



Animal Welfare Protocol

INTRODUCTION

The past 10 years the sled dog sport has gone through an enormous development. The goals to which the sled dog sport must lead have to be re-defined, because the past years the competitive achievements, that have to be performed by the dogs themselves, have been placed in the forefront. At the same time, the focus of many animal protection agencies has shifted towards the well being of the animals themselves. This also applies significantly on the animals that are used for sports or entertainment.

To keep up with these developments Mushing Holland (MH) and the FISTC have joined forces in developing this Animal Welfare Protocol (AWP).

The basic principal of the AWP is to handle a minimum standard for the interaction with sled dogs during racing.

Besides this the protocol has to be a reference for mushers and a guideline for the presentation of the sled dog sport to the public and to the government agencies.

This new AWP is far from perfect, and therefore needs continuous adjustments and additions. The Animal Welfare Supervisor (AWS) of the FISTC will be the right person to, in case of problems, discussions and interpretation differences, take on a leading role in bringing these items to the attention of the Board of the FISTC. At the occasions mentioned these points can be discussed and, if necessary, change or addition can be proposed.

To keep the readability of this protocol, persons are referred to in masculine form, it speaks for itself that any person can also been read as being feminine.

A IN GENERAL

1 Authority

The responsibility for the animal welfare affairs on the race-grounds is in the hands of the AWS and the Veterinarian of the organizing association. During the actual race the AWS and the veterinarian are present on the race-grounds.

The AWS and the veterinarian are to be treated respectfully and should get everybody's kind cooperation. The directions given by the AWS or the veterinarian are to be complied with immediately. The AWS and the veterinarian should have consensus of opinion that there has been an offence taken place or an offence is in process.

2 Availability at Races

A During the time of the actual races the AWS and veterinarian are present.

If the race is not actually taking place the AWS and veterinarian are on stand-by and should be available on call.

B In case of absence during the race the AWS should provide a substitute AWS in on time



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3 Education of the AWS

The FISTC will provide education to the AWS, which is focused on taking into account all factors that are important to the animal welfare during sled dog racing. Besides this, racing- and research protocols will be provided.

The training of the AWS should at least contain First Aid for Animals or a similar background. In latter case the board and the veterinarian will decide the qualification of the AWS. The AWS should be familiar with sled dog racing and the training and keeping of sled dogs.

4 Use of the Animal Welfare Protocol by other associations

The use of the by FISTC formulated Animal Welfare protocol obligatory for all FISTC-member clubs and countries. The use of this Welfare protocol by other associations/organizations is allowed if FISTC has given its written approval and under the strict condition that these associations/organizations commit their selves to observe these regulations unabridged.

B REGULATIONS ON THE RACE-GROUNDS

1 Recognition

The participants to the race will place a recognizable sign showing their start number behind the windscreen of their car or the windows of their mobile homes **and on the trailers on the stake-out.**

2 Medication

a) In case of dogs using (by means of oral, intravenous or dermatological) medication which is only obtainable through prescription, and which dogs are on the racing-grounds the musher has to inform the AWS and veterinarian before the start of the first stage of the race. If not complied to this will be regarded to as a minor offence

b) If dogs that use medication as mentioned under a. take part in the race without the musher informing the AWS or veterinarian it will be regarded to as a major offence.

c) Both AWS and veterinarian have the authority to advice the race marshal to exclude dogs on medication as mentioned under a. from participation in the race. In case of chronic illnesses (f.ex. hypothyroid (a thyroid gland that works to slow) the veterinarian will decide if this rule is applicable. The veterinarian has to hand over his motivated decision to the race Marshall.

d) If necessary doping samples will be taken as mentioned in the race-regulations.

e) Exclusions: Food additives, like vitamins and minerals, Canikur, gelatine, Canosan (this list is an example and does not have any jurisdiction) that are bought as such and not as medication, are not included in the intent of section 2.

3 Disease



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- a) Animals that show unmistakable symptoms of an infectious disease (f.ex. coughing, diarrhoea) are not allowed on the race-grounds or stake-out area.
- b) If disease should occur on the race-grounds, the veterinarian should be informed right away. The directions of the veterinarian or the AWS have to be followed instantly. Violations of this rule will be regarded as minor or major offences, depending on the seriousness of the disease.
- c) If an animal that has been excluded from taking part in the race is used anyhow, this will be regarded as a major offence, leading to the disqualification of the team.
- d) Because of the risk it brings with it, all animals on the race-grounds should be vaccinated properly. Bringing a not properly vaccinated dog to the race-grounds is a major offence, which leads immediately to the disqualification of the musher. The musher and his dogs also have to leave the race-grounds as soon as possible. Important note: this rule also applies to the not competing dogs of the musher.

