

## Summing up the changes in the FCI Obedience rules and guidelines

This is a summing up on the changes made in the obedience rules document.

Some last-minute amendments have been made based on questions, discussions, and requests for clarifications. We hope that you will apply these amended rules at your national obedience competitions. At international competitions and events where FCI obedience rules are to be used, these should always be applied. Apologies for the additional workload that this will probably cause for those having worked on the translations. An effort is made to ease the work and thus the changes are highlighted. One way to make sure that all changes have been registered is to use the “track changes” program. There is also a summing up of the changes here below.

The aim is to work with these rules at least the next five years.

Most of the highlighted texts are explanations and clarifications, maybe also some linguistic improvements have been made in the document. Some highlights are due to moving a few sentences or paragraphs to a more logical place. Also some of the texts in the general guidelines have been written down also in the descriptions of the relevant exercises.

The issues that are real changes have been discussed at the commission meeting 2021 in December.

### Some of the main amendments:

- **Handler's own dumbbells**  
The handlers may now use their own dumbbells in all classes. It can be a national decision but at international (CACIOB) and championship competitions the handlers may use their own dumbbells. The dumbbells must be according to the description.
- **Directed retrieve, class 3**  
In the new exercise “Directed retrieve”, some clarifications have been made on the stopping of the dog and judging the route.
- **Running round the cones, classes 1 & 2 & 3**  
In “Running round the cones”, some clarifications have been made on the route of the dog and the judging of the route. Please read the new text and please note, the point of judging the dog's distance to the cones is, that the grade should not be dropped if there is a clear distance between the dog and the cones. It is also not defined, what the ideal distance is. It can be f. ex 10 cm. It is, however, clearly defined that touching and knocking over a cone/cones causes a drop.  
In the group of cones, the cones must be equal in size but may differ in colour. The colour pattern must be the same for all dogs in a class.
- **Clarifications on hand signals**  
It has been more clearly defined, when the handler may use hand signals, when two hands are allowed and that a small nod is allowed in ex 3.7 when the middle dumbbell should be retrieved. Please also note that handler may quickly look in the direction where the dog is sent.
- **The stopping distances**  
The stopping distances have been unified as they were too strict in some of the exercise.
- **Ex. 3.4**  
In ex 3.4 some small details have been clarified on judging and performing.

- **In-between exercises**  
The dog may be on the left or the right-side in-between exercises; under control, nearby but does not need to be under command.
- **Illustrations**  
Illustrations on exercises 3.7 and 3.8 have been included.
- **Steward's commands**  
Some of the steward's commands have been clarified, e.g., ex 1.3 and 1.4

## Highlighted changes

Please note that the referring to the pages might not be quite accurate as the text of the final version can have moved a page or two forwards or backwards.

### 7. Handler's obligations and

Page 8 The handler should have the dog on her/his left side **during the exercises. Between exercises the dog should be under control and nearby (left or right).**

### 13. Equipment

Pages 11-12

Suitable retrieve objects:

- Three series (small – middle – large) of wooden dumbbells.

The following dumbbells should be available:

For Class 3 each series includes three dumbbells of equal **size (identical size and colour)**.

For Class 2 only two dumbbells of equal **size (identical size and colour)** are needed.

For Class 1 one of each size should be available.

Each series must differ in size and weight, so that they suite different-sized breeds i.e., small, middle-sized, and large breeds. The weight of the largest should not be more than approximately 450 g. The handler can choose whatever size he/she prefers, however.

***The handler is permitted to use his/her own wooden dumbbell (entirely wooden) in class 1. In classes 2 & 3, it is a national decision whether the handlers may use their own dumbbells or not. At international competitions and championship competitions the handlers are allowed to use their own dumbbells. The organiser should have a set of dumbbells (small – middle – large) available for the handler to use. The judge should check that the dumbbells fulfil the requirements.***



Figure: Wooden dumbbells. The dumbbells should be entirely wooden, and the middle part must be uncoated.

- Wooden objects approx. 2 cm x 2 cm x 10 cm are needed for Classes 2 and 3 exercises scent retrieve.

**The organiser always provides the objects for scent retrieve.**

In Class 2, the number of objects is six times the number of competing dogs.

In Class 3, the number of objects is eight times the number of competing dogs.

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Cones and markers:

- Several approximately 40–50 cm high cones (3–6) or a barrel  
For exercises 1.8, 2.9 and 3.8 several approximately 40–50 cm high cones (3 – 6) or a barrel of corresponding height and a diameter of 70–80 cm are needed in all classes. The area of the cones or the barrel should cover no less than 0,4 – 0,5 m<sup>2</sup>. The layout (depth X width) of the cones should be 70–80 cm X 70–80 cm.  
**The cones of a group should all be alike. They may all be of the same colour or of a different colour. In the layout, a similar colour pattern must be used for all dogs of the same class.**  
In championship competitions cones are always used.  
See description in Chapter VII Appendix 4.1

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14. The dog should **be near the handler in-between the exercises**. The dog does not have to be in heel position and under command, but it should be beside (**left/right**) the handler and under control.....

