

A Guide to

→ faults ←

→ refusals ←

→ elimination by disqualification ←

for the
New Zealand Agility Competitor

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Disclaimer

Whilst every endeavour has been made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of this document, the author accepts no responsibility for any conflict between the information in these guidelines and any decision any Agility Judge may arrive at through individual interpretation or application to any particular situation.

Notes

These guidelines have been written to provide competitors with a summary of the judging decisions that may be applied under the New Zealand Kennel Club Agility Regulations. This is intended as a quick reference guide only, and not a substitute for the Regulations themselves. In all instances, Agility Judges will judge in accordance with the Regulations, however a competitor should reasonably expect that these guidelines will form the basis of a judging decision.

Competitors need to be aware that whether a particular decision is applied in Agility may come down to “the opinion of the judge”, and you will see this phrase used in the Regulations. For example, the regulation for Touching the Dog reads:

Physical contact between the handler and dog shall incur a fault if, in the opinion of the judge, the instance of making contact was.

(a) a deliberate action by the handler; or

(b) accidental, but resulted in the dog receiving an advantage that it would not have otherwise received.

Accidental physical contact between the handler and dog shall not be faulted where the judge deems that no advantage was received as a result of the contact.

Similarly, for a refusal to apply, the Regulations state the dog must have first been “put at the obstacle”. It is therefore up to the Judge to decide whether or not the dog has been “put at the obstacle” when assessing if a refusal should be called or not.

Also, it is impossible to regulate for all possible happenings within agility, and at times Agility Judges will be faced with an unusual situation that may require individual interpretation.

NZKC Agility is also governed by the NZKC Show Regulations and the Rules of the NZKC, and at times these documents will also need to be considered when arriving at a ruling.

Due to the potential for future change to Regulations, it is important that the version date of this document is checked against that of the Agility Regulations, to ensure the document being viewed has not become outdated.

Section A – Definitions

Faults

A fault is incurred when a dog negotiates an obstacle inaccurately. There are also some occasions when a handler can incur a fault through taking certain actions. A fault earns 5 penalty points, with the exception of time faults, which earn 1 penalty point per complete second over Standard Course Time.

Refusals

A refusal is incurred when a dog, once put at the obstacle, backs off or goes past and must be put at the obstacle again.

If the dog incurs a refusal on an obstacle it must re-attempt that obstacle before continuing with the course.

Every instance of a refusal is scored and each refusal earns 5 penalty points. If the dog incurs three refusals during the round it is eliminated by disqualification.

Elimination by Disqualification

A dog that earns a disqualification is eliminated from competition in that class.

Disqualification can occur through particular actions of the dog. There are also some occasions when a handler can incur disqualification through taking certain actions.

The term “Elimination by Disqualification” is usually shortened to either “disqualification” or “elimination”.

There are instances where a dog and handler may be disqualified/eliminated from all classes on a day or at a fixture. These include:

Incorrect class

- If a dog is judged in a class for which it is ineligible.

Withdrawal without Permission

- If a dog is withdrawn from a class without permission of the Test/Show Manager.

Harsh Handling

- If an instance of harsh handling is deemed to be an extreme case.

Bitches in season

- If a bitch in season competes at or attends an Agility Fixture.

Practice

- If, in the event of the host club allowing practice in the ring after the completion of a class, a handler carries food into the ring during the practice time or at any other time until the completion of the Event.

Unfit for Competition

- If the dog is deemed to be diseased, of savage disposition, or by any other cause unfit for competition, including where its safety and/or wellbeing are in jeopardy.

End

Dress of Handler

- If the handler is considered to be inappropriately or unreasonably dressed.
- If the handler enters the ring with bare feet.

Training Aids

- If the dog wears any collar other than a flat collar.
- If the dog wears a flat collar with any attachment other than a D ring.
- If the handler carries a lead (whether visible or not) while running the course.
- If a lead is attached to the dog while it is running the course.
- If the handler uses or carries into the ring any food, manufactured whistle, clicker, squeaky toy or other related training aid.
- If the handler enters the assembly area prior to their run with the dog off-lead.
- If the handler exits the assembly area at the completion of its run with the dog off-lead.

Practice in the Ring

- If the handler in any way practices with the dog on the course prior to judging.