4 Environmental conditions and temperatures during races

A) Cart-races

The AWS and the veterinarian will measure the temperature in the shade, using an officially stamped thermometer, on every race-day at 9.00 a.m. This measuring will take place on the race-trail. If at any time a day the temperature is raising the AWS and veterinarian are allowed to re-measure the temperature and re-evaluate the conditions. When temperatures rise above 10 degrees Celsius the AWS and veterinarian will inform the race Marshall and together they will decide the following alternatives:

- a. If the outside temperature lies between 10 and 15 degrees Celsius and no increase is to be expected, without moist or sweltering conditions and the veterinarian will be available during the race, the race can go through. Whenever necessary the AWS and veterinarian can advice the race marshal to shorten the trail.
- b. If the outside temperature lies between 15 and 20 degrees Celsius and if the trail is mostly shady (minimum 80% woods) the race can take place over a distance of 4 kilometres without time registration.
- c. If the outside temperature is above 20 degrees Celsius no dogs may be harnessed to the cart. Walking the dogs is allowed.
- d. If, for any reason, it is thought necessary the race Marshall has the authority to shorten the length of the trail.

If temperatures lie above 10 degrees Celsius the musher have to be informed by the race Marshall or AWS about the actual weather conditions because there are many variations in dogs in the tolerance for higher temperatures.

B) Snow-races



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If snow conditions show an increased danger for injury (flex. powdery or icy snow) the mushers have to be informed about this during the daily mushermeeting. If any trail conditions have to be adapted due to altered conditions the race Marshall will decide. Also in case of warm winds (föhn) or other severe warming up, measures have to be taken accordingly and will be announced at a mushermeeting.

a. If, for any reason, it is thought necessary the race Marshall has the authority to shorten the length of the trail.

5. Course of the race

a. Start

The dogs have to be harnessed and led to the start in a good, easy and responsible way. It is not allowed to put unnecessary stress on the dogs before starting. Doing so will be regarded as a moderate offence.

b. During the race

If dogs are put under too heavy pressure during racing (f.ex. verbally, through sounds like f.ex. bells or metal rings, or even physical means (beating)) will be considered a very serious offence. This will lead to immediately disqualification of the musher for that race. It is possible that additive measures are undertaken by the FISTC, these measures should be discussed during a general assembly.

c. Finish

If, when approaching and/or passing the finish line, it appears that one or more dogs have been overburdened (overheated, overtired) and in case the musher is clearly to be blamed for this, it will be considered a very serious offence. If it does not appear to be the fault of the musher then the AWS and veterinarian will discuss the problem and the cause of it with the musher. Should it be that the problem of overburdening repeats itself on a regular base with the same musher the conclusion has to be drawn that the musher is in default in judging and correcting his team in time. This will be regarded as a moderate offence.

Dogs at the stake-out

Ground rules:

The dogs have to be kept at the stake-out without endangering any person or other dogs. From the participants will be expected that they are familiar with the basics of raising and handling dogs and have insight in the structure of a dog pack. Crude corrections on the stake-out are not allowed. (physical and/or verbal violence).

Considering the weight of the offence against these ground rules, the AWS and veterinarian have to report/remark it.

The consideration of the degree of the offence or occurrence lies in the authority of the AWS and the veterinarian who are appointed for supervising the race.

Civil Law (liability for bites and injury) applies irrespective of this protocol.



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TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

a. Stake-out material

Stake-out

The material has to be constructed in a way that prevents injury to the dogs.

In chains the links have to be too small for the dog's toes to get stuck in them.

With steel cable the cover should be undamaged.

Each dog's individual chain has to be connected to the central chain with a swivel on both the chain-side and the dog side to prevent strangulation and shortening of the individual chain. The distance between the individual chains should be 1,2 meters.

The length of the line has to be long enough to allow the dog to stand and lie down relaxed, but maximal 50 cm.

The musketons and all other connections have to be in a technically perfect condition to guarantee the safety of the dogs.

The distance between each individual animal has to be of the length that allows each animal to lie down without being reached by others. Contact with the animal next to it should be made possible without the risk of entanglement or fighting. The prevention of this must have priority.