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31. The “heel” command **may** be given
35. The “Heel” command may be given at every start of an exercise and the command “Stay” is allowed in exercises in which the handler leaves the dog or turns away from the dog. **In positions exercises, however, only the position command is allowed, not two commands.**

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36. If a hand signal is allowed, it will be stated in the exercise. **See also point 40.....**
37. The handler may quickly turn his/her head in the direction where the dog is sent and the handler may quickly look back when recalling the dog from **behind, f. ex. the box. Also, a small, very short nod of the head may be used when the dog is sent to the middle dumbbell in directed retrieve, class 3.**
45. .... **This applies also to ex 3.4 in recall situations.**

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44. If a dumbbell is thrown unintentionally to an unsatisfactory place (bumps outside the ring or to a place where it can't be reached or is not thrown over the hurdle /too short a distance), it must be thrown again. **This can also be the handler's choice. The steward fetches the dumbbell and hands it over to the handler.** A second throw however, results in a reduction of 2 grades. If the second throw is not successful, the exercise is failed (=0).
46. The handlers are free to choose the size of the dumbbells they will work with. In class 1 the handler may use his/her own dumbbell. **In classes 2 & 3, it is a national decision whether the handlers may use their own dumbbells or not. The dumbbells must be according to description. The judge checks that the handlers' dumbbells are acceptable.**

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- EX 1.1 A dog that fails to sit (the **starting position**, two commands, see general rules § 55), stands up, lies down, or moves more than its own body length, fails the exercise (= 0).

Page 36&37

- EX 1.3 **Performance:** All phases of the exercise, ~~except turning around at the marker/cone,~~ are done on the steward's permission.

The handler continues walking towards the turning point, approximately 10 metres (place indicated e.g. by a marker or cone), turns around (~~independently~~) and stops to stand facing the dog.

EX 1.4 **Performance:** All phases of the exercise, ~~except turning around at the marker/cone,~~ are done on the steward's permission

The handler commands the dog to lie down and starts walking towards the indicated place 20 – 25 m from the starting point and turns around (~~independently~~).

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EX 1.8 **Performance:** .....**Appendix 4.2 for suggested routes.** The ideal is not to do a close (tight) turn around the cones /barrel. Depending on the breed, **up to** approximately half a metre for middle sized breeds and **up to** one metre for large breeds are suitable distances.

Figure: Exercise 1.8. *See also Chapter VII Appendix 4.1 for pattern for the cones and Appendix 4.2 for routes. See also the figure 2 for exercise 3.8.*

**Directions for judging:** ..... **Reasonable** symmetry..... If the dog turns back much before having reached the cones/barrel **or if it stops on its way**, it must be redirected to circle around the cones/barrel. The grade drop is 3,.....

**Also, if the dog's route is very close to the cones/barrel or if it is not reasonably direct and symmetrical, if it is weaving, the grade should be dropped by ½ – 2.**

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EX 2.9 **A simultaneous hand signal may be used if redirecting is needed and when directing (left/right) the dog to the jump. For the stop command both hands may be used.**

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Figure ex 2.9 Suggestions for patterns of the cones are in Chapter VII Appendix 4.1 **and for routes in Appendix 4.2.**

Depending on the breed, **up to** approximately half a metre for middle sized breeds and **up to** one metre for large breeds are suitable distances.

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The handler is permitted to give a jump command immediately after the dog has started **off from its position towards the hurdle. No hand signal may be used for the jump command.**

**Directions for judging:**

Emphasis should be on the dog's willingness follow the commands and directions, the dog's tempo and taking a **reasonably** short way, but leaving a suitable distance from the cones/barrel. **Reasonable** symmetry.

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Also, if the dog's route is very close to the cones/barrel **or if it is not reasonably direct and symmetrical, if it is weaving, the grade should be dropped by ½ – 2.**

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EX 3.4 **A second command on the position fails the position**

~~After the first position is entirely done, the steward announces, "Second position".~~ **After the first position is done, handler and dog start walking or continue walking** (depending on how the first position has been carried out).

They continue with the heelwork of exercise 3.3 or if all of the heelwork exercise is done, both exercises have ended, **and this is announced.**

**The routes should not be unnecessarily long when the handler is walking without the dog making turns and turnabouts.**

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EX 3.4 *If the handler is standing, the dog can come to heel position as described in the recall exercises, i.e. directly or sit in front and then move to heel position. If the dog approaches the handler from behind, there is no preferred way, but it should be effortless and look nice. The same applies if the handler is moving and the dog approaches from the front. It should be seamless.*

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*It is advised that the steward clearly informs the handler if*

- *he/she should take the dog along when passing it from behind or*
- *pass the dog and continue to walk without the dog or*
- *stop beside the dog.*

*The positions exercise should always end in a short heelwork and stop.*

Suggestions for the steward's commands depending on the phase

- *“End of heelwork exercise. Start of positions exercise, 1<sup>st</sup> position stand with recall, second position down.”*
- *“End of positions exercise (ex 4). Start of/continue with heelwork /exercise 3.”*
- *“End of positions exercise. Heelwork exercise/exercise 3 continues.”*
- *“End of both exercises, thank you”.*

