

NAHRA Policy on Dog Aggression and Conduct

Purpose: To protect handlers and participating dogs from dogs with aggressive behaviors.

Background: Our Mission in improving and recognizing the talents of the conservation retriever extends to beyond simply measuring performance. Our dogs will be exposed to other dogs, strangers and our fellow sportsmen in the course of their working careers. Dogs with demonstrated overtly aggressive or dangerous behaviors are incompatible with our program.

Implementation: Judges, Marshalls and members of the Field test Committee must report any incidents of dangerous behavior or actions that occur during the conduct of a NAHRA Field Test to the NAHRA Office. This report will contain all elements of the observed incident as well as a listing of people who witnessed the behavior.

Process: The NAHRA Vice President will investigate all incidents related to aggression by compiling the facts from all parties involved including the offending dogs owner/handler. The Vice president will make a recommendation to the Executive Board on whether the dog should be allowed to continue participating in the NAHRA program.

Considerations that must be addressed:

1. Was the behavior unprovoked?
2. Were the behavior reactionary vs deliberate?

Reactionary – Dogs are placed into situations for various reasons where an aggressive behavior is simply a spontaneous reaction to circumstances. Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- a) Dogs placed in close quarters (travel routes, holding blinds, honors, upland hunting, etc.).
- b) Dogs approached and startled from the blind side or surprised by another handler or dog.
- c) Situations described above are elevated if dogs are required to come in close contact where exposed birds are stored.

Potential sanctions against these dogs in the situations described above should be weighed carefully. Many of these situations may not require a suspension or at least, a lesser term. However, the incident should be reported for possible future incidents.

Deliberate - This behavior is a much more serious situation and the corresponding sanctions should reflect this. It will be considered a much more serious infraction if an offending dog leaves its position (with or without the handler) unprovoked and seeks out another dog or person to initiate an aggressive act (shows intent).

3. Was the behavior possibly initiated by another dog?
4. Is there any previous behavior of this nature?
5. Was there any injury to person or dogs?

Possible sanctions:

Suspension of the dog from participation in NAHRA events for a defined period of time.

Lifetime suspension of the dog from participation in NAHRA events. (This remedy should be used with caution, a factor such as has there been repeated evidence or danger to personnel should be weighed carefully.)

Suspension of the handler may also be considered if negligence is a factor.