

*Non Competitive  
Obedience  
Association*

[www.frontierrots.com/nco.htm](http://www.frontierrots.com/nco.htm)



***RULE BOOK***

***version 3.0- 03/12/21***

## **Welcome Exhibitors, to the Non Competitive Obedience Association**

**The Non Competitive Obedience Association was formed to encourage advanced obedience and tracking training and to enable handlers to earn titles even when they cannot get to a traditional obedience trial or tracking test.**

**NCO is a great "first step" and we strongly encourage participants to continue on to competition obedience and tracking in other venues!**

### **What dogs are eligible?**

- Owners of ANY breed or mix may submit for titles!**
- For the NCO-1 or NCO-T1 level any dog/puppy 4 months of age or older may be submitted for a title.**
- For NCO-2 or NCO-T2 and above the minimum age will be 6 months of age.**
- Upon receiving the first submission for a dog/puppy, that animal will be given a NCO customer number and will be required for all future submissions.**
- Blind, deaf and physically handicapped dogs ARE eligible to be submitted AS LONG as the performance of the exercises is safe and not potentially harmful for the animal. Exercise modifications for handicapped or veteran animals will be pre approved by NCO, providing the spirit of the exercise remains and titles earned under a modification will have a small "m" suffix.**
- Dogs may be handled by any member of the owner's immediate family.**
- Dogs with bandages, stitches or open sores/wounds are not allowed to compete.**
- All dogs must start at the NCO-1 level in obedience or NCO-T1 level for tracking, regardless of any obedience or tracking titles they have earned in other registries.**
- Exhibitors may not wear any clothing in the videos that identifies a school, organization, training group, etc; either by logo or lettering**

### **What does it cost to submit?**

**FIRST submissions for EACH dog are \$25.00 for obedience or \$30 for Tracking paid via Paypal.**

**All subsequent submissions for the same dog are \$20.00 for obedience or \$25 for tracking.**

**The fee is per submission.**

**Failing submissions are allowed to be re shot and submitted again for unlimited amounts of tries but there is a \$10.00 fee for each obedience re-submission, \$15.00 for each tracking re-submission**

**Passing performances resulting in the earning of a title, will be emailed a title certificate and listed on our title holders pages.**

**NCO-5 and NCO-T6 (Master level) Title earners will get an additional award via mail!**

### **How are title videos submitted? (SEE TRACKING RULES for tracking specific criteria )**

- Videos need to be uploaded to You Tube as an unlisted video. The submission form will have a space for you to copy/paste the link URL.
- To keep uploads at the smallest possible size, make sure the video is edited Front and rear to show just the start of the performance, the entire performance UN edited and the end of the performance.
- EACH obedience exercise may be filmed in a different location or different day. You may film the exercises in ANY order but string them together in the video submission in the order listed please. The actual exercise performance may not be edited at all. Edited exercises will be failed. Tracking submissions must be entire and unedited, special additional requirements are in the tracking section.
- Sound must be audible in all parts of the video. Please do not add music or other sounds.
- You may not re use/resubmit videos for multiple submissions including multi submissions same title level or multi submissions within the same title level (ie: a title requires 3 passing submissions you cannot use the same heeling video in each submission). The ONLY exception to this policy is if a submission fails. You may re submit the exercises that were passing

and just re shoot the failing exercise for that one submission.

•All submitted videos may be used by NCO in promotions, on website, facebook etc.

## Dog and Human Safety and Laws

•Dogs may wear a buckle collar, a martingale collar, a limited slip collar or a slip collar. Tracking dogs must wear a harness- see tracking rules for more details.

•For NCO-2/ NCO-T2 and above the dog should (but not required) wear a collar with ID, rabies tag and license on it and this may be in addition to the collar the leash is attached to.

•Prong collars, harnesses (except in tracking), electronic collars, special training collars/devices and halters are not allowed. (Dogs who are medically required to wear a harness may apply for modification)

•Human and dog safety and compliance with the law are primary and as such, the use of a long line is encouraged when in public, **HOWEVER**, for all exercises that say "on a long line" the Dog may be off leash or dragging a leash as local law, dog safety and public safety allow. A long line can be a flexi, light cord, clothesline, actual wide long line or whatever works for you and your dog. Tracking requires line to be held by handler at all times.

•Line safety is important. Make sure it cannot catch or hang up. When doing jumps or directed sends make sure the cones, jump standards, obstacle etc is secure so leash will not drag or knock it over

•You alone are responsible for being in compliance with your local laws and for keeping your dog, other dogs and other people safe.

•By submitting a video for an NCO title you agree that you accept ALL risk of injury to humans or animals and ALL responsibility for following local and State laws regarding dogs, use of public places etc.. You will not hold NCO liable for any injury or damage in any way, shape or form.

## General Rules

see tracking section for additional tracking only rules.

- Heel position is the traditional at left side with region of dogs head to shoulder being in line with the handlers left hip and applies to moving or stationary positions without the dog touching, impeding movement or stepping on the handler. At the NCO-1 and NCO-2 levels more leeway is allowed in position and accuracy is expected to improve as the dog rises through the levels.
- "Front" is a sit directly in front of the handler centered to and facing handler close enough for handler to touch without leaning on, crowding or stepping on handler. At the NCO-1 and NCO-2 levels more leeway is allowed in position and accuracy is expected to improve as the dog rises through the levels.
- Hands may swing free at the handler's side or the left hand may rest on hip or stomach. At no time should hand appear to conceal a treat (even if no treat present). "Air cookies", finger snapping, hand luring, leg patting or clapping is not allowed except between exercises.
- Unless the exercise description states otherwise, both a hand signal and verbal command are allowed. More than 2 commands and/or hand signals (a hand signal and command given simultaneously count as one) per exercise will result in a fail. Hand signals and verbal commands must be given either/or or together.
- Leashes and longlines can be of any non metal or non "bungee" material. Long lines should be suited for the purpose, those for the retrieve over and obstacle and the directed send should be handle-less, smooth, non tangling material but as long as the exercise is performed safely we will not mandate a type or brand
- Praise : QUIET praise may be given during any exercise except those where verbal commands are disallowed.
- Calm praise, patting and toy play is allowed between exercises as long as the dog remains in control both in behavior and in toy possession.



