

Fall has arrived!!! Dust off those tracking lines that have been lying around all summer and get back into the game! Fall is one of the best seasons for tracking as you well know. As the season gets started, let's revisit some topics that have been causing a little confusion and inform you of a few new things at AKC.

Let's get started with the new start article in the TD level test. There has been some confusion that a glove or wallet may be used. According to the current *Tracking Regulations*, this article should NOT be a glove or wallet, but be of AN APPROXIMATE SIZE as a glove or wallet. The article should still be made of cloth and it should also be indicated on the official chart. A cloth glove could cause the dog see this as the end of the track, particularly during the transition period for dogs that have not been exposed to a start article on a TD track before.

Regarding, AKC tracking seminars; at an AKC tracking seminar the presenter will cover all the basic rules and regulations, how to handle a misconduct at a test and issues that pertain to any aspect of AKC tracking whether it is TD, TDX, or VST. AKC tracking seminars also cover the requirements to become a tracking judge and the approval process to progress to the next level. Attendance of these seminars is highly recommended for ALL judges, but for new applicants these seminars will count toward the requirements for applying to become a TD, TDX or VST judge. These are not training seminars. They were created to provide the fancy and potential judges accurate information regarding AKC policies and the *Tracking Regulations*.

For any judges who are trying to schedule an observation or needs help to coordinate one, there is a new email address that has been set up to help organize these requests and to facilitate a meeting with an AKC field rep. The new email address is cejdgobs@akc.org.

Finally, as some of you are aware, there have been a few changes to the judges' approval process. The requirements have not changed dramatically, but we thought it a good idea to list the changes here so that all of you will have a personal reference. Have a great fall tracking season and Happy Judging! If you have any questions or comments, please direct them to tracking@akc.org **Do Not Reply To This Email.**

To qualify as an applicant for TD or TDX judging – you must have:

1. Personally owned, trained and handled two (2) dogs that have been awarded an AKC Tracking Dog title (TD); **(if applying for Tracking Dog)**

OR

2. Personally owned, trained and handled a dog that has been awarded an AKC Tracking Dog Excellent Title (TDX) and title at least one other dog to a Tracking Dog (TD) title; **(if applying for Tracking Dog Excellent)**
3. Been active in the sport a minimum of six (6) consecutive year.
4. Observed tracking judges in planning and plotting tracks by serving as a tracklayer ten (10) times at AKC member or licensed tracking tests. (Each event will only count as one track-laying requirement.) Must submit completed charts of two (2) tracks where you served as a tracklayer.

(Serving as a tracklayer a minimum of five (5) times may be accepted, depending on other tracking experience noted in the application. Experience such as combination of two or more of the following: Tracking Test Chairperson, Chief Tracklayer and Tracking Test Secretary will help document this experience.) In lieu of track laying requirements, one (1) apprenticeship will be accepted for two (2) of track laying requirements for up to six (6) of the ten (10) tracks required.

5. Actively participated as a trainer or an assistant trainer in a dog training club or similar organization, specifically as a trainer or assistant trainer of the Tracking Dog or Tracking Dog Excellent class, depending on class applying for.
6. Attended an AKC tracking seminar within the last three (3) years.

Requirements to apply for Variable Surface Tracking

1. Must be an approved TDX judge or an approved TD judge on regular status who has owned, trained and handled a dog that has been awarded a VST title.
2. Serve as a tracklayer three (3) times at VST test.
3. Attended at least two (2) AKC Variable Surface Tracking workshops.

In addition, potential judges must judge at least two (2) sanctioned VST matches. Apprentice at two (2) licensed VST tests may be substituted for the match requirements. (Permission to apprentice must be obtained from the test-giving club and both judges. Only one apprentice judge will be allowed for each test. Apprentice judges must attend both days of plotting and the day of the event. Apprentice judges must submit their copies of the plotted tracks and a copy of the apprentice document to receive credit) To request apprentice judging forms, please send an e-mail to cxw@akc.org.