



GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG CLUB OF AMERICA-  
WORKING DOG ASSOCIATION, INC.

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## **HELPER GUIDELINES**

(Revised October 17, 2008)

### **Prerequisites for the use of a Helper in Phase C**

1. The rules and guidelines in the Trial rules that apply to Helper work must be followed.
2. On the day of the trial the Helper is the assistant to the judge.
3. For the personal safety of the Helper, as well for insurance reasons, the Helper must wear protective clothing (consisting of protective pants, jacket and sleeve) in training sessions as well as in competition and trials.
4. The Helper must wear shoes that are suitable for the weather and ground conditions, i.e., they must provide good, safe footing.
5. Before the start of phase C the Helper will be instructed by the Judge. The Helper must follow those instructions.
6. During the disarming and body search phases the Helper must follow the Handler's indications insofar as permitted by the rules. He must give the Handler the opportunity to bring the dog into the basic position before beginning the side and back transport.
7. Club trials may be conducted with a single Helper. With seven (7) or more dogs in a single trial a second Helper should be used. In National events, i.e., trophy competition, qualification trials, championships, etc., at least two Helpers should generally be used. In all events, it is allowed to use a Helper who lives in the same household as one of the Handlers.
8. Helpers at all GSDCA-WDA sanctioned events must be current members of the GSDCA-WDA. A GSDCA-WDA Trial Helper Book is required for any helper work at a GSDCA-WDA sanctioned trial.
9. Helpers at National events must be certified National Trial Helpers.
10. Helpers at Breed Surveys must be GSDCA-WDA Certified Club, Regional or National Trial Helpers.
11. Helpers at Regional Trials must be GSDCA-WDA Certified Regional or National Trial Helpers.
12. Helpers at local Club Trials must be GSDCA-WDA Certified Club, Regional or National Trial Helpers.
13. Upon proof of status, a SV Certified Teaching Helper may work local Club Trials.

### **Basic Rules Regarding the Conduct of Trial Helpers**

#### **1. General**

During a trial the level of training and qualities of the dogs being shown (e.g., drives, resilience, self-confidence, and controllability) is to be evaluated by the Judge. The Judge can evaluate this objectively by what is observed during a trial.

This aspect is above all dependent upon the sportsmanlike character of the trial, i.e., as far as possible equal conditions for all participants, so that the Helper must insure that the "picture" is not questionable.

Phase C must not be conducted according to the whims of the Helper. In fact, the Helper must follow a set of rules.

During a trial the Judge is to evaluate the most important criteria of the individual elements for Phase C. These include resilience, self-confidence, drives, and control. Included is the quality of the grip of each dog being show. In order for this to be possible the Helper must give each dog the opportunity to get a “good grip”, or when the resilience is to be evaluated that the Helper “tests” the dog appropriately. The goal is to have, insofar as possible, uniformity in the Helper work so that the demands are sufficient to permit an evaluation.

2. **Hold and bark (levels 1-3)**

The Helper stands in the appropriate blind, so as not to be visible to the Handler, with the sleeve arm slightly bent, motionless, and without any intimidating “body language”. The sleeve serves to protect the Helper’s body. During the “hold and bark” the Helper is to watch the dog but is to avoid giving help of any kind. The padded stick is to be held pointed downwards and to the side of the body.

3. **Hindering an attempted escape by the Helper (levels 1-3)**

Following the instructions from the Handler after the “hold and bark”, the Helper leaves the blind in a normal fashion and stands at a place determined by the Judge (the position marked for the escape). The position of the Helper must allow the Handler the possibility to place the dog in a down position at a distance of five (5) paces from the Helper on the “sleeve side”. It must be possible for the Handler to recognize in which direction the escape is to proceed.

At the Judge’s indication the Helper begins the escape, in a rapid fashion and in a straight line but without exaggerated and uncontrolled motion. The sleeve is not supposed to move in a separate motion so that the dog has the optimum opportunity to get a grip. During the escape the Helper is not to turn towards the dog but may watch the dog out of the corner of his eye. The Helper is not to move the sleeve away as the dog approaches. After the dog has gripped the sleeve the Helper is to continue running in a straight line, and while in motion, is to pull the sleeve tight against his body.

The Judge is to determine how far the Helper runs during the escape. At the Judge’s indication the Helper is to end the escape. If the escape is carried out with the appropriate action by the Helper, the Judge has an optimal opportunity to evaluate the exercise. The Helper is not to provide any help during the escape, e.g., exaggerated “offering” of the sleeve, verbally stimulating the dog or hitting the pants with the padded stick before or during the escape, lack of tension in the sleeve arm after the dog has gripped the sleeve, slowing the speed of the escape, ending the escape before the Judge’s indication, etc.

For the correct behavior for ending the escape see item 8 (valid for all levels).

4. **Defense against an attack from the guarding phase (level 1-3)**

After the guarding phase, and at the Judge’s indication, the Helper attacks the dog. In the process the padded stick will be waved threateningly over the sleeve but without striking the dog. In the same instant the Helper will move forward, without additional movement of the sleeve, with appropriate force. The sleeve is to be held against the Helper’s torso. After the dog has gripped the sleeve the Helper, using a sideways motion, is to drive the dog in a straight line. The Helper must drive all dogs in the same direction. The Judge is to choose a position so that it is possible to evaluate the behavior of all dogs during the response to the attack, including during the drive, the grip, the out, and the guarding phase. The Helper must not drive the dog towards the Handler.

