



## NCW NAVHDA TEST DAY VOLUNTEERS & INSTRUCTIONS

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### TEST DAY Volunteer Positions – Members

Without ALL volunteer roles filled we cannot run a test.

#### LUNCH VOLUNTEER

Prepares main course for lunch – expenses are reimbursed by the Chapter or accepted as a donation.

#### BIRD STEWARD

Delivers birds to grounds and ensures humane and ethical treatment throughout the length of the test. Birds must be kept fed and watered and protected from the elements to perform well in the field. It is impossible to have a good test if the birds are weak and fail to fly. Dead birds for drags and water work should be kept cool, dry, and covered to avoid attracting flies.

#### FIELD MARSHAL

See [FIELD MARSHAL CHECKLIST](#)

The field Marshal stays with their team for the entire day - making sure the handlers are prepared and ready for every portion of the test. **It is their job to keep the test moving smoothly.** They will identify and hand out running orders to the handlers on their team. They are responsible to gather all equipment needed for the test and make sure it is on hand and ready. If a double test is being run, there will be one Field Marshal for each team. The Field Marshal has radio access to judges and bird planters. The Field Marshal ensures all equipment is picked up and returned to the right place and ready for the next test day.

#### ASSISTANT FIELD MARSHAL

See [FIELD MARSHAL CHECKLIST](#)

This person assists the field Marshal in all assigned duties.

#### BIRD PLANTERS

See [BIRD PLANTERS TEST DAY INSTRUCTIONS SHEET](#)

There should be two or more Bird Planters per field per day. A **MAIN BIRD PLANTER** appointed. They will be carefully instructed in the proper way to plant the kind of birds being used. **Don't assume that anybody who comes along knows how to plant a bird properly.** Birds must be planted in such a manner that they will be alert and ready to fly when a dog approaches. Bird Planters take direction from the Senior Judge on where to put birds and must watch Judges for a signal that may indicate they need an extra bird.

#### DUCK THROWER (Winger)

See [BIRD PLANTERS TEST DAY INSTRUCTIONS SHEET](#)

Responsible for setting up decoys in the Remaining by Blind/Steadiness by the Blind sequence, setting up the winger and performing test throw(s) of duck to ensure proper execution. This person is responsible for reloading ducks for the duration of the test day and collecting/returning decoys to the trailer at the end of the day.

#### DUCK HANDLER (Search for Duck)

See [BIRD PLANTERS TEST DAY INSTRUCTIONS SHEET](#)

One duck handler is needed for the day at the Utility duck search. They make sure that the ducks needed are at the site in a location down-wind, away from the dogs and their handlers.

The Duck Handler will have two large bird bags, a single-barrel, break action shotgun, Kent Field Blanks, steel shot ammunition, skiff, paddle, and lifejacket.



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At the direction of the judge, they will go out in the skiff and place the duck in the marsh. Upon returning, the skiff should be pulled away and hidden downwind so it will not distract the handler or dog. Once the dog is far enough away from shore and in the marsh, they should get the next duck ready. (Primary feathers on one side should be pulled and discarded in a garbage bag.)

### **GUNNERS**

See [GUNNERS TEST DAY INSTRUCTIONS SHEET](#)

#### **Live Ammunition Gunning**

Utility & Gun Dog Testing - blank ammunition (Kent Field Blanks) is used for Water Work and live ammunition is used for Field Work. Live Ammunition Gunning at a NAVHDA Test or training is a serious responsibility. All Live Ammunition Gunners are required to read the sections on gun safety in the NAVHDA Aims, Programs, Test Rules book. Safe, intelligent, accurate shooting are primary concerns.

- Gunners must be international chapter members and be a local chapter member
- They will have read the NAVHDA Aims Programs Test Rules and abide by them
- Gunners must be mature adults who regard safety above marksmanship and are physically able to keep up with the handler.
- Gunners should:
  - Have handled a dog in a NAVHDA Utility Test
  - Participated as a gunner in a minimum of three training sessions under a member that has gunned for a Utility Test

The gunners are also responsible to fire the two blank rounds required during the Natural Ability field portion of the test.

#### **DISTRACTION GUNNER (Remaining by Blind/Steadiness by the Blind)**

See [GUNNERS TEST DAY INSTRUCTIONS SHEET](#)

This person will fire a blank from a single-barrel break action shotgun at the command of the judging team. He or she should bring hearing protection. This person should be familiar with the Steadiness by the Blind and Retrieve sequences for the Utility tests. The distraction gunner answers directly to the Field Marshal and judging team.

#### **GROUNDS CLEAN UP**

It is essential that we leave the grounds better than we find them, be it on public or private land. Cans, bottles, shell casings, bird waste, wastepaper, and any other litter should be picked up and removed. This is the responsibility of everyone.



