

HANDBOOK FOR HANDLERS

FORWARD

The Doberman Pinscher Club of America was formed principally to preserve and protect the Doberman Pinscher and to do all possible to bring its natural qualities to perfection.

The perfection we seek is embodied in three sets of characteristics: those of conformation, those of temperament, and those of trainability. This Register of Merit Award and Working Aptitude Evaluation Program has, as its fundamental purpose, the recognition of Dobermans having those natural qualities of beauty and functional utility that make the breed what it was intended to be.

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR REGISTER OF MERIT (ROM) AWARDS AND WORKING APTITUDE EVALUATION PROGRAM (WAE)

CHAPTER I: Certificates, Awards and Administration

Section 1: Introduction

The exercises included herein are designed to measure a Doberman's response to people, footing, visual and auditory stimuli, and to threat situations in order to ascertain the dog's aptitude for the work for which the Doberman was created.

There are five exercises in which the dog's responses to the stimuli presented are measured in accordance with the degree of approach or avoidance behavior to a given stimulus. Approach behavior is defined as investigative (e.g. curiosity and inspection) or protective behavior. Avoidance behavior is defined as an attempt by the dog to avoid (or escape confrontation of) the stimulus. Each exercise is graded on the following scale:

- +3: Very strong approach behavior - needs no encouragement, bold, confident, egotistical
- +2: Strong approach behavior - needs little encouragement
- +1: Mild approach behavior - needs encouragement
- 0: No response (measurable) to stimulus
- 1: Mild avoidance
- 2: Strong avoidance
- 3: Panic behavior, very strong escape reaction

Section 2: The Working Aptitude Certificate (WAC)

In order to earn a Working Aptitude Certificate, a Doberman must demonstrate the characteristics required of a dog to be a stable companion and resolute protector. The following exercise profile is the minimal acceptable profile required of a dog to earn a Working Aptitude Certificate.

EXERCISE	MINIMAL ACCEPTABLE SCORE
I	
A. Neutral Stranger	-1
B. Friendly Stranger	-1
II	
A. Hidden Clattering - Alert and discovery	+1
B. Hidden Clattering - Investigation	+1

C. Gunshot	0
III Umbrella	+1
IV	
A. Footing Exercise - Polyethylene strip	+
B. Footing Exercise - Grating	+
V	
A. Threat - Decoy Crossing	+1
B. Threat - Decoy Approach	+1
C. Threat - Decoy/Dog Confrontation	+1
D. Dog Under Control	Pass

Dobermans who achieve this minimal profile or better will earn a WAC awarded by the Doberman Pinscher Club of America.

Section 3. The Register of Merit (ROM) Award

The ROM Award will be issued by the Doberman Pinscher Club of America to Dobermans who have demonstrated acceptability in the three areas of conformation, trainability, and temperament. In order to be eligible for the ROM Award, a Doberman must attain:

1. An AKC Championship Title
2. One or more acceptable Performance Titles
3. A WAC obtained by passing a DPCA sanctioned Working Aptitude Evaluation

The DPCA ROM Award signifies and gives recognition to the TOTAL DOBERMAN, sound in mind and body, and should be a guide to breeders in the quality of their stock.

Titles which count toward the Performance component:

- Obedience
 - Tracking
 - Agility
 - Schutzhund
 - Ring Sport
 - Search and Rescue
 - Herding (instinct test does not count)
- Other performance events may be added as they become approved by the ROM Committee

Section 4. CONDUCT OF EVALUATIONS

Working Aptitude Evaluations will be conducted under the auspices of DPCA certified evaluators.

Section 5. ELIGIBILITY OF DOBERMANS

In order for a Doberman to be eligible to participate in a Working Aptitude Evaluation, the dog must be 18 months of age or older and must be registered or have an Indefinite Listing Privilege (ILP) number with the AKC. No Doberman with a Z -coded registration number with the AKC or on the current AKC list of dogs bearing the albinistic trait is eligible to participate nor is any Doberman that is not of an allowed color according to the Doberman Standard.

Section 6. ADMINISTRATION OF CERTIFICATES AND AWARDS

It is the responsibility of the owner to submit photocopies of AKC Championship and Performance Titles promptly to the ROM Coordinator. Upon notification of receipt of these titles by the Coordinator, the owner will be permitted to use the ROM title.