- **Treats:** a small treat may be given at the end of each exercise as long as the handler is stationary and has not yet started moving to the next exercise. Treats must be kept in a pocket and not the hand. Treat bags, aprons or pouches are not allowed
- **Toys:** a SINGLE discreet toy may be carried AS LONG as it is kept completely in a pocket out of view. The dog may be given the toy BETWEEN exercises as long as it remains in control both in behavior and in toy possession. (throwing the toy about is not in control)
- **Handling/Touching:** In Levels NCO-1 and NCO-2 the dog may be gently guided by leash or collar to the next exercise. In levels NCO-3 and above the dog may not be guided between exercises by leash or collar. The handler may pat the dog gently between exercises at all levels.
- **"In public"** defined for NCO purposes is a place, not your home or low distraction place (indoor or out). A public place by definition is a location where there are real world distractions: traffic, strangers, maybe strange animals, etc.. Given the changes in the world Post Covid-19, more flexibility is being given. BARE MINIMUM "Public" means AT LEAST-  
 \*location not your home or private rental of a facility, \*1-5 humans moving about, and \*traffic or animals unknown to your dog  
 A training center that you are renting private time at will qualify for NCO-1 and NCO-2 but not for NCO-3,4,5  
 The spirit of "public areas" is to demonstrate obedience with distractions, videos without at least 'bare minimum public' will be declined.  
 Remember all use and filming needs to follow the laws and rules of the location in question.

### Behavior: Dog

- **Dog-** A dog who exhibits fearfulness, nervousness, extreme timidity, or aggressiveness to the point where the judge feels it impacts performance will be failed.
- Dogs who snap at or bite the handler will be failed.
- Dogs who lunge at, or display aggression to other dogs or the public will be failed.
- Dogs who bark more than casually or who run off will be failed.

## Behavior: Handler

- Handlers who display anger or aggressive handling, pinching, choking or striking will be failed.
- Safety: Dog and public safety is paramount. Videos that display risk taking, endangerment of dog or public or disregard of laws will result in a fail.
- The handler is responsible for choosing footing, obstacles and surroundings with care and consideration.

## NCO Obedience Program:

Check our [YouTube channel](#) and [Facebook page](#) for videos of performances

### NCO-1 Beginner Level - May be filmed at home or a familiar area

\*For all exercises that say "on a long line" the Dog may be off leash or dragging a leash as local law, dog safety and public safety allow

Heel on leash: Dog sitting at heel on a 6' leash, held so that there is some obvious slack. Heeling will commence with a command and/or signal by the handler and will continue for approximately one minute at a brisk pace. The heeling pattern must include at least 1 about turn (left, right or "go around" about turns are all legal), 90 degree right turn, 90 degree left turn and a halt with a sit in heel position.

There shall also be a segment of at least 15' of a slow pace, then return to normal and also a segment of at least 15' of a fast pace, then a return to normal. There must be a noticeable change of pace in both handler and dog. There is no specific order to these required elements as long as they are incorporated.

Heel in a serpentine one way: The dog and handler shall heel forward and weave in and around 5 imaginary cones ala slalom skiing. The total distance

shall be approximately 20-30 feet and the handler may set start/finish markers ahead of time. If they feel it is necessary small discrete markers for the invisible cones may be laid on the ground/floor, but are not required and must be no larger than 5" across and must be flat. The curves should be obvious and the dog should maintain heel position.

Sit stay, handler walks around dog close: Dog sitting at heel on a 6 foot leash, handler commands/signals "stay" and walks around the dog close but not touching. When back in heel position handler will pause briefly.

Stand stay owner in heel position (30 sec): Dog sitting at heel on a 6 foot leash with some visible slack in it. Handler commands and/or signals dog to stand and then stay. handler then stands upright for 30 seconds to complete the exercise. The handler may step forward, give a couple commands/handsignals. They may not position the dog by hand or yank on collar. The handler MAY talk quietly to the dog periodically , but not non stop

Down, Sit, Down handler 4-6' away: Dog sitting in heel position on a 6 foot leash. handler commands and/or signals dog to stay and steps out 4-6 feet, turns and faces dog. Handler commands and or signals dog to down, pauses, then commands and/or signals dog to sit, pauses, then commands and/or signals dog to down. Pause then return around dog to heel position completing the exercise. The dog should perform the exercises promptly. Each position shall be accomplished with 1 verbal command and/or hand signal. ONE extra command and/or signal may be given without failure in total for this exercise (not per position)

Recall: Dog on a long line, handler leaves dog going approximately 12-15 feet. Pause with hands at side and then give command and/or signal to "come" returning hands to side. Dog must come to front and sit. This ends the exercise but the handler may ask dog to finish (either left or right) but this is not required and a failure to perform the finish will not fail the dog.



**NCO-2 Advanced Beginner Level - Must be filmed somewhere that is not at home**

**\*For all exercises that say "on a long line" the Dog may be off leash or dragging a leash as local law, dog safety and public safety allow**

Heel on leash: Dog sitting at heel on a 6' leash, held so that there is some obvious slack. Heeling will commence with a command and/or signal by the handler and will continue for at least one minute but not more than one and a half minutes at a brisk pace.

The heeling pattern must include at least 1 about turn (left, right or "go around" about turns are all legal), 90 degree right turn, 90 degree left turn and a halt with a sit in heel position.

There shall also be a segment of at least 15' of a slow pace, then return to normal and also a segment of at least 15' of a fast pace, then a return to normal. There must be a noticeable change of pace in both handler and dog. There is no specific order to these required elements as long as they are incorporated.

Heel in a serpentine - out and back: The dog and handler shall heel forward and weave in and around 5 imaginary cones ala slalom skiing. Upon the dog and handler reaching the farthest point, they shall curve around and weave in and around 5 imaginary cones back to the start. The total distance from one end to the other shall be approximately 20-30 feet and the handler may set start/end turn markers ahead of time. If they feel it is necessary small discrete markers for the invisible cones may be laid on the ground/floor, but are not required and must be no larger than 5" across and must be flat. The curves should be obvious and the dog should maintain heel position

Sit stay, handler walks around dog at end of 6' leash: Dog sitting at heel, handler commands/signals "stay" and walks around the dog at the end of the 6 foot leash but without pulling on the dog. When back in heel position handler will pause briefly.

