

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

For
All-Breed, Specialty, Obedience,
Tracking, Agility and Group Clubs

Many clubs seek the assistance of The American Kennel Club® in the preparation of their constitution and bylaws. This specimen is prepared purely as a service for such clubs. **It is recognized that some clubs may modify or elaborate upon these suggestions, as may be required by state laws. This form, under present American Kennel Club policies, could be readily approved.**

Clubs applying to The American Kennel Club to conduct shows or trials under its Rules and Regulations are required to submit their bylaws for review. This specimen represents the experience of many clubs and it is especially designed to meet the problems which most frequently arise. It is prepared particularly for a club which operates on a local basis; it presumes that a portion of the members will be able to attend regular club meetings.

Some clubs may wish to provide for more than one type of membership: (see Glossary on page 14); the number of officers and directors is purely optional (Article III); and the dates for fiscal and official year are simply examples (Article IV).

However, it should be pointed out that the wording of Article I, Section 3 of the Constitution and Article VIII of the Bylaws is thought to be helpful in avoiding tax problems; that a limitation on the area within which meetings may be held is important (Article II); that the provisions for notices as they appear throughout the sample are important; that the suggested procedure for elections and nominations best meets the needs of the average club of the type described (Article IV, Sections 3 and 4). The procedures for discipline in Article VI should be closely followed for the protection of all concerned. Close adherence to Article VII on amendments is recommended.

THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

CONSTITUTION

(Which may also be used as Articles of Incorporation with any additions that may be required by state law; or may be included in the bylaws as the first Article, renumbering the other Articles.)

ARTICLE I Name and Objects

SECTION 1. The name of the club shall be

.....

SECTION 2. The objects of the club shall be:

SPECIALTY CLUBS:

(a) to encourage and promote quality in the breeding of purebred..... and to do all possible to bring their natural qualities to perfection;

(b) to urge members and breeders to accept the standard of the breed as approved by The American Kennel Club as the only standard of excellence by which..... shall be judged;

(c) to do all in its power to protect and advance the interests of the breed by encouraging sportsmanlike competition at

- dog shows
- obedience trials (if applicable)
- tracking tests (if applicable)
- agility trials (if applicable)
- field trials (if applicable)
- hunting tests (if applicable)

(d) to conduct sanctioned matches,

- dog shows
- obedience trials (if applicable)
- tracking tests (if applicable)
- agility trials (if applicable)
- field trials (if applicable)
- hunting tests (if applicable)
- and any other event for which the club is eligible under the Rules and Regulations of The American Kennel Club.

ALL-BREED and GROUP CLUBS:

a) to further the advancement of

- all breeds of purebred dogs (all-breed clubs);
- all breeds (group clubs);

- b) to do all in its power to protect and advance the interests of
- dog shows
 - obedience trials
 - tracking tests
 - agility trials
- and to encourage sportsmanlike competition at such events; and
- c) to conduct
- sanctioned matches
 - dog shows
 - obedience trials
 - tracking tests
 - agility trials
 - and any other event for which the club is eligible under the Rules and Regulations of The American Kennel Club.

OBEDIENCE, TRACKING AND AGILITY CLUBS:

- (a) to promote the training of purebred dogs;
- (b) to disseminate knowledge regarding obedience, tracking and agility training;
- (c) to conduct classes for the training of dogs and their handlers;
- (d) to encourage the training of judges;
- (e) to hold and support obedience matches and trials, tracking matches and tests, and agility matches and trials under the Rules and Regulations of The American Kennel Club; and
- (f) to promote cooperation and good sportsmanship among its members in the training and exhibition of dogs.

SECTION 3. The club shall not be conducted or operated for profit and no part of any profits or remainder or residue from dues or donations to the club shall inure to the benefit of any member or individual.

