

Best Practices for NEBCA Trials and Events to Address COVID-19

Revision 1

July 12, 2020

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, NEBCA suspended the sanctioning of all sheepdog trials through July 31. When government restrictions on non-essential activities are lifted, it may be possible to hold sheepdog trials as well as fun trials and clinics provided they follow all state and local requirements. Organizers will need to make informed decisions on whether to hold any event that brings people together. They must consider if it can be done safely and how they will maintain adequate hygiene and distancing measures for the participants. The health and safety of all participants as well as the community must be of the highest consideration.

The following list of practices offers some guidance on what to do and what to consider when hosting an event in the near term. The list is oriented to trials but many of the same practices apply to clinics, fun trials and similar outdoor events.

General Practices

- Organizers, workers and participants are required to follow state and local guidelines that apply to the area and site where the event is held.
- Practice social distancing consistent with current guidelines. Avoid congregating to the extent possible. Shaking hands and/or hugging should be avoided. Do not touch dogs that are not your responsibility. Avoid common use items (pens/pencils/calculators).
- Attendees must wear masks and maintain social distancing (6' or 2 meters) when they are not in or near their vehicles or campers. Handlers may remove their mask when competing or working on the trial field, i.e. setting out.
- Disinfect surfaces in common-use areas as often as possible (tables, gates, etc.).
- Participants must provide their own hand sanitizer.
- Participants should bring their own food. Food for trial officials and workers should be arranged to minimize interactions (e.g. box lunches, individual coolers). Avoid gatherings for meals such as catered dinners or potlucks.
- Having spectators at events may not be possible without significant additional precautions (not covered here). Do not use direction signs or banners to help prevent unexpected visitors.

Trial Planning

- Events may need to limit the number of attendees based on state or local guidelines. Further limitations may be required given the space available for viewing, parking and camping in order to permit maintaining adequate space between people.
- Publish an approximate schedule for class times to allow competitors to be on site for their runs and not have to be there the entire day.
- Participants must agree to follow all safety measures. Consider listing safety measures on the entry form and have a sign-off agreement for them.
- Participants must not violate any travel or gathering measures still in effect where they live or where the trial will be taking place.
- Participants should not attend if they have a cough, fever or any other symptoms of illness. Trial managers should provide last minute refunds for health related cancellations.
- Entries should be pre-paid to avoid exchange of money at event.

Trial Workers

- Masks should be made available to event workers and officials.
- Cordon off areas for the secretary and judge with a minimum of six feet separation from competitors.
- Use a small number of scribes. Minimize or eliminate hand-offs of score sheets, clipboards, pencils, timers, etc. Sanitize common use items between worker changes.
- Consider dedicated sheep pen, set-out and exhaust workers. Provide necessary PPE and sanitizer for them.

Trial and Course Setup

- No handler tent in order to avoid people congregating. Do not provide common-use chairs. Handlers will need to provide their own shade or weather protection and maintain distancing while viewing the event.
- Set up a scoreboard in an open area. Suggest handlers take a photo of the scoreboard to avoid congregating near it.
- Hospitality areas should allow access while maintaining separation. Use disposable paper goods and utensils. Offer mainly individually wrapped food items. Avoid community items such as salt and pepper, condiments, creamers, etc.
- Eliminate handlers' meetings if possible. If held, maintain distancing. Alternatively, publish handler meeting information online ahead of the trial.
- Avoid using gates on and off the field that require hand contact.
- Consider the flow of handlers on and off the field to minimize close contact.

- If course obstacles (post, pen, chute) involve hand contact, they should be sanitized regularly. Consider changing the obstacle to eliminate hand contact (e.g. fixed open pen, cone for post)

Parking / Camping Areas

- Areas for parking and camping need to be large enough to allow sufficient distance between vehicles.
- Consider marking spaces with survey flags

Bathroom Facilities:

- Provide hand sanitizer in restrooms
- Have disinfecting spray or wipes at bathroom facilities for people to use on door handles and anything else they touch. If possible, leave doors open between use.
- Having a hand washing station is strongly encouraged. These can usually be rented along with portable toilets. The appendix has a homemade version.

Resources

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

Appendix

Homemade Hand Washing Station:

Materials: Large jobsite type water cooler with spigot (Home Depot), small table, bucket, paper towels, trash can, disinfecting wipes, course soap

Setup: Position the water cooler at the edge of the table with the spigot hanging over the edge. Place the bucket underneath to catch water. Place soap, paper towels and sanitizer wipes on the table, to the side. Someone will need to check supplies, fill the cooler and empty the water bucket periodically.

Use Instructions:

1. Wet hands; lather up 20 seconds; rinse.
2. Dry hands with paper towel.
3. Use a sanitizer wipe and clean the spigot handle