Stand stay owner in heel position (1 min) Dog sitting at heel on a 6 foot leash with some visible slack in it. Handler commands and/or signals dog to stand and then stay. Handler then stands upright for 1 minute to complete the exercise. The handler may not position the dog by hand or yank on collar. They may not step forward and no more than two commands (hand signal with verbal counts as one)

Recall over an obstacle leg pad height: Dog sitting at heel on a long line at least 8 feet from an obstacle that is approximately the height of the front leg pad. Handler leaves dog and goes at least 8 feet beyond the obstacle, pauses and then commands and/or signals dog to come to front returning hands to side. Dog must jump the obstacle (without climbing or hitting) and come to front and sit. This ends the exercise but the handler may ask dog to finish (either left or right) but this is not required and a failure to perform the finish will not fail the dog.

Down, Sit, Down handler 8-12' away: Dog sitting in heel position on a long line. Handler commands and/or signals dog to stay and steps out 8-12 feet, turns and faces dog. Handler commands and or signals dog to down, pauses, then commands and/or signals dog to sit, pauses, then commands and/or signals dog to down. Pause then return around dog to heel position completing the exercise. The dog should perform the exercises promptly. Each position shall be accomplished with 1 verbal command and/or hand signal. ONE extra command and/or signal may be given without failure in total for this exercise (not per position)

**NCO-3 Intermediate Level - Must be filmed in a public place (see rules for definition of “public”). Three passing submissions required.**

**\*For all exercises that say "on a long line" the Dog may be off leash or dragging a leash as local law, dog safety and public safety allow**

**Please film, panning about- approx 30 seconds or less of where you are so the judges can see the environment**

**Heel on long line: Dog sitting at heel on a long line, handle around handler's wrist but otherwise dragging. Heeling will commence with a command and/or signal by the handler and will continue for at least one and a half minutes to not more than two minutes at a brisk pace.**

**The heeling pattern must include at least 2 about turns (left, right or "go around" about turns are all legal), 90 degree right turns, 90 degree left turns and 2 halts with a sit in heel position.**

**There shall also be a segment of at least 20' of a slow pace, then return to normal and also a segment of at least 20' of a fast pace, then a return to normal. There must be a noticeable change of pace in both handler and dog. There is no specific order to these required elements as long as they are incorporated.**

**Figure 8 on long line: Handler shall use markers or natural items approximately 8-12 feet apart. Dog sitting at heel on a long line, handle around handler's wrist but otherwise dragging. Heeling will commence with a command and/or signal by the handler. The dog and handler shall heel in a figure 8 pattern starting in either direction. Upon completing one figure 8 they shall halt with the dog automatically sitting at heel. pause, then continue heeling to complete another figure 8. Halt, dog automatically sits and exercise is complete.**

**Go out, Turn and sit: Dog sitting at heel on a long line, handle around handler's wrist but otherwise dragging. Handler commands and/or signals dog to go out in a straight line to a marker or natural item approximately 20 feet away and commands the dog to turn and sit. Handler pauses, then**

returns around dog to heel position. Pauses and the exercise is complete.

Down, Sit, Stand Handler 10-15' away: Dog sitting in heel position on a long line. Handler commands and/or signals dog to stay and steps out 10-15 feet, turns and faces dog. Handler commands and or signals dog to down, pauses,

then commands and/or signals dog to sit, pauses, then commands and/or signals dog to stand. Pause then return around dog to heel position, pausing and completing the exercise. The dog should perform the exercises promptly. Each position shall be accomplished with 1 verbal command and/or hand signal. ONE extra command and/or signal may be given without failure in total for this exercise (not per position)

Retrieve: Dog sitting at heel on a long line, handler throws a non ball like object (an obedience dumbbell is fine but other items may be used providing they are not round/do not roll) out at least 12 feet. Pause. Send dog to retrieve. Dog should go out to the item directly, pick it up and bring it back to front without mouthing or playing with it. Dog should sit in front of the handler who shall briefly pause then take the item from the dog and command and/or signal the dog to finish (left or right) and exercise is complete

Retrieve over obstacle elbow height: Dog sitting at heel on a long line at least 8 feet from an elbow height obstacle, handler throws a non ball like object (an obedience dumbbell is fine but other items may be used providing they are not round/do not roll) out at least 8 feet beyond the obstacle. Pause. Send dog to retrieve. Dog should go out to the item directly jumping the obstacle without climbing or hitting, pick up the item, return back over the obstacle and bring the item back to front without mouthing or playing with it. Dog should sit in front of the handler who shall briefly pause then take the item from the dog and command and/or signal the dog to finish (left or right) and exercise is complete



**NCO-4 Excellent Level - Must be filmed in a public place (see rules for definition of "public").**

**Three passing submissions required, one of which must be outdoors.**

**\*For all exercises that say "on a long line" the Dog may be off leash or dragging a leash as local law, dog safety and public safety allow**

**Please film, panning about- approx 30 seconds or less of where you are so the judges can see the environment**

Heel on long line no verbal commands: Dog sitting at heel on a long line, handle around handler's wrist but otherwise dragging. Heeling will commence with a signal only no verbal commands by the handler and will continue for approximately one and a half minutes at a brisk pace.

The heeling pattern must include at least one about turn (left, right or "go around" about turns are all legal), one 90 degree right turn, one 90 degree left turns and 2 halts with a sit in heel position.

There shall also be a segment of at least 20' of a slow pace, then return to normal and also a segment of at least 20' of a fast pace, then a return to normal. There must be a noticeable change of pace in both handler and dog. There is no specific order to these required elements as long as they are incorporated.

Scent Discrimination 1 article type: Dog sitting or lying at heel on a long line. Handler leaves dog in a stay and takes a container with 5 dog safe identical articles clearly numbered so the video viewer can clearly read them (they may be every day objects or dumbbell like items) and walks approximately 10-15 feet behind the dog and dumps them out moving them into a spread out pattern using some method to keep scent off of them. The handler then selects one article and scents it- shows the number to the camera clearly- and sets it down among the pattern. Handler returns to dog and leaves bag at this location. Dog is heeled in a half circle to the right and sits at heel. Handler pauses, then sends dog for the scented article. Dog must go directly out to the articles and work to find the scented article which the dog shall bring directly to front. handler will pause, take article, command and/or signal dog to finish (left or right) then show the article number to the camera completing the exercise.