SECTION 4. The members of the club shall adopt and may from time to time revise such bylaws as may be required to carry out these objects.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I Membership

SECTION 1. *Eligibility.* There shall be (see Glossary on page 14) types of membership open to all persons 18 years of age and older who are in good standing with The American Kennel Club and who subscribe to the purposes of this Club.

While membership is to be unrestricted as to residence, the club's primary purpose is to be representative of the breeders and exhibitors in its immediate area.

SECTION 2. *Dues.* Membership dues shall not exceed \$..... per year, payable on or before the 1st day of () of each year. No member may vote whose dues are not paid for the current year. During the month of () the Treasurer shall send to each member a statement of dues for the ensuing year.

SECTION 3. *Election to Membership.* Each applicant for membership shall apply on a form as approved by the board of directors and which shall provide that the applicant agrees to abide by the constitution and bylaws and the rules of The American Kennel Club. The application shall state the name, address, and occupation of the applicant and it shall carry the endorsement of two members in good standing. Accompanying the application, the prospective member shall submit dues payment for the current year.

All applications are to be filed with the Secretary and each application is to be read at the first meeting of the club following its receipt. At the next club meeting the application will be voted upon and affirmative votes of $\frac{2}{3}$ of the members present and voting by secret ballot at that meeting shall be required to elect the applicant.

Applicants for membership who have been rejected by the club may not reapply within six months after such rejection.

SECTION 4. *Termination of Membership.* Memberships may be terminated:

- (a) *by resignation.* Any member in good standing may resign from the club upon written notice to the Secretary, but no

member may resign when in debt to the club. Obligations other than dues are considered a debt to the club and must be paid in full prior to resignation.

- (b) *by lapsing.* A membership will be considered as lapsed and automatically terminated if such member's dues remain unpaid (either 30/60/90 days) after the first day of the fiscal year; however, the board may grant an additional (either 30/60/90 days) of grace to such delinquent members in meritorious cases. In no case may a person be entitled to vote at any club meeting whose dues are unpaid as of the date of that meeting.
- (c) *by expulsion.* A membership may be terminated by expulsion as provided in Article VI of these bylaws.

ARTICLE II Meetings and Voting

SECTION 1. *Club Meetings.* Meetings of the club shall be held each month in (or within the greater area) at such hour and place as may be designated by the board of directors. Written notice of each such meeting shall be mailed by the Secretary at least 10 days prior to the date of the meeting. The quorum for such meetings shall be 20 percent of the members in good standing.

SECTION 2. *Special Club Meetings.* Special club meetings may be called by the President, or by a majority vote of the members of the board who are present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the board; and shall be called by the Secretary upon receipt of a petition signed by five members of the club who are in good standing. Such special meetings shall be held in (or within the greater area) at such place, date and hour as may be designated by the person or persons authorized herein to call such meetings. Written notice of such a meeting shall be mailed by the Secretary at least five days and not more than 15 days prior to the date of the meeting, and said notice shall state the purpose of the meeting, and no other club business may be transacted thereat.

The quorum for such a meeting shall be 20 per cent of the members in good standing.

SECTION 3. *Board Meetings.* Meetings of the board of directors shall be held each month in (or within the greater area) or via telephone conference call or via video conference at such hour and place as may be designated by the board. Written notice of each such meeting shall be mailed by the Secretary at least five days prior to the date of the meeting. The quorum for such a meeting shall be a majority of the board.

SECTION 4. *Special Board Meetings.* Special meetings of the board may be called by the President; and shall be called by the Secretary upon receipt of a written request signed by at least three members of the board. Such special meetings shall be held in (or within the greater area) at such place, date, and hour as may be designated by the person authorized herein to call such meeting. Written notice of such meeting shall be mailed by the Secretary at least five days and not more than 10 days prior to the date of the meeting. Any such notice shall state the purpose of the meeting and no other business shall be transacted thereat. The quorum for such a meeting shall be a majority of the board.