Harsh Handling

- If the handler is deemed by the judge to be handling the dog in a harsh manner. (Note: this may be before, during or after the dog runs in the class whilst handler and dog are under the judge's area of jurisdiction and/or scrutiny).

Not Competing Seriously

- If the judge deems the competitor is not competing seriously.

Fraud

- If there is any case of fraud or misrepresentation.

Section B – Grouping by Obstacle

This section lists the faults, refusals and ways of elimination that a dog can incur, grouped by obstacle. For the way faults and elimination that can be incurred by a handler, and the ways a dog can incur elimination separately from an obstacle, refer to the sections C and D.

A-Frame

Faults

- If the dog mounts the A-Frame without touching the up contact.
- If, once the dog has started descending the “down” side of the A-Frame, completely leaves the A-Frame before touching the down contact.

Each instance of a fault is scored on the A-Frame. If a fault is incurred, the dog does not go back to correct the fault – it continues on with the course.

Refusals

- If the dog, once put at the obstacle, then backs off or goes past and must be put at the obstacle again.
- If the dog completely leaves the A-Frame before the start of the descent ramp.

Disqualification/Elimination

- If the dog takes the obstacle from the wrong direction, or not in correct sequence.

Asymmetrical Spread Jump

Faults

- If the dog goes underneath any bar, jumps a wing, displaces a bar so that any part of a bar falls below its original height or knocks over any part of the jump.

If a fault is incurred on an Asymmetrical Spread Jump the dog does not go back to correct the fault – it continues on with the course.

Refusals

- If the dog, once put at the obstacle, then backs off or goes past and must be put at the obstacle again.
- If the dog jumps parallel to the obstacle (i.e. to one side, without passing over the obstacle itself).

Disqualification/Elimination

- If the dog takes the obstacle from the wrong direction, or not in correct sequence.

Section D – Additional ways to be Eliminated

In addition to that described in the “Obstacles” section, Disqualification/Elimination is incurred by the dog in the following instances:

General

- If the dog takes an obstacle in the incorrect sequence.
- If the dog incurs three refusals during a round.
- If the dog completes the course in more than the Maximum Course Time.
- If the dog runs out of the ring out of control of the handler.
- If the dog fouls (vomits, urinates or defecates) in the ring.
- If the dog commences its run from outside the roped ring area.

Disqualification/Elimination is incurred by the handler in the following instances:

Unaided Completion

- If the dog has only been able to complete an obstacle due to the physical assistance of the handler, i.e. the handler touching or holding the dog so as to guide or control it through or over an obstacle, where the dog would have been unable to complete the obstacle otherwise.

Outside Assistance

- If the handler receives any form of help during the run (verbal or physical) from someone else, which assists them or the dog to complete any part of the course or an obstacle (Note: this does not include cheering by supporters).

Failure to Complete Course

- If the handler removes the dog from the course prior to completion.

Section C – Additional ways to incur faults

Faults are incurred by the dog in the following ways:

General Knock-Downs

- If the Dog knocks down a hurdle or bar or any part of an obstacle.

For exceeding Standard Course Time

- Time faults are awarded at the rate of one point per completed second over the Standard Course Time.
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Faults are incurred by the handler in the following ways:

General Knock-Downs

- If the handler knocks down a hurdle or bar or any part of an obstacle.

Touching equipment

- If the handler touches, jumps or straddles any obstacle (deliberately or accidentally), and in the instance of doing so shows the dog that that's the obstacle it does next, or provides an indication of how the obstacle should be done.
- If the handler places any part of their body within the aperture of a Hoop or Tunnel (deliberately or accidentally), and in the instance of doing so shows the dog that that's the obstacle it does next, or provides an indication of how the obstacle should be done.
- If the handler goes under any part of any obstacle at any time.
- If any part of the handler's body passes between two weaving poles, or touches a weaving pole at any time.
- If the handler breaks the start or finish beam of an electronic timer.

Touching the Dog

- If the handler deliberately touches the dog.
- If there is accidental contact between handler and dog which causes the dog to receive an advantage it otherwise wouldn't have had.

Note: accidental contact between handler and dog is not a fault if the dog received no advantage as a result.

