option, have the 6-foot leash on you for a quick swap and to avoid holding up judging.

2. In the Regular Novice classes any leash may be used which provides adequate slack during the Heel on Leash and Figure Eight exercise. The required 6-foot leash is only required for the Group exercise. Unlike Beginner Novice, the handler will be leaving the ring after the Sit - Stay Get Your Leash exercise and will be able to swap leashes outside the ring before reentering for the Group exercise, providing one has qualified during the individual exercises, chosen to return, or was not released or excused for other reasons.

OPEN:

Open A & B; Preferred Open; Graduate Novice & Wild Card Open

Chapter 1, Sections 10 & 17; Chapter 2, Sections 3, 16 & 17 apply.

*In addition, **Chapter 4, Sections 11.*** “The dumbbell, which must be approved by the judge, will be made of one or more solid pieces of wood or non-wooden material similar in size, shape and weight to a wooden dumbbell. Metal dumbbells are not permitted. Dumbbells will not be hollowed out. They may be unfinished, coated with a clear finish or may be any color. They may not have decorations or attachments but may bear an inconspicuous mark for identification. The size of the dumbbell will be proportionate to the size of the dog.”

In addition, (AKC Blog), “What constitutes a correct dumbbell?

Merriam-Webster defines a dumbbell as ‘two weights connected by a short bar that serves as a handle.’ The dumbbell should only have ONE bar connecting the two ends. Two bars (similar to some scent articles) are not acceptable for the dumbbell used in the Open exercises.”

UTILITY:

Utility A & B; Preferred Utility; Graduate Open & Wild Card Utility

Chapter 1, Sections 10 & 17; Chapter 2, Sections 3, 16 & 17 apply.

*In addition, **Chapter 5, Section 8.*** “The articles will be provided by the handler and will consist of two (2) sets only. The handler will choose which two (2) sets are to be used, metal, leather or wood. Each set of articles will be comprised of five identical objects which may be items of everyday use. The size of the articles will be proportionate to the size of the dog. The metal set must be made entirely of rigid metal. The leather set must be made of leather. The wood set must be made of one or more solid pieces of wood. The articles may be unfinished, stained or dyed and must be designed so that only a minimum amount of fastening material is visible. The articles in each set will be legibly numbered with a different number and must be approved by the judge.” [Graduate Open Requires four articles]

In addition, (AKC Blog) “Articles may be of any shape and size as long as the size is proportionate to the size of the dog.

Identification: Articles and the article carrying case must comply with the Regulations Chapter 1, Section 10, Identification.

The articles may be items of everyday use:

1. The metal set must be made entirely of rigid metal.
2. The leather set must be made of leather.
3. The wood set must be made of one or more solid pieces of wood.

Wooden Articles:

1. The wooden set of articles must be made of one or more solid pieces of wood.
2. The articles may be unfinished, stained or dyed.
3. Must be designed so that only a minimum amount of fastening material is visible.
4. The articles will be legibly numbered with a different number.
5. Must be approved by the judge.

Summary:

1. Any color or any shape is fine for articles.
2. Articles may be finished with dye, stain, polyurethane, shellac, or varnish.
3. Articles may be completely unfinished.
4. Paint is not allowed on articles.

Stain: – *As the name suggests, **stains** are coloring agents that are used to change the color or shade of the wood.”*

*In addition, **Chapter 5, Section 10.*** “In this exercise the handler will provide three gloves that are predominately white. They must be open and must be approved by the judge.” [Two gloves are required for Graduate Open]

VERSATILITY:

Chapter 1, Sections 10 & 17; Chapter 2, Sections 3, 16 & 17 apply.

Versatility is comprised of two Novice, two Open and two Utility exercises, a total of six exercises for the class. The combination and order will be posted at ringside at least 45-minutes prior to the start of the class as to which exercises will be used on that particular day. Check the equipment needed for those exercises and make sure they conform to the descriptions defined in the Regular Novice, Open and Utility classes.

****JUDGES: It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to check all the handler’s and dog’s equipment coming into the ring.**
It will behoove you to do this before the team enters the ring, if there is an issue it can be corrected then, not later.**

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