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### GUNNERS

- **Before the test**, review the following sections of the Aims, Programs, Test Rules Book (2025):
  - **2.12 Safety**
  - **2.13 Handling of Firearms**
  - **2.14 Gunners**
- **SAFETY FIRST, LAST, AND ALWAYS.**
- **Report to the staging site at the appointed time** to receive Judge's instructions.
- **Always carry your gun in the open position until ready to shoot.**
- **Listen for Judge's instructions in the field.** For example, they may ask you to move back to give the dog/handler more room to work a bird.
- **When the dog makes bird contact**, the handler should decide which direction to take the bird and position you for the shot. If the handler is a novice, you may need to remind him/her of this.
- **After a bird is shot**, hold position until the dog passes you for the retrieve. At that point turn, walk behind the handler, and stand still. **If it is a short retrieve, STOP when the dog picks up the bird** - even if you are not yet behind the handler.
- **Step out of hearing range when the Judges are in discussion** during or after each dog's run.
- If you are unable to keep up with the handler or simply having a bad shooting day, the Judge may ask you to step down. **Be assured this is nothing personal.**
- Gunners are often asked to set up the winger for steady at blind. Check with your field marshal to see if this is needed.



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### 2.12 Safety

While live ammunition is being used, all persons must wear one or a combination of the following blaze orange garments: hat, vest, shirt, or jacket always in accordance with State/Provincial regulations.

Ultimately, the Judging Team is responsible to ensure everyone's safety. In case of noncompliance or risks to safety, they have the authority to suspend all test activities until safety is restored. Field marshals will also ensure that the gallery remains at a safe distance in a position away from the line of fire.

Up to two spectators may follow the dog in the field at all NAVHDA tests, as long as the Judging Team and handler agree. Spectators are never permitted to coach the handler in any way. If the Judging Team believes the spectators are posing a safety risk, or their presence is negatively affecting the dog's performance, they have the authority to have them leave the field.

Loose and unattended dogs are prohibited. When not under judgment all dogs must always be under control either in a kennel or on lead.

All handlers are expected to be aware of their dog's physical condition and act appropriately. Judges have the right and responsibility to ensure the safety and fair treatment of all the dogs during a test. If the Judges determine that a dog is deemed ill, injured, overheated or overstressed, to the point that continuing in the test may harm the dog, the dog will not be allowed to continue the test. Additionally, the score card will reflect whether the handler removed the dog or whether the Judges made the decision that the dog could not or should not continue the test. Judges will also ensure there are means (tubs, creek, pond, etc..) to cool off dogs, readily available for the field phase of all tests.

### 2.13 Handling of firearms

Hinged frame (break-open) shotguns of conventional gauge will be used in NAVHDA tests. All guns will be carried in the open position until just before the shot. Autoloaders and pump action guns are strictly forbidden, whether loaded with blank ammunition or not.

When blank ammunition is called for, it must be 12-gauge, professional factory manufactured, smokeless powder blank ammunition, or field trial poppers. Factory "primed poppers", which consist of only an empty hull and a primer, are not permitted.

Handlers are required to carry a shotgun during the GDT, UT and Invitational Test. Handlers are not allowed to carry shotguns during the NA test. At no time should a handler or gunner place a shotgun on the ground. Handlers must hold the shotgun for all retrieve sequences except during the duck search. If necessary to water the dog in the field, a Judge may be asked to hold the gun only while the handler waters their dog. For water retrieves, handlers must hold the gun until the retrieve is completed. Handlers are not permitted at any time to have live ammunition on their person while testing. Handlers may be allowed to carry their own unloaded break-open shotguns in NAVHDA tests. Some Chapters have policies mandating the use of only guns provided by the Chapter. If a Chapter has that policy, handlers must abide by it.



## 2.14 Gunners

Gunners should be properly sanctioned by the Chapter for safety and accuracy. Except for Natural ability, gunners must be at least 18 years of age, possess a valid hunting license, have the physical ability to keep up with the dog and handler, must have trained and handled a dog at the Utility level, and be a Chapter and NAVHDA member in good standing. A gunner for the Natural Ability Test may be under the age of 18 if accompanied by an adult and should have completed the state, local or provincial hunter safety course and should possess a valid hunting license. The gunner may be a family member but if at any time the Judging Team believes any gunner is interfering or affecting the dog's performance in any way, they have the authority to request a change of gunner. The Senior Judge will brief each gunner prior to the test to review the safety rules and requirements. Field gunners are not permitted to use any shot larger than #7 in the field. If at any time a gunner exhibits unsafe behavior, they will be asked to leave the field immediately.

For the GDT and UT, the gunners will carry their guns in the open position until just before the shot. They will position themselves one to either side and just behind the handler with a reasonable distance between gunners. When the dog points, the gunners will move up on a general line: *-gunner-handler-gunner-* and ready their guns for firing. No shots will be fired parallel to or behind the line: *-gunner-handler-gunner-*. In other words, the gunner on the right confines his or her shots to the Right Safe Sector and the one on the left to the Left Safe Sector. Shots at birds that flush and fly behind the above-mentioned line or unsafe area will not be attempted. Gunners must also be alert to the dangerous combination of a low flying bird and a dog that has broken and is chasing. In the Utility Test, if the bird cannot be shot, Judges may instruct a gunner to fire in the air to simulate shooting the bird. In the GDT and UT, only pointed birds will be shot; gunners are not permitted to shoot wild flushed birds or bumped birds. Bumped or wild flushed birds may be shot at the Invitational Test at the Judges' discretion.