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**Directions for judging**

*If the dog misses one of the positions, no more than 7 can be awarded.*

*If the dog misses the recall, but does both positions correctly, no more than 7 can be awarded.*

*If the dog misses both positions, the exercise is failed.*

*If the dog misses a position and recall, the exercise is failed.*

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*If the dog has not stopped within three body lengths or the dog fails completely to stop at a position, no recall can be made from this position and the exercise is failed.*

No extra commands are allowed on the positions. These will fail the position. Hand signals, body language on the stand/sit/down commands and looking back at the dog are grave mistakes **and** will severely reduce the grade by 1–5, **depending** on their strength and duration and **they can even fail** the position.

Summing up:

- *Wrong position (1) and good second position + good recall (2) => max 7*
- *Moves more than one body length (1) and good second position + recall => max 6*
- *Stops on position (1) after three body lengths and good second position and recall => max 5*
- *No position (1) (the dog continues walking, no stop at all within three body lengths) + recall (this means a recall from a very different/short distance), the exercise is failed (= 0), even if the second position is OK.*
- *Both positions OK, recall unsuccessful max 7*

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If the dog is fully outside the circle, it must be redirected into the circle (**at least one foot inside**), or else the exercise is failed.

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The Circle

If the dog is completely outside the circle, redirecting the dog into the circle is obligatory (**at least one foot inside**).

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EX 3.7 ***For the dumbbell in the middle, both hands may be used, by putting them together in front and pointing towards the dumbbell in the middle and a small nod of the head is allowed.***

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**Performance:** The handler and dog stand at the starting point facing the middle dumbbell at the distance of 20 metres. The start of the exercise is announced. The steward walks to place the dumbbells as described, for all competitors from the same direction. The handler sends the dog towards the middle dumbbell and after it has passed the 10-metre line segment, commands it to stand. The handler can give the stand command at any point after the dog has passed the 10-metre line. ***The dog should stop before having passed the line of dumbbells.*** If the dog stops before the 10-metre line segment, it must be redirected to pass the line segment. This drops the grade.

***When the dog has been stopped, after ~ 3 seconds,*** the handler is informed which dumbbell (the right, the left or the middle dumbbell) should be retrieved (left / middle / right) -----command. The dog should retrieve and deliver the dumbbell correctly. ***The handler's*** directing command (right/left/middle) and the retrieve command should follow each other without a break in between, thus a late retrieve command will be interpreted as a second command.

**Directions for judging:**

Emphasis should be on the dog's willingness to retrieve, to follow the directive commands and stop command, the dog's tempo, ***running reasonably straight forward before the stop command and taking the shortest way to the correct dumbbell.***

Showing the dog directions or touching the dog at the starting point will lead to failing of the exercise =0. (***See general guidelines § 20 & 53, hand touch.***)

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***If the dog is commanded to stop and needs to be redirected, no more than 8 can be awarded. If the dog is stopped too early and needs redirecting to pass the 10 m line segment, no more than 8 can be awarded.***

A dog that takes a wrong position, changes its position or moves after the stop command (more than 1X body length), before stopping, cannot get more than 8.

***If the dog needs approximately 3X its body length to stop, no more than 7 can be awarded. If the dog does not stop, the exercise is failed.***

The dog must remain in its position (stand) until the handler's directing command to retrieve. If the dog starts off too early after the stop, the grade should be lowered by 2–3. This can even fail the exercise, if the start off is very early, for example before the steward's command.

***If the dog moves clearly more than approximately one body length from its standing position, after it has once stopped, before the directing command /retrieve command, the exercise is failed (=0).***

Page 85 *See picture*

***The exercise is failed (=0), if the dog passes the line of dumbbells before it is directed to retrieve i.e. due to a late stop on command or disobeying the stop command.***

The exercise is failed (=0) if the dog picks up the wrong dumbbell ***or if it does not let go of the dumbbell.***

EX 3.8

***A simultaneous hand signal may be used if the dog needs to be redirected and for the directing command (left/right) to the jump. No hand signal anymore for the jump command. For the stop command both hands may be used.***

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Depending on the breed, ***up to*** approximately half a metre for middle sized breeds and ***up to*** one metre for large breeds are suitable distances.

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***See Figure 2 for ex 3.8***

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**Reasonable** symmetry

The breed/structure of the dog must be taken account of when judging the speed **and judging the stop (see Class 3, exercise 5 for stops) as well as when judging the distance from the cones/barrel.**

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If the dog clearly goes to the wrong dumbbell/hurdle and is stopped and redirected successfully to the correct one, 3 grades should be dropped. If the dog is redirected successfully from **a** wrong direction ~~(or hurdle)~~ without a stop, 1–2 grades should be deducted.

If the dog's route is very close to the cones/barrel **or if it is not reasonably direct and symmetrical, the grade should be dropped by ½ – 2.**