Brush Fence

Faults

- If the dog goes underneath any bar, jumps a wing, displaces a bar so that any part of a bar falls below its original height or knocks over any part of the jump.

If a fault is incurred on a Brush Fence the dog does not go back to correct the fault – it continues on with the course.

Refusals

- If the dog, once put at the obstacle, then backs off or goes past and must be put at the obstacle again.
- If the dog jumps parallel to the obstacle (i.e. to one side, without passing over the obstacle itself).

Disqualification/Elimination

- If the dog takes the obstacle from the wrong direction, or not in correct sequence.

Collapsible Tunnel

Faults

- Nil

Refusals

- If the dog, once put at the obstacle, then backs off or goes past and must be put at the obstacle again.
- If the dog enters the tunnel (even if only to the extent of paw or nose) and then backs out.
- If the dog's head goes past the opening on the outside of the tunnel and it has to be brought back to re-take the obstacle.

Disqualification/Elimination

- If the dog takes the obstacle from the wrong direction, or not in correct sequence.

Weaving Poles

Faults

- If the dog enters the weaving poles with the first weaving pole on the dog's right-hand side.
- If the dog (once it has correctly entered the weaving poles) negotiates the weaving poles incorrectly (i.e. fails to take all subsequent poles on alternate sides thereafter).

If a fault is incurred in either of these two ways on the Weaving Poles, the dog must go back to correct the fault – it must negotiate all the poles correctly before continuing on with the course.

In Standard Agility classes, if a fault is incurred in either of these two ways on the Weaving Poles a maximum of one fault is scored. Faults are not marked in either of these two ways in Elementary classes.

Refusals

- If the dog passes the second weaving pole with no prior attempt to enter the weave (this applies to either side of the weaving poles).

No additional refusal or fault will be scored on the Weaving Poles after having incurred the refusal, until such time as the dog returns to the start of the Weaving Poles and is re-presented to the obstacle.

Subsequent to incurring a refusal on the Weaving poles, a disqualification may still be assessed.

Refusals are not marked on the Weaving Poles in Elementary classes.

Disqualification/Elimination

- If the dog back-weaves, which is defined as passing between the two end poles (i.e. the two furthest from the start of the weaving poles) as if it were negotiating or attempting to negotiate the weaving poles in the wrong direction.
- If the dog fails to complete correct negotiation of the weaving poles before negotiating the next obstacle (or where the weaving poles are the final obstacle, finishing the course).
- If the dog takes the obstacle out of correct sequence.

See-Saw

Faults

- If the dog mounts the See-Saw without touching the up contact.
- If, once the See-Saw has tipped downwards and touched the ground, the dog completely leaves the See-Saw before touching the down contact.
- If, once the See-Saw has started to tip downwards, the dog completely leaves the See-Saw before the “down” end has touched the ground*.

Each instance of a fault is scored on the See-saw. If a fault is incurred, the dog does not go back to correct the fault – it continues on with the course.

* To avoid a fault under this clause, some part of the dog's body must maintain contact with the See-Saw at all times until the “down” end has touched the ground. The See-saw does not have to be touching the ground when the dog leaves the obstacle, as long as the “down” end has touched the ground previously.

Refusals

- If the dog, once put at the obstacle, then backs off or goes past and must be put at the obstacle again.
- If the dog completely leaves the See-Saw before it has started to tip downwards.

Disqualification/Elimination

- If the dog takes the obstacle from the wrong direction, or not in correct sequence.

Crossover

Faults

- If the dog mounts the designated up-ramp of the Crossover without touching the up contact.
- If, once the dog has started descending the designated “down” ramp of the Crossover, completely leaves the Crossover before touching the down contact.

Each instance of a fault incurred in either of these two ways on a Crossover is scored. In these cases, the dog does not go back to correct the fault – it continues on with the course.

- If the dog attempts to descend an incorrect ramp by putting more than two paws on the wrong ramp.

In this instance, the dog must continue down the ramp to the ground and return to the designated up ramp and negotiate the obstacle correctly* before continuing. The off contact point of the incorrect ramp is not judged.

In Standard Agility classes a maximum of one fault is incurred for descending an incorrect ramp, no matter how many times the dog does it.

* i.e. the dog must ascend the designated on ramp, and descend by the designated off ramp, without touching the ground in-between.

