

MN NAVHDA Participation Rules, Etiquette & Safety Policy **Adopted 12/17/2019**

As a community, we share a passion for our dogs and training. As new members join in training events, someone taking the time to explain the prevailing “rules and etiquette” is sometimes overlooked. In an effort to welcome new trainers to MN NAVHDA and assure they enjoy a safe, stress free start; we have outlined this information below. As we are very fortunate to have access to some wonderful training grounds, many of these items address good stewardship so that we will continue to be welcomed back to these training venues.

Participation & Membership:

Membership in NAVHDA International is required by all participants to participate in Minnesota Chapter Events, *unless a Release Agreement is signed.*

- An individual is considered a NAVHDA member if they have a NAVHDA member number and if their dues are paid in full for the year in which the event in question is occurring. This would include “life members” since they have a member number and their dues are paid in perpetuity. The Minnesota Chapter allows spouses and/or family members to be considered Chapter members without joining NAVHDA International; these individuals are considered non-members of NAVHDA International and must therefore sign the release agreement prior to actively participating in any NAVHDA International or Chapter events.
- A non-member is defined as Anyone who wishes to participate in a NAVHDA event, but who is not a member of NAVHDA International, and/or individuals who are former NAVHDA International members but whose dues are not paid in full, and/or is someone who intends to join NAVHDA International but does not yet have a member number or dues paid in full.
- A release agreement is required when a non-member wishes to actively participate in a NAVHDA event. Practically speaking, this means anytime a non-member intends to:
 - handle a dog in one of our training sessions.
 - follow a handler out in the field during a hunt test or training session.
 - volunteer to help at any NAVHDA sanctioned event.
- A signed release agreement is not required for any non-member who is merely there to watch an event from a distance or stops by to have lunch, etc., but does not otherwise actively participate in any event or activities.
- *A non-member may not discharge a firearm at any Event.*

Safety First! Follow these rules at all times:

- Blaze Orange or Pink is required in the field at all times.
- Youth under 18 years of age MUST be a member of NAVHDA International AND have a valid state issued firearms safety certificate to handle firearms at any Event, including the firing of blank ammunition.

- Gunners at Chapter tests must be approved by the Board of Directors and must meet the requirements set forth in the NAVHDA AIMS Programs, Test Rules book (See section on “Field Group”-Utility Test.).
- A break open shotgun (Single Shot, Over/Under or Side by Side) is REQUIRED during Tests and is HIGHLY recommended in the field at other events. If a Non break action gun like a pump-action or semi-automatic is used, shotgun actions shall remain open while walking in the field and loaded with a maximum of 2 rounds at any time. The action shall only be closed once the dog is on point and the gunners have assumed a safe position from which to shoot. Safety mechanisms shall remain engaged until the time the gun is mounted to discharge the firearm. Gunners shall consider safety for all persons and the dogs paramount and shall not take any shot which may possibly place a person or dog in danger. Any person in the general area where a game bird is pointed and attempting to be flushed is encouraged to verbally call out the word “Safety” to signal to a gunner not to take a shot, where a potential safety issue or concern is observed. Once a “Safety” has been declared, no shot may be taken.
- Know your target and what is beyond.
 - Visible sky ensures birds are above our dogs.
 - If in doubt, don't take the shot. We don't want to disappoint our four-legged friends, but a pellet in our two-legged friends is NOT acceptable.
 - Do not discharge a firearm towards the parking area.
- Maintain muzzle control!
 - Do not sweep people or animals.
 - Do not discharge too close to people or unannounced.
- No shooting is permitted during any MN NAVHDA Event beyond what is required to support the training or testing event.
- Youth under 18 years of age must have a valid state issued ATV safety certificate to operate any ATV, UTV or off-road vehicle at an Event.
- Extreme weather such as lightning, strong winds, extreme temperature, snow or heavy rain can create hazardous conditions. The event leadership has the responsibility to decide if an event should be halted due to weather and at what point the event shall resume

Politeness and Courtesy:

- Dogs must be on a lead and under control at all times when not performing a drill.
 - Run your dog(s) ahead of training.
 - Please do not free-run them on the grounds prior to the start of training. The extra marking and fecal matter in the fields is an unnecessary distraction to the training process.
- Puppies must be on a lead and under control just as adult dogs. Puppies should be introduced to unfamiliar adult dogs in a careful, controlled situation to preclude any aggressive behavior by the adult dog.
- Police your refuse.
 - Dispose of your dog(s) poo where others will not accidentally 'find' it.
 - Check around your vehicle before you go to make sure all garbage is collected.

- Your dead birds are yours and yours alone. Please make sure you take them with you for disposal-OFF THE GROUNDS
- Tread Lightly
 - The grounds are often muddy, drive slowly and use 4x4 if you have it.
 - If in doubt walk in; do not muck things up. We will lose the grounds.
 - Stay on the road and parking area. Do not drive into the fields or other perceived trails.
- Be respectful and cognizant of others and their unique needs and circumstances
- Everyone is at a different stage of dog training and ability.
 - Not everyone has the same access to resources and tools.
 - There is more than one way to skin a cat -- seek first to understand and then to be understood.
- Dive in and lend a hand.
 - If you don't know how to do something, ask and someone will gladly help.
 - If you see someone needs help, ask and they will generally welcome your offer
 - Go the extra mile, these friendships open doors and last a long time.

Lots of work goes into each of these events and many people go above and beyond for the betterment of the rest of us. Many knowledgeable people come to help out those that are learning. Volunteers organize the purchase, transport, housing and feeding of birds made available for training. The club provides grounds and equipment that many would not have access to. Take time to thank those around you that help make it happen. Also, it never hurts to ask the organizers "is there anything I can do to help?"