

CERTIFICATION

The why, who, where, when and what you should know prior to trying to certify your dog for the TD or TDU tracking test

Why - when did AKC start requiring certification of a dog before it is able to enter a tracking test. Unknown but it was required in 1991 but as to when it was required as a rule by AKC (not sure). The Tracking Regulations cover certification in Chapter 3.

Who - A provisional or approved AKC tracking judge can certify your dog. Additionally you can be certified by a person who has handled a dog to a TD or VST title within the last (10) years. The written certification is good for two (2) years and must state the dog has satisfactorily performed a certification test. The certification test will be of a complexity equivalent to the TD or TDU test and take place under similar conditions to such test. It is permissible to enter a test under the judge who certified the dog. When you are quite certain your dog is ready contact a Tracking judge or person who has also is qualified to certify and make arrangements. Please ask what is the fee for the certification track. If the response is no fee a small gift is appropriate. Cash is always appreciated and \$25.00 is about the right amount especially considering the price of gas.

Where - Use the AKC Judges Directory to search for TD/TDU judges in your area or close by. The email and telephone numbers are listed for each judge so you can use that information to contact a judge to make arrangements for certification. A judge usually has a location nearby that will be suitable for a certification track.

When - How do you know when your dog is ready? Here is a list of questions to ask yourself and help you decide if your dog is ready.

- 1) Do you have a consistent start routine?
- 2) Does your dog have a motivated start? (Most tests at all levels are failed at the start and the first leg.)
- 3) Do you keep a steady line connection with your dog at 20 feet?
- 4) In training do you know exactly where your track goes and do you make maps?

- 5) Do you keep a tracking log?
- 6) Does your dog deep scent on the tracklayers track?
- 7) Can your dog deal with distractions? (Animal carcass, goose poop, the gallery, moving cars, bike riders, barking dogs, food refuse etc)
- 8) Do you track consistently? (1-3 times per week?)
- 9) Do you track in all kinds of weather?
- 10) Do you track at all different times of day?
- 11) Can your dog problem solve turns?
- 12) Can your dog successfully complete a course of 3-5 turns, 440-550 yards that is aged 1/1 - 2 hours ?
- 13) Can **YOU** run a blind track?
- 14) Does your dog have a reliable article indication?

If you believe you and your dog are ready by all means contact a judge or other person authorized to certify. If your dog does not pass the certification track, do not panic. Any dog can have a bad day on the track. Typically the judge will offer some advice on what they observed of your handling and your dog tracking.

WHAT - what to expect? A regulation TD or TDU track will be laid and aged for you. You and your dog will be judged as though it were a test. No food or toys allowed! All the elements of a TD/TDU track will be included. If you pass the judge will provide certification slips for you.

Remember to always read the AKC Tracking Regulations for each test you are entering and know the rules.