Refusals

- If the dog, once put at the obstacle, then backs off or goes past and must be put at the obstacle again.
- If the dog, once having been presented to the crossover, goes past the designated up ramp with no attempt to perform the crossover.
- If the dog, once having commenced the designated up ramp, leaves the crossover (i.e. touches the ground) prior to placing at least one foot on any other ramp.

Disqualification/Elimination

- If a dog attempts to ascend the crossover by other than the designated up ramp.
- If a dog fails to complete the descent of an incorrect ramp once it has placed more than two paws on the incorrect ramp.
- If the dog takes the obstacle out of correct sequence.

Dogwalk

Faults

- If the dog mounts the Dogwalk without touching the up contact.
- If, once the dog has started descending the “down” ramp of the Dogwalk, completely leaves the Dogwalk before touching the down contact.

Each instance of a fault is scored on the Dogwalk. If a fault is incurred, the dog does not go back to correct the fault – it continues on with the course.

Refusals

- If the dog, once put at the obstacle, then backs off or goes past and must be put at the obstacle again.
- If the dog completely leaves the Dogwalk before the start of the descent ramp.

Disqualification/Elimination

- If the dog takes the obstacle from the wrong direction, or not in correct sequence.

Pipe (open) Tunnel

Faults

- Nil

Refusals

- If the dog, once put at the obstacle, then backs off or goes past and must be put at the obstacle again.
- If the dog enters the tunnel (even if only to the extent of paw or nose) and then backs out.
- If the dog's head goes past the opening on the outside of the tunnel and it has to be brought back to re-take the obstacle.

Disqualification/Elimination

- If the dog takes the obstacle from the wrong direction, or not in correct sequence.

Multiple Bar Ascending Spread Jump

Faults

- If the dog goes underneath any bar, jumps a wing, displaces a bar so that any part of a bar falls below its original height, cuts a corner (i.e. cross-jumps) or knocks over any part of the jump.

If a fault is incurred on a Multiple Bar Ascending Spread Jump, the dog does not go back to correct the fault – it continues on with the course.

Refusals

- If the dog, once put at the obstacle, then backs off or goes past and must be put at the obstacle again.
- If the dog jumps parallel to the obstacle (i.e. to one side, without passing over the obstacle itself).

Disqualification/Elimination

- If the dog takes the obstacle from the wrong direction, or not in correct sequence.

Hoop

Faults

- If the dog displaces or breaks the hoop (Note: should the broken section of the hoop re attach itself, this is still a fault).

If a fault is incurred on a Hoop, the dog does not go back to correct the fault – it continues on with the course.

Refusals

- If the dog, once put at the obstacle, then backs off or goes past and must be put at the obstacle again.
- If the dog goes through any frame which holds the Hoop.
- If the dog goes through any space between the Hoop and its frame.
- If the dog goes underneath the Hoop.

Note: If a refusal is incurred where the dog runs under or past the Hoop, no penalty shall be assessed for the dog returning underneath the Hoop or through any frame supporting it.

Disqualification/Elimination

- If the dog takes the obstacle from the wrong direction, or not in correct sequence.

Hurdle

Faults

- If the dog goes underneath any bar, jumps a wing, displaces a bar so that any part of a bar falls below its original height or knocks over any part of the jump.

If a fault is incurred on a Hurdle the dog does not go back to correct the fault – it continues on with the course.

Refusals

- If the dog, once put at the obstacle, then backs off or goes past and must be put at the obstacle again.
- If the dog jumps parallel to the obstacle (i.e. to one side, without passing over the obstacle itself).

Disqualification/Elimination

- If the dog takes the obstacle from the wrong direction, or not in correct sequence.

Long Jump

Faults

- If the dog runs through the Long Jump, cuts a corner (i.e. cross-jumps) or knocks over any part of the jump.

If a fault is incurred on a Long Jump, the dog does not go back to correct the fault – it must continue on with the course.

Refusals

- If the dog, once put at the obstacle, then backs off or goes past and must be put at the obstacle again.
- If the dog jumps parallel to the Long Jump (i.e. to one side, without passing over the Long Jump itself).
- If the dog runs past the Long Jump without jumping.

Disqualification/Elimination

- If the dog takes the obstacle from the wrong direction, or not in correct sequence.