

# NOTES FOR NEW TRACKLAYERS

Here are some notes for new tracklayers. Please, all judges and experienced tracklayers: feel free to correct, amend, and add to this!

The responsibilities of the tracklayer are easy, yet important. It will require two days of your time: the first day is walking the test area with the judge as she determines where the track will run, and each of you creating a map of the track. The second day is the actual test where you alone will re-create the track that was designed the day before.

**On the plotting day:** The judge will be making notes and jotting down measurements and visual markers on her plotting sheet, and you will be doing the same thing on your own sheet: so the first thing to remember is to **bring a clipboard, paper, and pen on plotting day!** You want to be as unobtrusive as possible while the judge is plotting...lots of mental stuff going on now....but if you have a question about a visual marker, etc., now is the time to ask.

On plotting day you will be following the judge around while they create the track, and you will be making track drawings and as many marker drawings and notes as you can. Also following along will be the equipment volunteer with all the marker stakes: if possible on plotting day, a marker stake will be placed at the beginning of the track (where you will make your scent pad), and for TD tests, another will be placed 30 Metres out on the first leg. Thereafter, a marker stake is placed at every corner and at the final article drop. Urban tracks are more difficult to leave marker stakes since turns may be on pavement. The urban tracks are also plotted on public land...not so easy to leave marker stakes overnight! However, urban tracks have more visual markers, i.e. sidewalks, traffic signs, hydro poles, etc., to help you plot your track. On the test day, these marker stakes and visual markers will make it easier for you to lay your track exactly as the judge has plotted it the day before. The judge may discuss with you what the visual markers would be and she will tell you where to place the corner markers.

Mark down every visual marker you can on your own plotting sheet: for every corner, drawn a picture or write a description of what you see when you look north, south, east, and west. If you are in a very large field and the markers are really far away, you can easily be 10 feet off your track and still seemingly be in line with your markers. Multiple markers are your friend! This is important on tracking day not only to lay your track (although hopefully all the corner marker stakes are where you left them the night before), but to find the track again later on test day after the corner markers are gone and a dog is having trouble, has been whistled off, but wants to continue as a training track. This is when all your little pictures and notes are important to ensure that you can help the dog be successful in finding the track, or in retrieving the articles that the dog was unable to find.

All measurements are recorded roughly in metres: It may be handy to also count your strides, i.e. 62 strides from the corner flag marker to the article drop, and mark this on your plotting sheet as well as using the visual markers. When laying the track, start out staring at your visual marker that is straight ahead and count your strides: as long as you stay calm and walk normally, when you have reached your count you should be at the sideways visual markers so you can drop an article.

And don't forget to **pick up your article(s) from the equipment manager on plotting day before you leave at the end of the day.** No, you do not have to sleep with them, but you will need them first thing in the morning and there is a good chance you will be going directly to your track area without meeting with the equipment manager first.

**On the day of the tracking test:** Arrive early and be ready to start laying your track at the designated time. All the tests follow each other fairly quickly, but there are ageing requirements of each test. You will have been given an exact time to start laying your track and if you are late laying that track, the dog that has drawn your track will have to wait until the ageing requirements are met.

Be familiar with the CKC rule book, particularly regarding the starting pad: a judge might assume you know the rules, so make sure you do. **"At the start of the track, the tracklayer, who shall not be a member of the handler's immediate**

household, shall thoroughly tramp an area of about one square meter, remain standing one minute, then proceed along the designated track at a normal walking pace. No standing still or shuffling while on the track is permitted.”

“The tracklayer shall leave one flag to mark the start of the track and another 30 metres (98 feet) from the start to indicate the initial direction of the track for the TD test. After dropping the article or articles, the tracklayer shall proceed straight ahead for at least 20 metres (66 feet) and leave the course.”

You will need to time the starting pad “tramping” time of approximately one minute plus the “standing” time of one minute. You will also need to mark down the time you started laying the track and the time you finished laying the track, so **you will need a watch with a second hand.**

Except for the start flag stake (and the second stake in TD tests), all marker stakes must be picked up as you lay your track: so be prepared to juggle things...you will have your clipboard with track map and pen, your test articles to drop (glove, etc), so you **need to wear weather appropriate apparel with large pockets to carry articles**, and you will now also have all the corner marker stakes to pick up and stick under your arm. You cannot drop any of these things, so plan ahead! Do remember to drop your test articles at the designated spots and step on them as you pass over them! You cannot go back on your track...only forward, so keep an eye on your plotting sheet and make the article drops when needed.

When the dog that has drawn your track starts his test, the judge will follow at a discreet distance and you will follow with the judge, being even more discreet! Now is **not** the time to query the judge! You need to have your clipboard and your map with you: If the dog gets into difficulty, the judge may ask your opinion on whether the dog is on or close to the track, so be aware of where you are and keep track of your visual markers (north, south, east, west) so you can be helpful.

All of this may sound a bit daunting, but it is actually a lot of fun and a terrific learning experience. Thank you to everyone who volunteers to be a CKC tracklayer: without you the tests could not be held.