Section 7. RE-EVALUATION OF DOGS

Dogs who have been evaluated but have not passed may be re-evaluated at a later date. There is no limit to the number of times a dog can be evaluated but past experience has indicated that a dog who has not passed the Evaluation on three successive attempts will probably never certify, even with extensive conditioning. If the re-evaluation occurs at the same grounds as the original Evaluation, a

waiting period of six months must elapse before the dog is re-evaluated to prevent the dog from remembering past experiences. Otherwise, a one month waiting period between Evaluations is sufficient.

Section 8. DISQUALIFICATION OF A DOG

A dog that in the opinion of the Evaluator attacks any person on the course shall be disqualified. The Evaluator shall mark the Data Sheet for that dog "Disqualified" and state the reason. The Data Sheet will be forwarded to the ROM Coordinator. Any dog that in the opinion of the Evaluator attacks a person or dog at a WAE event resulting in an injury or is believed by that Evaluator to present a hazard to persons or other dogs, shall be disqualified by the Evaluator and a report shall be filed with the ROM Chairperson and ROM Coordinator. The disqualified dog may not again participate at any WAE nor be on the grounds of a WAE unless and until, following application for reinstatement by the owner to the ROM Chairperson, the owner received official notification in writing from the ROM Chairperson that the dog's eligibility has been reinstated.

Section 9. INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLUBS SPONSORING ROM EVALUATIONS

All Doberman Pinscher clubs or other groups desiring to conduct a DPCA ROM Evaluation will:

- 1. Inform the ROM Coordinator of their intent to conduct a ROM Evaluation at least 30 days prior to the date of Evaluation. No Evaluation may be conducted with 200 miles or 30 days of another Evaluation.**
- 2. Obtain the services of a qualified DPCA evaluator. Names and addresses of qualified evaluators will be listed in each year's post-convention Pipeline and on the DPCA website.**
- 3. Pay expenses of the evaluator, such as air fare, meals and lodging. Evaluators are not allowed to make money or charge for conducting Evaluations.**
- 4. Obtain Club Kit, Score Sheets, and Data Sheets for registering dogs for the Evaluation from the DPCA ROM Coordinator or the DPCA website. The club can reproduce these to obtain the required number.**
- 5. Have on hand, the day of Evaluation, all required equipment as specified in these Rules and Regulations.**
- 6. Provide the required assistants to conduct the Evaluation as specified in these Rules and Regulations.**

CHAPTER II. CONDUCT OF WORKING APTITUDE EVALUATIONS: EXERCISE OBJECTIVES, DESCRIPTIONS AND PROCEDURES

EXERCISE 1 - Behavior Toward Strangers

Objective: To measure the dog's reaction to strangers in a non-threatening situation. (Standard requires "alert, watchful, fearless, loyal"; faults are "shyness or viciousness")

Procedure: The dog and handler will approach first the neutral, then the friendly stranger. The handler should give the dog the full 6' of lead. Observation of the exercise will begin as soon as handler/dog team and stranger start walking toward each other. In Part A, the neutral stranger will walk directly up to the handler of the dog. The handler may NOT encourage his dog in this exercise. Evaluator will observe the reaction of the dog throughout the neutral encounter. Upon completion of the encounter, the evaluator will motion to the handler and friendly stranger to approach each other. The handler will not move on with the dog toward the friendly stranger until signaled by the evaluator to do so. As in the neutral stranger exercise, observation will commence upon approach of handler/dog and friendly stranger to each other. The handler may encourage the dog on this exercise.

- A. Neutral Stranger - An assistant who is a stranger to the dog approaches handler directly to a**

distance of about 2' and engages the handler in a normal conversation. The neutral stranger must NOT act familiar with the handler or joke with them. That is NOT a neutral occurrence. Assistant ignores the dog throughout and, after the bit of non-confrontational conversation, assistant continues on his or her way. The handler may not talk to the dog during this exercise. Handler and dog then proceed along directed course where they encounter the friendly stranger.

B. Friendly Stranger - On this exercise, handler will let dog have a full 6' of slack in the lead as they approach the friendly stranger. A different assistant who is also a stranger to the dog approaches happily and briskly and is exuberantly friendly to the dog. (Do not use the dog's name.) When about 6' from the dog, the stranger stops and pats his or her leg to get the dog to come for petting. He or she does NOT reach out for the dog. Words such as "Puppy, puppy, what a pretty puppy" spoken by the friendly stranger will be used to encourage the dog to approach. When the friendly stranger tries to coax the dog over for play/petting, handler may encourage the dog or reassure with words such as "It's OK."