Stand, Down, Sit handler 10-15' away : Dog sitting in heel position on a long line. Handler commands and/or signals dog to stay and steps out 10-15 feet, turns and faces dog. Handler commands and or signals dog to stand, pauses,

then commands and/or signals dog to down, pauses, then commands and/or signals dog to sit. Pause then return around dog to heel position, pausing and completing the exercise. The dog should perform the exercises promptly. Each position shall be accomplished with 1 verbal command and/or hand signal. ONE extra command and/or signal may be given without failure in total for this exercise (not per position)

Owner performed Stand for exam: Dog sitting in heel position on a long line. Handler commands and/or signals dog to stand and stay, then steps out approximately 10 feet, returns to dog and runs hand down dog's back, steps back out to approximately 10 feet, pauses, then returns around behind dog to heel position. pauses and completes the exercise. The handler may not position the dog by hand or yank on collar. They may not step forward and no more than two commands (hand signal with verbal counts as one).

Directed send (2): Dog sitting at heel on a long line or leash dragging on the ground. Handler commands and/or signals dog to go out in a straight line to a marker or natural item approximately 20 feet away and commands the dog to turn and sit.

Handler pauses, then asks dog using command AND signal to go left or right between two cones previously set out which are about 10 feet from the handler position but one pair offset to the left and one pair offset to the right. Cones should be anchored so won't drag or tip over if leash hits them. Cones are 6' apart. Dog passes between the cones indicated and comes to front. As the dog passes the cones the handler may pivot to face the dog. Handler pauses then asks dog to finish (left or right).

Handler may praise dog and/or perform a heeling circle to set up again. The handler repeats this same process but this time asks for the other set of cones. Dog passes between the cones indicated and comes to front. As the dog passes the cones the handler may pivot to face the dog. Handler pauses then asks dog to finish (left or right). Pauses and the exercise is complete.

The use of jump standards, with the bar or board removed and uprights anchored so unable to be dragged or knocked over are acceptable alternate to cones

Recall over Obstacle elbow height: Dog sitting at heel on a long line at least 8 feet from an obstacle that is elbow height. Handler leaves dog and goes at

least 8 feet beyond the obstacle, pauses and then commands and/or signals dog to come to front returning hands to side. Dog must jump the obstacle (without climbing or hitting) and come to front. Handler pauses and then commands and/or signal the dog to finish (left or right) and exercise is complete

Directed Retrieve 3 gloves used, 1 retrieved: Handler will have laid out 3 white cloth gloves in a line or semi circle previously. Gloves are 8-10 feet apart. Dog and handler are about 12 feet from the center glove. Dog sitting at heel on a long line. Handler points a finger to indicate to the camera which glove they will be retrieving. Handler may ask dog to mark the desired glove. Handler then commands and/or signals dog to retrieve the selected glove. Dog shall go to the glove promptly, pick it up and retrieve it to front without throwing it or chewing on it. handler pauses, takes glove from dog, pauses and commands and/or signals dog to finish (left or right) Exercise is complete

**NCO-5 Master Level - Must be filmed in a public place (see rules for definition of "public").**

**Six passing submissions required, three of which must be outdoors.**

**\*For all exercises that say "on a long line" the Dog may be off leash or dragging a leash as local law, dog safety and public safety allow**

**Please film, panning about- approx 30 seconds or less of where you are so the judges can see the environment**

***There are no extra commands and/or signals allowed at the Master level***

**Heel on long line no verbal commands: Dog sitting at heel on a long line, handle around handler's wrist but otherwise dragging. Heeling will commence with a signal only no verbal commands by the handler and will continue for one minutes at a brisk pace.**

**The heeling pattern must include at one about turn (left, right or "go around" about turns are all legal), one 90 degree right turn, one 90 degree left turns and one halt with a sit in heel position.**

**There shall also be a segment of at least 10' of a slow pace, then return to normal and also a segment of at least 10' of a fast pace, then a return to normal. There must be a noticable change of pace in both handler and dog. There is no specific order to these required elements as long as they are incorporated.**

**Scent Discrimination 2 article types: Dog sitting or lying at heel on a long line. Handler leaves dog in a stay and takes a container with 5 dog safe identical articles clearly numbered so the video viewer can clearly read them (they may be every day objects or dumbbell like items) and walks approximately 10-15 feet behind the dog and dumps them out moving them into a spread out pattern using some method to keep scent off of them. The handler then selects one article and scents it- shows the number to the camera clearly- and sets it down among the pattern. Handler returns to dog and leaves bag at this location. Dog is heeled in a half circle to the right and sits at heel. Handler pauses, then sends dog for the scented article. Dog must go directly out to the articles and work to find the scented article which the dog shall bring directly to front. handler will pause, take article, command and/or signal dog to finish (left or right) then show the article**

number to the camera completing the first part of the exercise. The dog may be praised and/or patted briefly.

Handler then repeats the exact process as above with a second set of five

articles made of a material different than the first set (leather instead of wood or metal etc) Upon completing the entire process again with the new article type this exercise is complete.

Moving Stand & Owner stand for exam: Dog sitting in heel position on a long line. Handler commands and/or signals dog to heel and heel forward about 10 feet and while still moving commands and or signals dog to stand and stay. The dog shall stop in place taking no more than a couple extra steps and the handler shall continue out about 6 feet, turn and face the dog, pause, then return to dog and runs hand down dog's back, steps back out to approximately 6 feet, pauses, then returns around behind dog to heel position. pauses and completes the exercise. The handler may not position the dog by hand or touch collar. They may not step forward and no more than one commands (hand signal with verbal counts as one)

Retrieve over obstacle elbow height: Dog sitting at heel on a long line at least 8 feet from an elbow height obstacle, handler throws a non ball like object (an obedience dumbbell is fine but other items may be used providing they are not round/do not roll) out at least 8 feet beyond the obstacle. Pause. Send dog to retrieve. Dog should go out to the item directly jumping the obstacle without climbing or hitting, pick up the item, return back over the obstacle and bring the item back to front without mouthing or playing with it. Dog should sit in front of the handler who shall briefly pause then take the item from the dog and command and/or signal the dog to finish (left or right) and exercise is complete

Directed send (3): Dog sitting at heel on a long line or leash dragging on the ground. Handler commands and/or signals dog to go out in a straight line to a marker or natural item approximately 20 feet away and commands the dog to turn and sit.

