

WORKING DOG QUALIFIED (WDQ) CERTIFICATION

The Working Dog Qualified Certification (WDQ) Program is designed to be an extension of the previously established Working Dog (WD) and Working Dog Excellent (WDX) Certifications. In addition to testing a dog's natural abilities, additional training attributes are required. A WDQ test should be a fairly demanding assessment of those abilities expected in a competent, working retriever. Emphasis should be on testing straightforward abilities without resorting to tests containing "trick" elements.

The following describes extensions to the WD/WDX Programs that form the basis of the WDQ Program. Except where noted, all previously described conditions of the WD/WDX Programs apply to the WDQ Program tests. These are pass/fail non-competitive tests. Dogs are not required to have a WD and/or a WDX certification before they compete for the WDX.

Handlers should also refer to the *WD/X/Q Handler's Guidelines* for additional information.

Privileges and Limitations of the Working Dog Qualified Certificate

The receipt of a Working Dog Qualified Certificate entitles the owner to indicate their dog's achievement by including the letters "WDQ" after the dog's name in documents other than those considered "official" by the AKC or other registries. The title "Working Dog Qualified" and the designated letters "WDQ" are recognized by the ACC, but not necessarily by any other organization. **The WDQ title is a club title only.**

REQUIREMENTS

For land marks, it is recommended to scent the area of the fall prior to the first running dog, so scent is present for the first dogs, like the dogs that run near the end.

Description of Tests (tests are suggested to be performed in this order)

- a. Land Double.** The first mark is a dead duck (memory bird), thrown into medium cover, and should fall 100 to 130 yards from the line. A second bird, a live flier, should be thrown and land approximately 90 yards into medium cover. There should be 90 degrees or more between the two birds. This should not be designed as a switching test. **Handling is Not allowed on the land double.**
- b. Land Blind.** A dead bird should be placed in light to medium cover about 80 yards from the line and be downwind. A minor obstacle should be incorporated into the test to encourage handling. This could be a small ditch in front of the line, a sharp angle entry into cover, changes in cover, etc. An obvious "blind" marker should be used and visible to the handler. The land blind is a separate series from the land marks but may be run immediately after a dog runs the land marks.
- c. Water blind.** This test must contain at least some swimming water. A dead bird should be placed about 50 yards from the line but not visible to the dog. It can be in light cover. If there is not enough deep water, some running water is acceptable; however, the dog must be able to hear the whistle commands so that the dog can be stopped and handled. In this case, the blind should be lengthened but should never be longer than 70 yards. The line should be 5 to 10 feet back from the shoreline. While a slight angle entry into the water may be necessary, a straight entry is preferred. Sharp angle entries should be avoided so that bank running or cheating are not encouraged. The water blind is a separate series from the water marks and should be run prior to running the combination triple. An obvious "blind" marker should be used and visible to the handler.

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d. Combination Triple. This test is to be a triple mark consisting of two birds in water and a third on land. The area for this test should be chosen carefully to provide reasonably open swimming water with enough adjacent land to run a medium length land mark. The first bird thrown should be dead and fall on land in medium cover about 80 yards out. A second bird, a dead duck, should be thrown in partial cover in swimming water about 40 yards out. The third bird should be a dead duck thrown into open swimming or running water about 20 yards out. There should be approximately 90 degrees between the land duck and the first water duck (second bird thrown). The birds may be retrieved in any order.

****** If there is absolutely no water available where the triple with one duck on the land and two in the water can be thrown, it is permissible to have all 3 birds in the water with correct length and space between birds. There is one flier in the WDQ that will be on land and shot as part of the double. Handling on a mark is allowed only in the triple combination.

Each throw of a dead duck should be accompanied by a shotgun simulator or blank shot prior to the throw. (Thrower/Gunner can be the same person or two people who must be standing at the required distance in the field when throwing/shooting). For the live flier the Thrower/Gunner can be the same person but it is recommended that there be at least two people who must be standing at the required distance in the field when throwing/shooting.

Special Points

1. A holding blind is placed behind the line for the handler and dog to wait prior to running a test.
2. The dog and handler team is under judgement from the time they leave the last holding blind.
3. The dog can be brought to the holding blind on lead or slip cord and collar or a choke chain. (An English all-in-one slip lead is allowed). All collars/leads must be removed and put in the handler's pocket before heeling the dog from the holding blind to the line. The handler cannot touch the dog once they leave the holding blind until they have given the last bird in each test to the judge and have heeled their dog back behind the judges. At this point, the handler may attach the dog's leash/collar and touch the dog.
4. Dogs are required to be steady. Dogs must show a "reasonable degree of steadiness and general obedience." Dogs should not be touched or verbally reprimanded on line. One controlled "break" is acceptable. However, a dog should not be sent until his number has been called by one of the judges.
5. Dogs are required to deliver to hand, but not necessarily at heel position.
6. Handling is not permitted on the land double. While marking is of primary importance, **handling on the water triple in the WDQ is permissible.** If a handler decides to give assistance, the dog should respond readily and handle right to the bird in a controlled manner.
7. The blinds are expected to be handling tests, and the dogs should exhibit a reasonable willingness to stop and take casts when so commanded. An "out of control dog" that happens to stumble on the bird should not be considered to have passed the test.
8. A shotgun blank shot or shotgun simulator shot should be fired before a bird is thrown.
9. All gunners/throwers, on both land and water, must be fully visible to both dog and handler. All birds must be thrown so dog/handler can watch the bird thrown and see it fall into light cover.

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10. A white shirt/jacket must be worn by at least one gunner/thrower at each throwing station.
11. It is suggested that the tests be run in the following order:-land marks, land blind, water blind, and then the water marks. Both blinds will be run with no bird crates, bird scent of old falls, or gunners remaining in the field for distraction. When feasible, blinds will be run in a separate area (outside the marks).
12. Decoys can be used.