

# SKC & FCI Trial Guidelines

*(Dated 8 Dec 2025)*

## 1. Handler Eligibility & Substitution

Each entry must list one official handler — the handler–dog pair is considered the competition unit.

If the original handler cannot attend:

- A replacement handler may run the dog only with prior approval from the Trial Manager before the trial begins.
- The replacement handler must have a valid SKC membership.
- The new handler's name must be updated on the running order and results sheet.

### Results from a replacement handler:

- Do count for the trial's placings and awards (as the actual handler's results).
- Do not count towards national team selection points or the ranking of the original handler–dog pairing.

No substitution is permitted once the trial has started, except for genuine emergencies with both judge and trial manager approval.

## 2. Adding or Reducing Runs on Trial Day

- Handlers may add runs (e.g., additional class levels) before the start of the trial by informing the Trial Manager and making payment on the spot (subject to ring capacity).
- Handlers may withdraw or reduce runs on the day of the trial, but no refunds will be issued.
- The running order will be updated where possible; however, no guarantees can be made for preferred sequences after late changes.
- Once the first dog has entered the ring, no further amendments will be accepted.

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## 3. What Can Be on the Handler and the Dog

- No training vests, bags, leads, pouches or aids may be worn on the handler's body during a run — immediate elimination applies.
- No collars or harnesses on the dog — immediate elimination applies.
- Treats and toys are not allowed in the hand or visible to the dog while in the ring.
- Rewards are allowed only outside the ring after the dog exits.

## 4. Treats and Toys

- Pockets containing hidden treats or toys are acceptable as long as they remain invisible and untouched during the run.
- If a toy or treat drops from a pocket or clothing, it results in immediate disqualification. No refunds will be issued.

## 5. NCR (Non-Competition Runs)

- NCR runs are permitted only with prior clearance from the Trial Manager and Judge before the class begins.
- Only toys may be used in NCR runs.
- NCR runs are not timed and will not appear in rankings.

## 6. Re-Run Policy & Guidelines

### a) Decision Authority

- The Judge has the final and absolute authority to grant, request or deny a re-run.

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- A handler may request a re-run if they believe the performance was unfairly affected by an external factor, but the judge's decision is FINAL and not subject to appeal.
- The Trial Manager may support the judge in reviewing operational factors (e.g., timer malfunction, ring invasion) but cannot overrule the judge.

## b) Valid Re-Run Triggers

A re-run may be granted only in the following clearly defined situations:

Category	Example Scenarios	Notes
Equipment or Timing Failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Timer fails to start/stop correctly</li><li>• Tunnel collapses</li><li>• Obstacle visibly shifts/dislodges</li></ul>	Confirmed by ring party or judge
Judge/Steward Error	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wrong signal or premature whistle due to miscommunication</li><li>• Obstacle reset incorrectly after the previous dog</li></ul>	Judge acknowledges official error

 *Note: Handler or dog mistakes (refusals, wrong courses, handler slips, dropped leads, etc.) do not qualify for re-runs.*

## c) Procedure for Requesting a Re-Run

- Handlers must make the request to the Trial Manager immediately after leaving the ring, before the next dog starts running.
- The Trial Manager shall confirm the reason with the Judge.
- The Judge announces whether a re-run is granted.
- The original time and score for the team are voided once a re-run is approved.

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- Handlers may not request further re-runs unless a new valid trigger occurs.

## **d) Timing & Order of Re-Run**

- Normally, the re-run will occur after a short rest period (minimum of 5 dogs later or 5 minutes) to ensure fairness and safety.
- The handler must run the same course sequence unless the judge has officially altered the course.

## **e) When One Participant Is Affected by the Event / Factor**

- All mistakes that occurred before the point of event (e.g. disturbance, confusion, or inappropriate obstacle setup) will remain as recorded. Clean runs up to that same point will also remain valid during the re-run.

## **f) When Multiple Participants Are Affected by the Same Event / Factor**

- If multiple dogs were impacted by the same external event, the judge may offer a re-run to all affected handlers.
- Handlers may choose to decline the re-run. However, if declined, their runs will be marked as elimination immediately.

## **g) Documentation & Transparency**

- All re-runs must be recorded on the score sheet with the reason noted (“timer fail,” “external interference,” etc.).
- The Trial Manager should announce to the ring party when a re-run is approved to prevent accidental timing or ranking errors.
- For selection or ranking events, only the final official run (post re-run) will be used for points calculation.

## **7. Call-to-Line Protocol**

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- All handlers must report to the ring when called within three calls or 30 seconds.
- Failure to appear results in “Absent.” Ring party discretion applies if the dog is concurrently running in another ring (if applicable).

## 8. Crating, Leashing & Safety

- All dogs must be crated or leashed except when competing or warming up in designated areas.
- No loose dogs are permitted outside designated off-lead zones.

## 9. Course Safety & Weather Protocol

- The Judge and Trial Manager may jointly pause, alter, or omit an obstacle due to unsafe footing.
- Any ongoing class may be re-run or cancelled at their discretion; their decision is final.

## 10. Coaching During Walk-Through

- Handlers **may not** receive coaching or instruction from trainers, mentors, or other handlers inside the ring during walk-throughs.
- Verbal discussions outside the ring boundary are acceptable, provided they do not delay the walk or disturb others.
- The walk-through is for personal course familiarisation, not for group lessons.
- Persistent coaching or instruction within the course area may result in a warning or, in repeated cases, disciplinary action by the Trial Manager.
- Judges and stewards may remind participants to maintain fairness and neutrality during walk-throughs.

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## **11. Start Interval After Walk-Through**

- After the official walk-through ends, the ring will allow a 5-minute preparation buffer before the first dog is called to the line.
- The first handler must be ready when called after the buffer time.
- The first handler may request to start earlier if ready, with the agreement of the Judge and the readiness of the ring crew. The Trial Manager shall announce to all participants if the ring opens earlier.
- The Judge may extend the buffer (e.g., to 5–7 minutes) if the ring crew needs time to confirm the timer, course markings, or obstacle adjustments.
- If the first dog delays beyond a reasonable call time (30 seconds after being called), the Judge may mark “Absent” and move to the next competitor.

## **12. Participation Pertaining to National Team Selection**

- The handler and dog must be physically present in the ring during the trial. Registering and paying for the trial do not constitute participation.
- Any team found to be manipulating participation records to meet minimum requirements may be disqualified from selection at the discretion of SKC.