Handler pauses, then asks dog using command AND signal to go left or



right between two cones previously set out which are about 10 feet from the handler position but one pair offset to the left and one pair offset to the right. Cones should be anchored so won't drag or tip over if leash hits them. Cones are 6' apart. Dog passes between the cones indicated and comes to front. As the dog passes the cones the handler may pivot to face the dog. Handler pauses then asks dog to finish (left or right).

Handler may praise dog and/or perform a heeling circle to set up again. The handler repeats this same process but this time asks for the second set of cones. Dog passes between the cones indicated and comes to front. As the dog passes the cones the handler may pivot to face the dog. Handler pauses then asks dog to finish (left or right). Handler may praise dog and/or perform a heeling circle to set up again.

Handler commands and/or signals dog to go out in a straight line to the marker or natural item for a third time.

Handler pauses, then asks dog using command AND signal to go left or right between one set of cones, handler's choice.

Dog passes between the cones indicated and comes to front. As the dog passes the cones the handler may pivot to face the dog. Handler pauses then asks dog to finish (left or right).

Pauses and the exercise is complete.

The use of jump standards, with the bar or board removed and uprights anchored so unable to be dragged or knocked over are acceptable alternate to cones

Directed Retrieve 6 gloves used, 2 retrieved: Handler will have laid out 6 white cloth gloves in a large circle previously. Gloves are at 12, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 on a clock face. Dog and handler are about 12 feet from the glove ring in the center.

Dog sitting at heel on a long line. Handler points a finger to indicate to the camera which glove they will be retrieving. Handler may ask dog to mark the desired glove. Handler then commands and/or signals dog to retrieve the selected glove. Dog shall go to the glove promptly, pick it up and retrieve it to front without throwing it or chewing on it. handler pauses, takes glove from dog, pauses and commands and/or signals dog to finish (left or right)



Dog sitting at heel again. Handler points a finger to indicate to the camera which glove they will be retrieving. Handler may ask dog to mark the desired glove. Handler then commands and/or signals dog to retrieve the selected glove. Dog shall go to the glove promptly, pick it up and retrieve it to front without throwing it or chewing on it. handler pauses, takes glove from dog, pauses and commands and/or signals dog to finish (left or right)Exercise is complete

Stand, Down, Sit handler 15-20' away no verbal commands: Dog sitting in heel position on a long line. Handler commands and/or signals dog to stay and steps out 15-20 feet, turns and faces dog. Handler commands and or signals dog to stand, pauses, then commands and/or signals dog to down, pauses, then commands and/or signals dog to sit. Pause then call the dog to heel, pausing and completing the exercise. The dog should perform the exercises promptly.

## **NCO Tracking Program**

### **Required equipment:**

- \*Collar with ID as described in Dog and Human Safety and Laws section
- \*Properly fitting harness that line attaches at top of back. Harness may not be a compression type, anti pulling or similar. If in doubt, send a photo of harness to NCO for approval.
- \*Long line lengths listed in level description
- \*GPS collar OR the ability to attach cell phone to dog (pouch on harness or dog vest allowed as long as you video the “putting on” )
- \*A flag for the start- can be a surveyor flag, or actual small flag on a post. Flag should be big enough to see in the video.

### **General Rules**

- \*Unless contradicted in this section, all NCO rules in the Obedience section will apply
- \*Protective coats and/or boots may be used on the dog as long as the “putting on” is video recorded
- \*YOU MUST have the ability to record the GPS route of both track laid and track ran. This can be accomplished by a GPS collar system (like the Garmin Astro) or by smart phone via an app (like OnX, DogTracks, Motion X GPS etc)
- \*The track must be a single unedited recording from start to finish and this must include the “putting on” of any protective gear, or vest/pouch to hold cell phone.
- \*GPS collars may not have a correction feature (ie shock like the TT15) and a photo or short video of the collar showing it must be included in your final video.
- \*For all tracks you will need a person to follow you filming (this MAY be the tracklayer) as you run track. The camera person must be far enough so both dog and handler are always on screen together and close enough to see handler and dog behavior and that handler can be heard.
- \*Guiding dog by line or verbal/hand signal direction AFTER the start are automatic fails. Dog may be led by collar/harness to start and a hand signal may be given at start.
- \*Any corrections- loud verbal or physical are automatic fail.
- \*A neutral tone “leave it” or “uh-uh” or “No” ARE ALLOWED
- \*Treats or toy may be carried concealed, May not be given until track has ended

- \*Line must always be held by handler, never dragging loose with handler behind.
- \* Eliminating on a track is NOT a “Disqualification”.

### Tracking Video Submission -Special rules

\*Tracklayer's name, mailing address, email address and telephone number MUST be provided on the submission form for NCO-T2 and above levels  
Same info on crosstrack layers must be provided for NCO-T4 and above levels

\*Tracklayer must provide date and time track laid and total yards

\*FINAL video for submission must include:

30 second or less scan of the surroundings

30 second or less video of the GPS collar if used

Video of track as ran start to finish including “putting on” of special gear, vest or pouch

Video of watch or phone just prior to start showing time and date

The map showing both track laid and track run on same image

### NCO-T1 -Beginner Tracking Dog

Handler lays their own track

15' long line. A longer line may be used but a long tassel of surveyor tape or similar must visually mark the 15' point. Handler at 15' mark of line except to untangle.

