

Dog Training Participation Rules, Etiquette & Safety Policy

Revision 20210218

As a conservation club, many of us share a passion for our hunting dogs and their training. As new members join in training events, someone taking the time to explain the prevailing “rules and etiquette” is sometimes overlooked. In an effort to welcome new hunting dog trainers to Key Cities Conservation Club and assure they enjoy a safe, stress free start; we have outlined this information below. As we are very fortunate to have access to some wonderful training grounds, many of these items address good stewardship of these training venues. Please remember – only club members have access to our facilities and guests are not allowed.

Safety First! Follow these rules at all times:

- Blaze orange is required to be worn in the field at all times when two or more people are training one or more dogs together.
- Youth under 18 years of age MUST have a valid state issued firearms safety certificate to handle firearms at any dog training event, including the firing of blank ammunition.
- A break-open shotgun (Single Shot, Over/Under or Side by Side) is HIGHLY recommended when training dogs. If used with a pointing dog, break-open gun actions shall remain open while walking in the field. The action shall only be closed once the dog is on point and the gunners have assumed a safe position from which to shoot.
- If a gun without a break-open action, like a pump-action or semi-automatic, is used, it should be loaded with a maximum of 2 rounds.
- Safety mechanisms of all guns shall remain engaged until the time the gun is mounted for discharge of the firearm. Once the gun is dismounted, the safety mechanism should be reengaged.
- Gunners shall consider safety for all persons and the dogs paramount and shall not take any shot which may possibly place a person or dog in danger. Any person in the general area where a game bird is attempting to be flushed is encouraged to verbally call out the word “Safety” to signal to a gunner not to take a shot where a potential safety issue or concern is observed. Once a “Safety” has been declared, no shot may be taken.
- Know your target and what is beyond.
 - Visible sky ensures birds are above our dogs.
 - If in doubt, don't take the shot. We don't want to disappoint our four-legged friends, but a pellet in our two-legged friends is NOT acceptable.
 - Do not discharge a firearm towards the parking area.
- Maintain muzzle control!
 - Do not sweep people or animals.
 - Do not discharge too close to people or unannounced.
- Extreme weather such as lightning, strong winds, extreme temperature, snow or heavy rain can create hazardous conditions. When there is lightning or thunder, please adhere to the “30-minute rule” and do not resume training until 30 minutes after the last lightning is seen or thunder heard.

Use of Birds

- The club keeps homing pigeons in the pigeon coup for use in dog training. THESE HOMING PIGEONS ARE **NOT** TO BE SHOT! Homing pigeons are marked in the following ways:
 - Adult pigeons for use by members have green leg-bands.
 - Immature pigeons have RED leg-bands and are NOT TO BE USED.
- If the club has quail in quail coup(s), they may be used for dog training if the doors are not locked. THESE QUAIL ARE **NOT** TO BE SHOT as they will recall back to the quail coup(s) at night and can be reused for training by other members.
- At times, the club will have other birds such as feral pigeons, chukar, pheasants and ducks that members can purchase to be used for dog training.
- Members are allowed to bring their own training birds onto the club property.
- Birds, that you or your dog(s) have killed, whether your own or purchased, are yours and yours alone. Please make sure you take them with you for **DISPOSAL OFF OF THE CLUB GROUNDS!**

Politeness and Courtesy:

- During club organized training events, dogs should be kept on a lead and under control at all times when not performing a drill.
 - Run your dog(s) ahead of training.
 - Please do not free-run them on the training grounds prior to the start of training. The extra marking and fecal matter in the fields is an unnecessary distraction to the training process.
- Puppies must be on a lead and under control just as adult dogs. Puppies should be introduced to unfamiliar adult dogs in a careful, controlled situation to preclude any aggressive behavior by the adult dog.
- Police your refuse.
 - Dispose of your dog(s) feces where others will not accidentally 'find' it.
 - Check around your vehicle before you go to make sure all garbage is collected.
- Tread lightly.
 - The grounds are often muddy, drive slowly and use 4-wheel drive if you have it.
 - If in doubt, walk in; do not muck things up.
 - Stay on the road and parking area. Do not drive into the fields or other perceived trails.
- Be respectful and cognizant of others and their unique needs and circumstances. Everyone is at a different stage of dog training and ability.
 - Not everyone has the same access to resources and tools.
 - There is more than one way to skin a cat -- seek first to understand and then to be understood.
- Dive in and lend a hand.
 - If you don't know how to do something, ask and someone will gladly help.
 - If you see someone needs help, ask and they will generally welcome your offer.
 - Go the extra mile, these friendships open doors and last a long time.

Lots of work goes into each of these training events and many people go above and beyond for the betterment of the rest of us. Knowledgeable people come to help out those that are learning. Volunteers organize the purchase, transport, housing and feeding of birds made available for training. The club provides grounds and equipment that many would not have access to. Take time to thank those around you that help make it happen. Also, it never hurts to ask the organizers "is there anything I can do to help?"