SECTION 5. *Voting.* Each member in good standing whose dues are paid for the current year shall be entitled to one vote at any meeting of the club at which he is present. Proxy voting will not be permitted at any club meeting or election.

ARTICLE III Directors and Officers

SECTION 1. *Board of Directors.* The board shall be comprised of the officers and () other persons, all of whom shall be members in good standing and all of whom shall be elected for one-year terms at the club's annual meeting as provided in Article IV and shall serve until their successors are elected. **General management of the club's affairs shall be entrusted to the board of directors.**

SECTION 2. *Officers.* The club's officers, consisting of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, shall serve in their respective capacities both with regard to the club and its meetings and the board and its meetings.

- (a) The President shall preside at all meetings of the club and of the board, and shall have the duties and powers normally appurtenant to the office of President in addition to those particularly specified in these bylaws.
- (b) The Vice President shall have the duties and exercise the powers of the President in case of the President's death, absence or incapacity.
- (c) The Secretary shall keep a record of all meetings of the club and of the board and of all matters of which a record shall be ordered by the club; have charge of the correspondence, notify members of meetings, notify new members of their election to membership, notify officers and directors of their election to office, keep a roll of the members of the club with their addresses, which shall be sent to any member in good standing, upon written request, not more than once every club year, and carry out such other duties as are prescribed in these bylaws.
- (d) The Treasurer shall collect and receive all moneys due or belonging to the club. Moneys shall be deposited in a bank designated by the board, in the name of the club. The books shall at all times be open to inspection by the board and a report shall be given at every meeting on the condition of the club's finances and every item of receipt or payment not before reported; and at the annual meeting an accounting shall be rendered of all moneys received and expended during the previous fiscal year. The Treasurer shall be bonded in such amount as the board of directors shall determine.
- (e) The offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be held by the same person, in which case the board shall be comprised of () persons.
- (f) AKC® Delegate (for clubs elected member clubs of the AKC).

SECTION 3. Vacancies. Any vacancies occurring on the board or among the offices during the

year shall be filled until the next annual election by a majority vote of the members of the board at its first regular meeting following the creation of such vacancy, or at a special board meeting called for that purpose; except that a vacancy in the office of President shall be filled automatically by the Vice President and the resulting vacancy in the office of Vice President shall be filled by the board.

ARTICLE IV

The Club Year, Annual Meeting, Elections

SECTION 1. *Club Year.* The club's fiscal year shall begin on the first day of (January) and end on the last day of (December).

The club's official year shall begin immediately at the conclusion of the election at the annual meeting and shall continue through the election at the next annual meeting.

SECTION 2. *Annual Meeting.* The annual meeting shall be held in the month of (), at which officers (Delegate to The American Kennel Club) and directors for the ensuing year shall be elected by secret ballot from among those nominated in accordance with Section 4 of this Article. They shall take office immediately upon the conclusion of the election and **each retiring officer shall turn over to the successor in office all properties and records relating to that office within 30 days after the election.**

SECTION 3. *Elections.* The nominated candidate receiving the greatest number of votes for each office shall be declared elected. The () nominated candidates for other positions on the board who receive the greatest number of votes for such positions shall be declared elected.

SECTION 4. *Nominations.* No person may be a candidate in a club election who has not been nominated. During the month of (), the board shall select a Nominating Committee consisting of three members and two alternates, not more than one of whom may be a member of the board. The Secretary shall immediately notify the committeemen and alternates of their selection. The board shall name a chairman for the committee and it shall be such person's duty to call a committee meeting, which shall be held on or before ().