Track 150-200 yards in length in an open area

Two to three 90 degree turns

30-90 minutes in age

No crossing of water or ditch

No change in surface

(Ie. if on short grass entire track needs to be similar, not grass to dirt or short grass to tall)

Each leg of track must be no less than 50 yards long

No leg of track can be within 50 yards or less of another leg

No leg of track nor entrance path to start may cross any track leg

No portion of track shall follow a fence, or boundary for more than 15'

No leg of track can be within 15' of a fence or boundary

Start article a piece of cloth or clothing

End article must be leather

## **NCO-T2 -Novice Tracking Dog**

Someone NOT the handler lays the track, can be a family member  
20' long line. Handler at end of line except to take article, untangle or negotiate  
obstacles. Lines longer than 20' may be used but handler needs to stay at 20'  
Track 300-400 yards in length in an open area  
Three to five 90 degree turns  
One to two hours in age  
No crossing of water or ditch  
No change in surface type except may cross a sidewalk, hiking or bike path not  
more than 6' wide  
Each leg of track must be no less than 50 yards long  
No leg of track can be within 50 yards or less of another leg  
No leg of track nor entrance path to start may cross any track leg  
No portion of track shall follow a fence, or boundary for more than 15'  
No leg of track can be within 15' of a fence or boundary  
Start article a piece of cloth or clothing  
End article must be leather

## **NCO-T3 -Intermediate Tracking Dog**

Someone NOT the handler lays the track, CAN NOT be a family member  
20' long line. Handler at end of line except to take article, untangle or negotiate  
obstacles. Lines longer than 20' may be used but handler needs to stay at 20'  
Track 600-800 yards in length  
Four to six turns, three must be 90 degree turns- all turns must be in open area  
Two to three hours in age  
No crossing of Path, water or ditch more than 6' across, Water or ditch must be  
less than 12" deep or less than swimming depth whichever is less  
No crossing of log, barrier or wall taller than 1' high  
Each leg of track must be no less than 50 yards long  
No leg of track can be within 50 yards or less of another leg  
No leg of track nor entrance path to start may cross any track leg  
No portion of track shall follow a fence, or boundary for more than 15'  
No leg of track can be within 15' of a fence or boundary  
Start article a piece of cloth or clothing  
Middle article must be cloth or clothing, no less than 6" long and should not

present a swallow hazard and not less than 200 yards from start or end of track.  
End article must be leather

## NCO-T4 -Advanced Tracking Dog

**Note: you will need a crosstrack layer- not handler or tracklayer**

Someone NOT the handler lays the track, CAN NOT be a family member  
20' long line. Handler at end of line except to take article, untangle or negotiate  
obstacles. Lines longer than 20' may be used but handler needs to stay at 20'

Track 800-1000 yards in length

Five to Seven turns, three must be 90 degrees

Three to five hours in age

Water crossings must be less than 12" deep or less than swimming depth  
whichever is less

All fence or wall crossings must be safely handled. Handler may assist dog to  
ensure safety but may not indicate the track direction.

Each leg of track must be no less than 50 yards long

No leg of track can be within 50 yards or less of another leg

No leg of track nor entrance path to start may cross any track leg

No portion of track shall follow a fence, or boundary for more than 15'

There MUST be two obstacles such as road crossing, dramatic surface change  
(grass to dirt, grass to forest etc), walls, water, ditches, logs etc..

A cross track layer must walk a u shaped path crossing the track twice around  
the half way mark for aging time. Cross tracklayer may be a family member.

Start article a piece of cloth or clothing

TWO middle articles must be cloth or clothing , no less than 6" long and should  
not present a swallow hazard and not less than 200 yards from start or end of  
track and not closer together than 50 yards.

End article must be leather



## NCO-T5 -Excellent Tracking Dog

**Note: you will need two crosstrack layers-not handler or tracklayer**

Someone NOT the handler lays the track, CAN NOT be a family member  
20' long line. Handler at end of line except to take article, untangle or negotiate  
obstacles. Lines longer than 20' may be used but handler needs to stay at 20'  
Track 800-1000 yards in length

Five to Seven turns, three must be 90 degrees. No turns on hard surface areas.

Five to eight hours in age

All fence or wall crossings must be safely handled. Handler may assist dog to  
ensure safety but may not indicate the track direction.

Each leg of track must be no less than 50 yards long

No leg of track can be within 50 yards or less of another leg

No leg of track nor entrance path to start may cross any track leg

No portion of track shall follow a fence, or boundary for more than 15'

There MUST be FOUR obstacles such as road crossing, dramatic surface change  
(grass to dirt, grass to forest etc), walls, water, ditches, logs etc..

Hard surface areas (dirt roads, gravel areas or paved areas) may not be more  
than 40' across

Each cross track layer must walk a u shaped path crossing the track twice around  
the half way mark for aging time. Cross tracklayers may walk as close as 6' apart.

Cross tracklayers may be a family members.

Start article a piece of cloth or clothing

FOUR track articles may be any item no less than 6" long and should not present  
a swallow or shatter hazzard and not less than 100 yards from start or end of  
track and not closer together than 50 yards.

End article must be leather

## NCO-T6 -Master Tracking Dog

**Note: you will need two crosstrack layers-not handler or tracklayer**

Someone NOT the handler lays the track, CAN NOT be a family member  
20' long line. Handler at end of line except to take article, untangle or negotiate  
obstacles. Lines longer than 20' may be used but handler needs to stay at 20'  
Track 1000-1500 yards in length

Five to Seven turns, three must be 90 degrees. No turns on a hard surface area  
Ten to twelve hours in age

All fence or wall crossings must be safely handled. Handler may assist dog to  
ensure safety but may not indicate the track direction.

Each leg of track must be no less than 50 yards long

No leg of track can be within 50 yards or less of another leg

No leg of track nor entrance path to start may cross any track leg

No portion of track shall follow a fence, or boundary for more than 15'

There MUST be FOUR obstacles such as road crossing, dramatic surface change  
(grass to dirt, grass to forest etc), walls, water, ditches, logs etc..

Hard surface areas (dirt roads, gravel areas or paved areas) may not be more  
than 40' across

Each cross track layer must walk crossing the track twice around the three  
quarter mark for aging time. Cross tracklayers may walk as close as 6' apart.

Cross tracklayers may be a family members.

Start article a piece of cloth or clothing

FOUR track articles may be any item no less than 6" long and should not present  
a swallow or shatter hazard and not less than 100 yards from start or end of  
track and not closer together than 50 yards.

