

P1002 PROTOCOL FOR MEASURING OF DOGS FOR NZ AGILITY **(updated January 2013)**

Introduction

Regulatory requirements. All dogs competing in agility in NZ must have an interim height measurement recorded at 18 months and a permanent height measurement recorded at 2 years. This includes dogs competing only at Ribbon Trials. Dogs may be measured up to four weeks prior to their 18 month anniversary, and up to two weeks prior to their two year anniversary.

Measuring sessions. Measuring sessions may be organised by Clubs or measurers. Ideally these will be held at every event, and they will also be advertised so that people may attend. Additional measuring clinics may also be held at club events or on training nights. These may double as training sessions where young dogs will attend to learn to stand for measuring, and where those learning to be measurers will gain practical experience.

Measurers. Those people listed as approved official Measurers with the Agility Committee may conduct official measuring sessions. All dogs must be measured by two official measurers, the Main measurer and the Assistant measurer. These two people will both measure the dog and come to an agreement on the height to be officially recorded (see process to follow below) . It is the Main measurer's responsibility to supply the certificate and stick, and to complete any administration requirements. Both measurers will sign the certificate. Neither measurer is to be the owner or part-owner of the dog.

Measuring sticks. All measuring sticks registered to official measurers are the same, and any request for repair, replacement or modification must be reported to the Agility Committee. No official measure is to be conducted on anything other than an official measuring stick

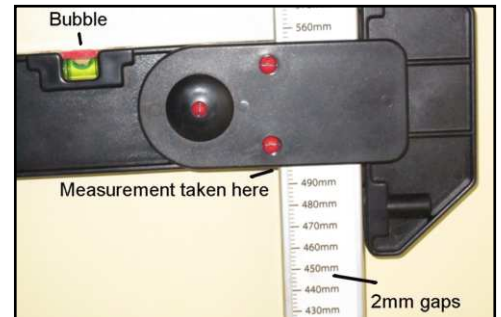
Procedure.

A standard procedure has been established. This is to ensure everyone follows the same processes, and uses the same equipment to produce a consistent result.

1. **Choose a suitable quiet location and flat surface.** The measurement of dogs must take place in a suitable quiet location such as a separate tent, and not in the presence of other dogs, or handlers. Measurement must be carried out on a solid and level non-slip surface. A concrete or wooden floor is ideal, and a table may be used. A wobbly table is not suitable, nor is a grass surface.
2. **Stand the dog correctly.** The handler may hold the collar or head of dog, reward it and talk to it, but must not physically hold the dog in position. The dog must stand in a natural stance, with its weight placed squarely on all four legs. Front feet parallel and vertical, with the head held naturally by the dog – the chin will be approximately level with the back. Back feet should also be parallel, with a vertical line from the hock to foot. Wait till the dog is relaxed before measuring. Beware dogs that sag by dropping the shoulder or angling the elbows outwards. You may need to spend some time talking to the owner and the dog, giving the dog some treats or touching it gently before commencing the measuring process. Do not even consider measuring when the dog's stance is unsuitable or the dog is moving around. It is the owner's responsibility to ensure their dog will stand to be measured, and a process for teaching this is available (Handout is available)
3. **Identify the place where the measure will be taken.** Feel for the top of the shoulder blades and be sure the blade sits flat across this part of the dog. The shoulder blades must both be the same

height if the dog is standing correctly. Dogs with differing structure or carrying some weight might carry their shoulder blades less prominently. If the stick is placed in front of or behind this area the measure will be incorrect.

4. **Take the measure.** The crossbar should be sitting well above the dog's back. Do not take a measure from the very end of the stick. To ensure the crossbar is horizontal view the bubble from the top window. Bring the measuring stick in towards the dog, with the stick close to the dog's foreleg. Ensure the stick is also vertical and not on a lean. Slide the crossbar down carefully until it makes gentle contact with the shoulder blades, whilst ensuring the bubble remains in the window. Ensure you do not upset the dogs stance. Remove the stick from the dog and record the measure. Measure to the nearest 2mm.



5. **Repeat the measure.** Repeat #3 and #4 above. If the dog moves between measures, repeat the process from #2 above. The dog can be measured six times/measurer.
6. **How to decide on the measure to be recorded.** Each measurer will evaluate their measures of the dog based on the criteria above. They then choose the three which best meet the criteria and average them, without consultation with the other measurer. Both measurers will then compare their averages. Where the averages differ by **2mm or less**, the average of those two measures will be recorded as that dog's official measure. Where the range is **more than 2mm** the measuring process will end at that time. The dog can be re-measured later during the same session, or at another date.

Administration by Main Measurer. Write out a height certificate for the dogs measured. Record all details for transfer to the official spreadsheet provided by the Agility Committee, retaining a copy for your own records. The owner receives the height certificate, and the Main measurer forwards all details to the Agility Committee (ideally within 14 days of the measure). Interim certificates are issued to dogs under 2 years of age. Certificates are marked Ribbon trial only where dogs are not registered with Dogs NZ. Once these dogs become registered with Dogs NZ all data should be forwarded to the NZ Agility Committee (there is no requirement to remeasure unless the dog is under 2 years). Give the Permanent number information card to owners.

Difficulties. If the dog appears stressed or if a measurer cannot get three good measures out of six attempts, cease measuring and rest the dog. If a measurer gets heights that differ vastly, check that the stance of the dog is correct. There is no point continuing with the measuring process if the dog does not stand correctly. The dog might be more co-operative if the handler stands back or goes away, take the food away, or move other dogs/people further away. If dog is still not co-operative halt the process and advise the owner to try at another time or on another day. Give them advice about teaching their dog to stand/accept the measure stick. If the dog shows signs of extreme nervousness or aggression the measurers may refuse to measure the dog and must advise the Agility Committee. If there is any dispute over any measure do not issue a certificate and report the matter with all accompanying detail to the Agility Committee for a decision.



Any queries regarding the measuring process, must be addressed to: Dogs NZ-AC

E: secretary@dnzac.nz

Photo – An example of a dog standing straight and square. Note the vertical lines showing good front and rear leg position (Note: the dog's head is slightly higher than ideal)