Attachment to vehicles.

This should not present a problem if the following directions are being followed:

Danger of injury from or under the vehicle has to be prevented. Contact with greases, fuels or anti-freeze has to be avoided.

Considering the technical requirement of the chains the same rules apply as for placing the dogs at a stake-out line.

As pointed out above; with attachment to vehicles the dogs have to be able to lie down in a relaxed way.

b. Boxes

Any team that has been warned by the Animal Welfare controller for his boxes, should be disqualified before the start of the Championships if he did not change or improve the travelling conditions of his dogs the following year.

Each individual dog needs a surface that allows lying down, lying on its side, turning around and standing up.

Maximum of 2 dogs in a box.

The Board recommends that if in a car there are more than one dog, then dog boxes must have their own lockable door (e.g. backdoor of car is not sufficient).

The minimum surface is:

For 1 dog: length = length of the dogs trunk cm x 1,2, width = length of the dogs trunk in cm x 0,6, height = height of the top of the scapula of the dog in cm x 1,0.



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For 2 dogs: 1,2 x length of the dogs trunk, 0,9 x length of the trunk and 1 x shoulder height of the biggest dog in cm.

But the musher has to check the national law, because the FISTC cannot be hold responsible for not complying with the national law.

The boxes should provide shelter against all weather conditions (rain, cold, sun and wind) and constructed in a way that prevents excessive moisture building on the inside. The temperature in the boxes should be at all times below 25 oC. In case of boxes made in campers or caravans, the boxes should be enough separated from the living spaces, that this can be assured.

The boxes should not have sharp edges or screws on which the dogs could injure themselves. The ventilation of the boxes has to be constructed in a way that prevents excessive building of heat and draught (especially when driving).

When the boxes are also used during driving, the surface should be antiskid.

If the boxes are located in a trailer behind the car, penetration of exhaust gasses into the boxes has to be prevented.

Not complying with these regulations will be, depending on the seriousness of the violation, regarded as minor to major offence.

c. Attitude towards dogs at the stake-out

The dogs are put at the stake-out for feeding, watering, grooming and preparation before and the follow-up care after the race. It has to be prevented that the dogs are kept at the stake-out without supervision on hear/sight distance, otherwise the dogs should be kept in the boxes.

If the dogs are kept on the stake-out for too long the AWS and veterinarian will contact the race-marshall, who must take further actions.

Leaving the stake-out while the dogs are still kept on their lines without providing substitute supervision is prohibited and will be regarded as a minor to major offence, depending on the situation and duration.

d. Hygiene

Independent of what kind of stake-out construction has been chosen the most important rule is a perfect hygiene.

Secretion has to be removed immediately. Boxes, straw and surfaces should be kept clean at all times. Not keeping the boxes clean is considered a major offence, not keeping the steak-out clean is a minor to major offence, depending on the situation.

Dogs that have been soiled with secretion or urine have to be cleaned immediately.

OFFENCES

For the items mentioned under "technical requirements" a. b. c. and d. the following complies: in case of minor offences a suitable solution will be discussed by the AWS, veterinarian and the musher and a time span for correcting the offence will be set. All other minor offences will be discussed with the musher and will be laid down in the Animal Welfare Report.

All minor offences are reported to the race Marshall/referee. If a musher commits 3 or more minor offences, the race Marshall/ referee can decide to disqualify the musher on these grounds



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Moderate offences will be put to the attention of the Race Marshall/referee. The Race Marshall/referee is obliged to discuss the offence with the AWS and veterinarian with the musher in question on the day the offence has passed. If the facts can not be altered or the person in question is not willing to cooperate the Race Marshall is mandatory to give immediate notice to the person in question of removal from the racing grounds. Also the committing of 2 or more moderate offences can lead to disqualification.

In case of offences with boxes, chains, or any other material or technical matter the person in question will be given a warning and together with the Race Marshall and the AWS/veterinarian a time span will be set in which the problem has to be solved.

In case of major offences against the FISTC Animal Welfare Protocol or the effective animal protection rules, exclusion of the musher will follow immediately and the board of FISTC will be informed. The board will rule according to the relevant sanction regulations (FISTC regulations).

ANIMAL WELFARE PROTOCOL

This protocol will be provided to all members clubs, which have the obligation to send it to all their mushers.

Of each race an Animal Welfare Report will be made by the AWS and the veterinarian. These reports will be given for inspection to the FISTC board.

The Animal Welfare Supervisor.