End article must be leather

## **NCO-OCT -Optional City Tracking Dog**

### **NO prior title required, this is an optional title**

Someone NOT the handler lays the track, CAN NOT be a family member  
15' long line. A longer line may be used but a long tassel of surveyor tape or similar must visually mark the 15' point. Handler at 15' mark except to take article, untangle or negotiate obstacles. May also shorten line to deal with people, animals or traffic

Track 500-800 yards in length

Five to Seven turns, none acute turns

Three to five hours in age

ALL municipal laws must be followed, Be aware of and cautious of people, animals and traffic at all times.

Each leg of track must be no less than 30 yards long

No leg of track can be within 50 yards or less of another leg

No leg of track nor entrance path to start may cross any track leg

There MUST be THREE different surface types, and surfaces devoid of vegetation must comprise no less than 50% of the track nor more than two thirds.

Start article a piece of cloth or clothing

FOUR track articles may be any item no less than 6" long and should not present a swallow or shatter hazard and not less than 50 yards from start or end of track and not closer together than 50 yards.

End article must be leather

IF a dog eliminates on the track, handler must stop to bag solids.

Camera person shall retrieve the bag after the team moves on.

# Non Competitive Obedience Association

## Judging Procedures

### Videos

You are judging performance only, not the videography skills.

The only concerns about a video you have are:

- A) Can I see and hear what the dog and handler are doing at least for the principle parts of the exercises?
- B) Does it appear that each exercise is complete and UN edited? (the individual exercises may be separate segments BUT each exercise must be itself unedited.)
- C) The dog itself has no bandages or visible stitches? Not painful?
- D) The Audio has no added background music masking dog/handler noise?
- E) The dog equipment complies with rules and any treats/toys are not visible during performance?
- F) Safety and handling rules have been followed to as best you can tell?
- G) Surroundings. Does the dog/handler appear to be in the sort of location described in the rules for that level?

### Performances

There are no scores. Performances are pass/fail only. Performances are also level dependant. Dogs at NCO-1, NCO-2, NCO-T1 and NCO-T2 are given more leeway as far as positioning and performance and the expectation is that performance will improve as the dog climbs in the levels. A dog at NCO-5 SHOULD be considerably better than a beginner dog at NCO-1

Decisions to fail should be supported by the rules and SHORT suggestions for improvements will be forwarded to the handler. Long training suggestions are NOT expected or desired! *"I failed XYZ exercise because V was not performed according to the rules and I suggest change this to improve your*

*performance”*

Specific performance details, not detailed in the rules:

Heel Position: Traditional on the left position with the dogs muzzle to shoulder in line with handler's hip facing straight ahead (12 o'clock) is the ideal image. Stationary or moving.

For stationary heel position:

Dogs at the NCO-1 and NCO-2 levels are given more leeway. Variations from the ideal position UP to but NOT greater than dog's rear at 9 O'clock are accepted.

Dogs at NCO-3 and NCO-4 levels, variations up to but not greater than dog's rear at 8 o'clock are accepted.

Dogs at NCO-5 level, variation up to but not greater than dog's rear at 7 o'clock are accepted.

Heeling In NCO-1 the heeling is "approximately 1 minute" 45 seconds fits into the "approximately" category because the people will be counting to themselves. LESS than 45 seconds will not fit and will be an NQ

NCO-2 changes the "approximately" to "At least"

So in NCO-2 and above too short of a heeling pattern will not qualify

Front Position: Traditional directly in front of handler. Close enough to touch but not crowding or stepping on the handler. Handler facing 12 o'clock, dog facing 6 o'clock

Dogs at the NCO-1 and NCO-2 levels are given more leeway. Variations from the ideal position UP to but NOT greater than dog's rear at 9 and 3 O'clock are accepted.

Dogs at NCO-3 and NCO-4 levels, variations up to but not greater than dog's rear at 10 and 2 o'clock are accepted.

Dogs at NCO-5 level, variation up to but not greater than dog's rear at 11 and 1 o'clock are accepted.



**Return Around Dog:** Handler returns around the dog's right behind dog and into heel position.

Dogs at the NCO-1 and NCO-2 levels the handler may hold hand in front of dog's nose or above it's head as they walk around the dog.

**Stand In** NCO-1 the handler may step forward, give a couple commands/handsignals. They may not position the dog by hand or yank on collar. In NCO-2 and above no step forward and no more than two commands (hand signal with verbal counts as one)

**Praise:** Quiet praise is allowed at any point in an exercise EXCEPT those where verbal commands are prohibited.

**Treats & Toys:** ARE allowed at the end of each exercise as long as the handler remains stationary. In NCO-1 some leeway is given to the “stationary while giving treats” rule, as long as the handler is not feeding multi treats across a distance, but in NCO-2 and above the handler MUST remain stationary. Toys may be given to the dog at the end of the exxercise and the dog may carry it to the start of the next exercise as long as it is in control of the possession and not flinging it about etc.

**Leashes:** the occasional tight leash are allowed at NCO-1 and NCO-2 levels as long as the leash is not tight throughout the exercise. At NCO-3 and above the dog will be either free or on some sort of a long line. The long line should not be used to control the dog during the exercise, but maintaining line safety (reeling in, getting un tangled) will not be deemed controlling the dog.

**Stays:** Stay times are approximate simply because the handler will likely be counting. As long as the times are close, it is acceptable. The dog may wiggle, look around or shift as long as the principle part of the exercise is accomplished.

**Finish:** In NCO-1 and NCO-2 levels finishes are allowed but not mandatory

**Serpentines and Figure 8:**

Perfectly shaped serpentines are not required. The exercise is to show that the dog will maintain position through changes of direction rapidly in a short distance. What you are looking for is 5 semi circles for each direction required in a straight line. The start and finish marker counts as 1 and 5.

Perfectly shaped figure 8 are easier to obtain but not required. The exercise is to show that the dog can maintain position through a figure 8 shaped pattern.

Distances: Named distances are to be judged to the best of your ability.

Obstacle heights: The two obstacle heights are leg pad height (the pad at the pastern joint on the back of the leg) and elbow height. As we encourage the use of natural obstacles there is a bit of allowance as long as close to the height.

