

## Status of Group Exercise Task Force

As a result of Group Task Force meetings held in June, the recommendations below will be made to the AKC Board in October and if approved at the November 2017 meeting, they will become effective March 1, 2018.

### Purpose:

- 1) Modify the existing group exercises to eliminate the concern that a dog will leave its position during the exercise and harass another dog; 2) Replace group exercises with new exercises that will demonstrate a dog's ability to stay; and 3) Increase the number of times a dog must perform a controlled stay exercise showing that it is under the handler's control.

### Recommendations:

- One of the two Novice class group exercises will be eliminated and replaced with a new individual exercise that demonstrates the dog's ability to stay.
  - The "**Sit Stay – Get Your Leash**" is an individual exercise that will demonstrate how steady a dog is in a stay position, with the handler at a distance. This exercise should further show the judge that the dog is under the handler's control prior to the team returning to the ring for a group exercise with other dogs in the ring.
  - The "**Group Exercise – Sit & Down Stay**" will be a two-part stay exercise performed on-leash, with the handler holding the leash for safety. Handlers will stand six feet away from the dog and the dog will perform a sit and a down stay. The spacing between dogs has also been increased to six feet for safety. If a dog fails the first part of the exercise, they will be released from the second part of the exercise.
- Both Open class out-of-sight group exercises will be eliminated and be replaced with individual exercises that test a dog's ability to stay while the handler is at a distance from the dog.
  - The "**Command Discrimination**" exercise is a three-part stay exercise that will demonstrate the handler's control of the dog from varying distances, as they command the dog to change positions three times (Stand, Down, Sit). The dog must remain in the place that it was left for all three changes of position.
  - The "**Stay – Get Your Leash**" exercise is a two-part sit and down stay exercise that will demonstrate the handler's control of the dog as they leave the dog in a stay and go a minimum of 30 feet away from the dog, before the judge orders them to return to the dog after one minute. For the second half of the exercise, the judge will order the handler to command the dog to change position, then leave the dog to go get the leash; walking at least 30 feet to a place designated by the judge outside of the ring gate entrance. Once the handler reaches the location and picks up their leash, they must wait at the ring entrance for the judge's order for them to return to the dog. The dog must not move from the position or the place where it was left.

Stays are an integral part of obedience. Referencing only the current regular classes of Novice and Open, dogs are required to stay in a certain position until commanded otherwise as follows:

### **Current Regulation**

Class	Required to Stay in Individual Exercises	Required to Stay Including the Group Exercise
Novice	2 times	4 times
Open	4 times	6 times

The 2017 Group Task Force recommendations will require a dog to stay in a certain position until commanded otherwise an increased number of times; further establishing that a dog is under the control of its handler. (See table below.)

**Proposed Change to Regulation**

Class	Required to Stay	Notes
Novice	5* times	The stay behavior will increase.
Open	9 times	

\* Includes one Group Exercise, performed on-leash.

The stay exercises will also be equally amended in the Preferred Novice, Preferred Open, Graduate Novice, and Team classes.