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### **HEAD BIRD PLANTER**

- Carry the radio provided to communicate with Judges and Field Marshal
- Teach new bird planters how to help with each task
- Confirm each bird planter has a bird bag
- Confirm birds are transported from the staging site to the test sites
- Confirm birds are out of sight and smell of dogs
- Confirm birds are sheltered from sun and rain
- Confirm "used" birds are separated from fresh birds
- Dispatch ducks for the Utility Retrieve by Drag and chukars for Natural Ability water if needed
  - Duck Dispatch Kit (Rubbing Alcohol & Syringe) is stored in the club trailer
- Confirm live and dead birds are delivered to the staging site at the end of each day. Live, uninjured/unused birds are to be placed in the walk-in bird enclosure. Dead birds may be given to anyone who wants the meat or disposed of properly.
- Return radio to Field Marshal



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### BIRD PLANTERS

- **Bring a bird bag** if you have one. Contact the Field Marshal if you do not have a bird bag and one will be provided for you.
- **Bring water, sunscreen, bug spray, and clothing appropriate for the weather.**
- **You will answer first to Judges.** The Field Marshal and Head Bird Planter may also give you instructions during the day. The Head Bird Planter will be given a radio to communicate with the Judges and Field Marshal.
- **If you are new, the Head Bird Planter or a Judge will help you learn each task.** Ask questions if anything is unclear.
- **Field:** Chukars are used for both Natural Ability and Utility Fields. Judges will dictate the number of birds for each dog. Be prepared to plant birds immediately after receiving the go-ahead from Judges between each dog.
- **Natural Ability Pheasant Track:** Flight feathers are to be pulled from one wing only. **Before pulling feathers check to be sure the other wing has not already been pulled.** Leather gloves are recommended to avoid injury from spurs.
  - Sometimes Judges prefer to pull flight feathers themselves. If so, they will tell you.
  - Deliver one pheasant in a latched bag to the Judges when they signal.
  - Hold bird bag high enough to avoid laying a scent track as you deliver the bird.
  - Keep pheasants out of sight and smell of dogs as much as possible.
- **Natural Ability – Water:** Judges may ask for a freshly dispatched chukar in the event a dog will not swim for dummies. This will always be after all other dogs have completed the water portion. Keep chukars away from the water site until needed.
- **Utility Duck Search:** Flight feathers are to be pulled from one wing only. When Judges signal bring one duck in a latched bag to the skiff. A Judge will instruct you where to place the duck. Keep ducks out of sight and smell of dogs as much as possible.
- **Utility Retrieve by Drag:** Deliver one dead duck to the Judges when signaled. The head bird planter will take care of dispatching ducks.
- **Utility Steady by Blind – Distraction Gunner:** One person will be given a single-shot gun and Kent Field Blanks. They will be instructed by a Judge on sequence of shots and shown where to stand.
- **Utility Drag of Duck – Winger Operator:** One person will operate the winger. Dead ducks will be stored in a cooler by the winger. Ducks are to be thrown when signaled by the Judge or handler. A Judge will give instructions prior to beginning this segment.



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The Test Coordinator, Test Secretary, Permit Secretary, Equipment Steward, Volunteer Coordinator, and Lunch Coordinator volunteer positions are roles filled by specific Chapter Board members or pre-assigned individuals.

### **TEST COORDINATOR**

Responsible for management of the Test. Sees to the arrangements for grounds and birds, assigns tasks, and stays updated on progress. Responsible for lining up judges and arranging travel, food, scorecards, and clipboards. (Chapter Vice President.) \*May enlist assistance from Food Coordinator to purchase drinks/snacks/ice to stock Judges' Coolers.

### **TEST SECRETARY**

Responsible for all the paperwork – taking test entries, scheduling running days, and communicating with handlers before test. Responsible for sending test dates and contact information to NAVHDA International for use in VHD.

### **PERMIT SECRETARY**

Responsible for acquiring necessary permits from the DNR. (Chapter Treasurer)

### **EQUIPMENT STEWARD**

Whoever houses the trailers shall maintain equipment in good working order and deliver the trailer the day before the test. (Chapter President)

### **VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR**

Works with Test Coordinator and Test Secretary to manage and instruct all Test Day Volunteers.

### **LUNCH COORDINATOR**

Recruits volunteers to make the main dish for lunch. Ensures lunch tote is stocked with supplies and bottled water is available. Assists lunch volunteers with ideas for main dish and quantities for preparation. Remind Lunch Volunteer to bring ice for water cooler.