Position Changes: down,sit,down; down, sit, stand; stand, down, sit. Etc.. The dog shall change positions with 1 verbal and/or hand signal command. ONE extra command and/or signal is allowed (ONE per exercise not one per position) EXCEPT at NCO-5 where no extra commands are allowed in any exercise. "Creeping" over the course of the exercise in levels NCO-1 and NCO-2 should not exceed 1 body length. Creeping in NCO-3 and above should not exceed ½ a body length

Go outs: Go outs should be straight to 12 o'clock (from the handler at the clock center) however performances with go outs as great as but not greater than the angle of 11 and 1 o'clock are within acceptability.

Directed Sends: You are simply looking for the dog to take direction from the handler and pass between 2 markers on it's way to the handler. Failure will be dogs that take the wrong direction or do not pass around the inner marker.

Retrieves: Dog should go directly to the item to be retrieved and bring it directly back to the handler without delay. Some level of shaking, tossing and chewing are allowed as long as it does not interfere with the performance.

**Gloves and Scent Articles:** If you cannot tell which article was to be retrieved clearly and which one was actually retrieved you must fail the exercise.

**Guiding:** NCO-1 and NCO-2 dogs may be gently guided between exercises. NCO-3 and above they may not be physically guided

**Luring etc:** Luring, air cookies, pretending to hold a treat, clapping or leg slapping are not allowed DURING exercises but are allowed between exercises.

### **INSTANT NQ/fail**

yelling Collar corrections, pinching, hitting, aggressive handling,

performance Eliminating during an exercise  
Dog being so aggressive, shy or fearful that this impacts

Dogs lunging at other dogs or humans

Dogs who bark more than occasionally

Dogs that run off

Dogs that snap at/bite the handler

obvious disregard of laws Videos that display risk taking, dog or public endangerment or

## **Tracking Specific Guidelines**

### **Equipment**

Dog must be wearing a collar with ID which can dangle or be flat. Seeing a collar on the dog is sufficient

Harness must be a type with lead attachment on back. It must not be a compression, anti pull, front clip etc... If any doubts as to suitability you may ask NCO admin to request a harness photo.

IF a GPS collar is used it may not be a type capable of administering a correction. The video clip of the collar at the beginning of the

submission video will show the collar all sides so that you can ascertain there are no correction prongs. If you have doubts, you may ask NCO admin to request the collar's make and model to verify.

IF a phone is attached to the dog's harness via vest or pouch the video will show this being put on.

The dog must wear the GPS device be it collar or phone, the handler may not carry it.

Protective vests, skid plates and boots MAY be worn by the dog as long as the video shows them being put on, so that you can see there is no gear other than that involved.

Articles must not present a swallow or shatter hazard.

### Tracking Lines and Line Handling

NCO-T1 and NCO-OCT The line is 15' .A longer line may be used but a long tassel of surveyor tape or similar must visually mark the 15' point. Handler at 15' mark of line except to untangle.

All other levels, the line is 20' or more and handler should appear to be staying at the 20' point- approximately.

You have no way to measure the line, visually approximate is sufficient.

Line may be shortened to deal with entanglements, barrier crossings, dog coming towards a stationary handler, other animals, non track related people, automobiles or other safety concerns.

Handler must remain at the approximate distance indicated, the leash must remain in their hand at all times except for entanglement remedies. The line may dip and touch the ground and even drag as long as the handler remains at the approximate required distance and the line is in their hand. Restarting after barrier, entanglement or articles handler may let line out til proper distance or go to end of line.

### Videography

Rarely will the video submissions be stellar quality/ professional appearing.

As long as you are satisfied with the clarity of the image, the ability to hear the handler if they yell or over loud command the dog (soft voice

is not required to be heard), see the dog behavior in general, see the handler if they guide/correct or restrain the dog inappropriately AND can see both dog and handler at the same time, the video is sufficient.

The rules have been written to make the performances as cheat proof as possible. If in doubt consult an NCO admin prior to failing a performance.

### Misc

There needs to be a start flag of some type  
Guiding the dog to the start via collar, leash or harness is allowed

Hand or verbal signal to track at start is allowed

Fence and wall crossings must be handled safely. This can mean; shortening the line significantly, restraining the dog so handler can hold wire fence open or cross first , lifting a dog over, or anything else that makes the fence or wall crossing safe for BOTH dog and handler.

A verbal restart command is allowed after articles or an entanglement or barrier crossing but no hand signals.

Elimination of the track is NOT a DQ. Handlers involved in the Optional City Tracking level must bag solids and camera person must pick the bag up.

A neutral tone “uh uh”, “no” or “leave it” ARE ALLOWED

Concealed treats and a single concealed toy are allowed to be carried on track and given at END of track only.

WATER MAY be given on the track in all levels NCO-T2 and above but may not be used as an obvious restart cue

### Performance

In viewing both the video of the dog and handler tracking and looking at the GPS map of track laid vs track ran you should determine if the dog did or did not meet this criteria:

Dog was tracking the scent via footstep, or air scent.

Dog was clearly following the track and did not get more than approximately 30' off track without a self correction (ie dog misses turn and loops/back tracks on it's own and refinds the track successfully in a reasonable



time unaided by handler)

Dog indicates the articles in some way visible on camera. This can be a slow down, head bob, full stop in any position. A full stop is of course the ideal but all are acceptable if visible.

Handler is not guiding dog once past the start. Guiding defined as altering or directing dog's path by line, hand signals or voice.

Start article may be left at the start. ALL other articles must be recovered

### INSTANT DQ/Fail

Collar corrections, pinching, hitting, aggressive handling, yelling

Dog being so aggressive, shy or fearful that this impacts performance

Dogs lunging at other dogs or humans

Dogs who bark more than occasionally

Dogs that run off

Dogs that snap at/bite the handler

Guiding the dog to the track AFTER the start, by collar, harness, line or by hand signal

Videos that display risk taking, dog or public endangerment or obvious disregard of laws

Use of disallowed equipment

**CONTACT the Non Competitive Obedience Assn**

**Email: [noncompobed@gmail.com](mailto:noncompobed@gmail.com)**

**WEBSITE: <http://www.frontierrots.com/nco.htm>**

**FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/noncompobed/>**