- (a) The committee shall nominate one candidate for each office (and for Delegate, who may but need not be an officer or director of the club) and positions on the board and, after securing the consent of each person so nominated, shall immediately report their nominations to the Secretary in writing.
- (b) Upon receipt of the Nominating Committee's report, the Secretary shall, at least two weeks before the () meeting, notify each member in writing of the candidates so nominated.
- (c) Additional nominations may be made at the () meeting by any member in attendance, provided that the person so nominated does not decline when their name is proposed, and provided further that if the proposed candidate is not in attendance at this meeting, the proposer shall present to the Secretary a written statement from the proposed candidate signifying willingness to be a candidate. No person may be a candidate for more than one position (except for the position of Delegate).
- (d) Nominations **cannot** be made at the annual meeting or in any manner other than as provided in this Section.

ARTICLE V Committees

SECTION 1. The board may each year appoint standing committees to advance the work of the club in such matters as dog shows, obedience trials, trophies, annual prizes, membership, and other fields which may well be served by committees. Such committees shall always be subject to the final authority of the board. Special committees may also be appointed by the board to aid it on particular projects.

SECTION 2. Any committee appointment may be terminated by a majority vote of the full membership of the board upon written notice to the appointee; and the board may appoint successors to those persons whose services have been terminated.

ARTICLE VI Discipline

SECTION 1. *American Kennel Club Suspension.* Any member who is suspended from **all** the privileges of The American Kennel Club automatically shall be suspended from the privileges of this club for a like period.

SECTION 2. *Charges.* An individual member may prefer charges against another individual member for alleged misconduct prejudicial to the best interests of the club. Written charges with specifications must be filed in duplicate with the Secretary together with a deposit of \$....., which shall be forfeited if such charges are not sustained by the board following a hearing. The Secretary shall promptly send a copy of the charges to each member of the board or present them at a board meeting, and **the board shall first consider whether the actions alleged in the charges, if proven, might constitute conduct prejudicial to the best interests of the club. If the board considers that the charges do not allege conduct which would be prejudicial to the best interests of the club, it may refuse to entertain jurisdiction.** If the board entertains jurisdiction of the charges, it shall fix a date for a hearing by the board not less than three weeks nor more than six weeks thereafter. The Secretary shall promptly send one copy of the charges and the specifications to the accused member by registered mail together with a notice of the hearing and an assurance that the defendant may personally appear in his own defense and bring witnesses if he wishes.

SECTION 3. *Board Hearing.* The board shall have complete authority to decide whether counsel may attend the hearing, but both complainant and defendant shall be treated uniformly in that regard. Should the charges be sustained after hearing all the evidence and testimony presented by complainant and defendant, the board may by a majority vote of those present reprimand or suspend the defendant from all privileges of the club for not more than six months from the date of the hearing. And, if it deems that punishment insufficient, it may also recommend to the membership that the penalty be expulsion. In such case, the

suspension shall not restrict the defendant's right to appear before his fellow members at the ensuing club meeting which considers the board's recommendation. Immediately after the board has reached a decision, its finding shall be put in written form and filed with the Secretary. The Secretary, in turn, shall notify each of the parties of the board's decision and penalty, if any.

SECTION 4. *Expulsion.* Expulsion of a member from the club may be accomplished only at a meeting of the club following a board hearing and upon the board's recommendation as provided in Section 3 of this Article. Such proceedings may occur at a regular or special meeting of the club to be held within 60 days but not earlier than 30 days after the date of the board's recommendation of expulsion. The defendant shall have the privilege of appearing in his own behalf, though no evidence shall be taken at this meeting. The President shall read the charges and the board's finding and recommendation, and shall invite the defendant, if present, to speak in his own behalf if he wishes. The members shall then vote by secret ballot on the proposed expulsion. A $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of those present and voting at the meeting shall be necessary for expulsion. If expulsion is not so voted, the board's suspension shall stand.

ARTICLE VII

Amendments

SECTION 1. Amendments to the constitution and bylaws may be proposed by the board of directors or by written petition addressed to the Secretary signed by 20 percent of the membership in good standing. Amendments proposed by such petition shall be promptly considered by the board of directors and must be submitted to the members with recommendations of the board by the Secretary for a vote within three months of the date when the petition was received by the Secretary.