“Stick hits” with the padded stick are to be placed on the dog’s shoulders in the vicinity of the wither. All dogs should be hit with the same intensity. The first “hit” is to be made during the drive after the helper has taken 4-5 steps and the 2<sup>nd</sup> hit after an additional 4-5 steps. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> “stick hit” the Helper should drive the dog further but without additional hits.

The Judge determines the duration of the driving phase. At the Judge’s indication the Helper stops the drive. If the attack is performed with the necessary energy from the Helper, the Judge has an optimal opportunity to evaluate the dog. Any help by the Helper, e.g., “feeding” the dog the sleeve before it grips, verbal agitation or hitting the leg of the protective pants with the padded stick before beginning the attack, holding the sleeve without tension while driving the dog, varying the intensity of the drive and stick hits, ending the drive before the Judge’s indication if the dog shows weakness, etc., is not permitted.

The procedure for ending the exercise is given in item 8 (valid for all levels).

5. **Back transport (levels 2 & 3)**

When directed by the Handler the Helper begins to walk, at a normal pace, for the back transport covering distance of approximately thirty (30) paces. The Judge determines the pattern to be followed. During the transport the Helper may not make any rapid movements. The padded stick and the sleeve are to be held so as not to provide any additional stimulation for the dog. In particular, the stick is to be held so that it is out of sight of the dog. The Helper should walk at the same speed for all dogs.

6. **Attack on the dog from the back transport (levels 2 & 3)**

At the Judge's indication an attack is performed from the back transport while the Helper is in motion. The attack is to be carried out by the Helper with a dynamic "about turn" either to the left or to the right, followed by a powerful forward motion in the direction of the dog. The padded stick is to be held above the sleeve and used to make threatening motions. The sleeve is to be held against the front of the Helper's body and additional sleeve motion is to be avoided. Once the dog has gripped the sleeve, the Helper while continuing the dog's motion should move the dog to the side and begin to drive the dog in a straight line. The Helper must drive all dogs in the same direction. The Judge must choose a position so as to be able to observe all dogs' reactions to the attack, the behavior during the driving phase, the nature of the grip, the "out" and the guarding phase for all dogs. The dog should not be driven towards the Handler.

The Judge determines the duration of the driving phase. At the Judge's indication the Helper stops the drive. If the drive is performed with the necessary energy, the Judge has an optimal opportunity to evaluate the dog. Any help by the Helper, e.g., moving too far sideways before the dog grips, "feeding" the dog the sleeve before the dog grips, verbal agitation or hitting the leg of the protective pants with the padded stick at the beginning of the attack, holding the sleeve without tension while driving the dog, varying the intensity during the drive, ending the drive before the Judge's indication if the dog shows weakness, etc., is not permitted.

The procedure for ending the exercise is given in item 8 (valid for all levels).

7. **Attack on the dog out of motion (levels 1-3)**

At the Judge's indication the Helper leaves the blind into which he has been directed and walks to the centerline of the field (runs in level 2 & 3) where he then

- changes from a walk to a running pace and attacks the dog and Handler from the front while yelling and making threatening gestures with stick (level 1)
- without breaking stride attacks the dog and Handler from the front while yelling and making threatening gestures with stick (level 2 & 3)

The Helper must "catch" the dog with flexibility in the sleeve position without coming to a stop. Whenever possible the Helper must rotate when catching the dog to absorb the momentum of the dog. In no case should the Helper run around the dog. Once the dog has gripped the sleeve the Helper while continuing the dog's motion, should move the dog to the side and begin to drive the dog in a straight line. The Helper must not "run over" the dog. The Helper must drive all dogs in the same direction. The Judge must choose a position that permits observation of all dogs' reactions to the attack, the behavior during the driving phase, the nature of the grip, the "out", and the guarding phase for all dogs. The dog should not be driven towards the Handler.

The Judge determines the duration of the driving phase. At the Judge's indication the Helper stops the drive. If the drive is performed with the necessary energy, the Judge has an optimal opportunity to evaluate the dog. Any help by the Helper, e.g., reducing the speed of the attack, stopping before catching the dog, moving too far sideways before the dog grips, running around the dog, "feeding" the dog the sleeve before the dog grips, holding the sleeve without tension while driving the dog, varying the intensity during the drive, ending the drive before the Judge's indication if the dog shows weakness, etc., is not permitted.

The procedure for ending the exercise is given in item 8 (valid for all levels).

8. **Ending the exercise (applies to all exercises)**

All exercises must be ended so that the Judge can observe the quality of the grip, the "out", the guarding by the dog (the Helper's back should not be to the Judge and the Helper should maintain eye contact with the Judge). After ending a defense exercise, the resistance against the dog is to be released, and the Helper is to avoid all stimulating motions but without relaxing the sleeve arm. The sleeve should not be carried high but remain in the same position as during the preceding exercise. The padded stick should be held next to the body, pointing downward, and out of sight of the dog. The Helper may not provide help to get the dog to "out". After the dog releases, the Helper should maintain eye contact with the dog. No additional stimulation or help of any kind may be provided. If the dog circles while guarding, the Helper is allowed to turn slowly, without any sudden movements, in order to keep an eye on the dog.

9. **Insecurity and failure of the dog**

If the dog fails to grip during the defense exercise or releases during the drive, the Helper is to pressure the dog until the Judge ends the exercise. In such a situation the Helper may not provide help or end the exercise on his own. Dogs that will not out may not be helped to out by the Helper assuming a particular body posture or through motion by the padded stick. If the dog shows a tendency to leave during the guarding phase, the Helper may not provide stimulation to keep the dog close by. The Helper is to be either active or neutral, as prescribed by the trial rules, during all exercises and guarding phases. If the dog bumps or grips during a guarding phase, the Helper is to avoid moving.