SECTION 2. The constitution and bylaws may be amended by a $\frac{2}{3}$ secret vote of the members present and voting at any regular or special meeting called for the purpose, provided the proposed

amendments have been included in the notice of the meeting and mailed to each member at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

(For a club which is a member of The American Kennel Club this Article should also have a Section 3 to read as follows:

“No amendment to the constitution bylaws that is adopted by the club shall become effective until it has been approved by the Board of Directors of The American Kennel Club.”

since the bylaws of The American Kennel Club require such approval.)

ARTICLE VIII Dissolution

SECTION 1. The club may be dissolved at any time by the written consent of not less than $\frac{2}{3}$ of the members in good standing. In the event of the dissolution of the club other than for purposes of reorganization whether voluntary or involuntary or by operation of law, none of the property of the club nor any proceeds thereof nor any assets of the club shall be distributed to any members of the club, but after payment of the debts of the club its property and assets shall be given to a charitable organization for the benefit of dogs selected by the board of directors.

ARTICLE IX Order of Business

SECTION 1. At meetings of the club, the order of business, so far as the character and nature of the meeting may permit, shall be as follows:

- Roll Call
- Minutes of last meeting
- Report of President
- Report of Secretary
- Report of Treasurer
- Reports of committees
- Election of officers and board (at annual meeting)
- Election of new members
- Unfinished business

New business

Adjournment

SECTION 2. At meetings of the board, the order of business, unless otherwise directed by majority vote of those present, shall be as follows:

Reading of minutes of last meeting

Report of Secretary

Report of Treasurer

Reports of committees

Unfinished business

New business

Adjournment

ARTICLE X

Parliamentary Authority

SECTION 1. The rules contained in the current edition of “Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised,” shall govern the club in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any other special rules of order the club may adopt.

(The bylaws of a club that is a member of The American Kennel Club should include, without parentheses, the references to Delegate, which appear in parentheses.)

**For the most updated
information on AKC policies,
as well as frequently asked
questions and answers, please
visit www.akc.org**

GLOSSARY

Member in good standing — An individual who is not suspended by The American Kennel Club or their Club and whose dues for the year are already paid.

Types of Membership (must be defined in Article I, Section 1):

Regular (Individual) — Enjoys all club privileges including the right to vote and hold office.

Household — Two (2) adult members residing in the same household, each eligible to vote and hold office.

Foreign (usually for parent clubs) — for those individuals who are not U.S. residents (or its territories and possessions). Shall be entitled to all club privileges except voting and office holding.

Associate or Newsletter — Entitled to all club privileges except voting and office holding (offered to individuals who live outside of the club's area; also offered to individuals who live in the club's area but are not active).

Junior — Open to children under 18 years of age; a non-voting/non office holding membership which may automatically convert to regular membership at age 18.

Honorary — An individual who has made significant contributions to the Sport, Breed or the Club; honorary members pay no dues and are not eligible to vote, but can maintain regular (or household) membership if they pay dues.

Life — For those individuals who have been members for a long period of time (usually 20+ years); Life members pay no dues but are eligible to vote and hold office.

Uppermost limits for dues — In order to avoid frequent bylaw amendment, an uppermost limit (i.e. — Dues shall not exceed \$____) should be included for each type of membership, in addition to when and by whom the dues are set each year.

Reprimand — A written warning to a member after charges have been filed in accordance with the bylaws, and it is determined that the member's conduct was not severe enough to warrant a suspension or a recommendation for expulsion.

Notices — All club notices must be sent either via the US Postal Service or e-mail in accordance with current AKC policy.

Delegate Duties — For AKC member clubs only, the general duties of the Delegate must be listed.

Votes on Bylaw Amendments — After amendments are voted upon, the club must provide AKC with the number of members in good standing as well as the date of the vote, and the number who voted for and against. A copy of the revised document must be submitted to AKC as soon as it is printed.

NOTES