EXERCISE 2 - Reaction to Auditory/Visual Stimuli

Objective: To measure dog's alertness to auditory/visual stimuli and the degree of dog's investigative behavior toward those stimuli.

Procedures: Dog and handler will begin this exercise approximately 5' to 10' before the 20' marker. The dog and handler will approach van and move parallel to the van, about 3' to the right of it, with the dog between handler and van. The leash should be slack but the dog should not have enough lead to sniff at the van. When the dog is 20' from the assistant, evaluator will signal assistant to start rattling the can with a side to side wrist-twisting motion. Can is not to be rattled too vigorously. Rattling of can will continue until Part B is completed.

As the can starts rattling, the handler will give the dog 6' of slack and proceed around the end of the van to the can, pointing at it. The handler's motions should be smooth and positive. Upon commencement of rattling, the handler may say, "Hey, what's that?" or "Let's find it," excitedly. Upon discovery, the handler may point toward the rattling can and say, "Look at that!" or some other means of encouragement. The handler should not look at his dog when giving encouragement. Focus should be on the stimulus. The dog does not have to touch the can and the handler may NOT touch the can. Evaluator will then signal assistant to stop rattling the can.

This exercise has three parts as follows:

A. Hidden Clattering - Handler and dog walk directly toward a van behind which is an assistant seated with his or her back to the van and whose right hand, holding a beer or pop can partially filled with gravel, is extended parallel to the van in the direction from which the dog will approach. (The purpose here is to present the minimum human profile upon discovery by the dog.) When the dog is about 20' from the assistant, the evaluator will signal for the can to be rattled by a twisting motion of the hand - not a violent up and down motion. After rattling begins, dog may be encouraged to approach the van to discover the source of the noise. Some males may try to urinate on the van. Handlers must be cautioned not to allow this.

In Part A of this exercise, the evaluator is looking for strength of alert and investigative responses of the dog.

B. Assistant continues to rattle can as dog comes around the van to discover the source of the noise and investigate the can. The dog is given 10 seconds from the time the can is first in view of the dog to make a close inspection.* Dog may be encouraged by the handler. The handler shall NOT pull the dog toward the can. To do so will result in a minus (-) score.

In Part B of this exercise, the evaluator is observing the approach or avoidance reaction to the can.

***A close inspection is focused attention to the stimulus within 12" from the stimulus to the dog's nose. For a close inspection to occur, there has to be focus and interest.**

C. Gunshots -

Procedure: Handler and dog will start from a spot that is 10' before the shooter. Upon instruction of the evaluator, handler and dog will PASS the shooter, and upon crossing a point 15'

beyond the shooter, where the shots will be fired, will continue moving until told to stop. The distance should be sufficient to see the posture of the dog and recovery to be within 10 seconds. Evaluator will position himself to be able to view the posture and expression of the dog during and after the shots.

Handler and dog will walk along a course in line with and away from the shooter. The dog and handler will proceed across the point marked at 15', at which time the evaluator will signal the shooter to fire three shots towards the sky as follows: BANG! (pause) BANG! BANG! Upon hearing the first shot, handler will encourage his dog to continue along the marked path, but should not pull the dog along. Handler will continue along his course until told to stop by the evaluator at a designated point at least 20' away from the point of the shots. Should the dog startle, it is to be given 10 seconds to recover. Recovery is indicated by the posture of the dog, including ears, tail and overall carriage, which should approach the bearing of the dog prior to the shots.

EXERCISE 3 - Reaction to Visual Stimuli - Umbrella Exercise

Objective: To measure dog's reaction to sudden visual stimulus, degree of dog's investigative behavior and startle-recovery time.

Procedures: Handler/dog team proceeds (preferably downwind) toward an assistant who is sitting on a lawn chair with umbrella hooked over the chair's arm directly in dog's path but facing 90 degrees to the side. As the dog crosses a marked point 9' from the tip of the umbrella, the evaluator will give a signal to the assistant to slowly raise the umbrella whose tip has been resting on the ground. (Note: Abruptly raising the umbrella as dog approaches might indicate challenging behavior to the dog. This is why the exercise stresses that the umbrella is to be raised slowly.) The 9' spot will be pre-marked. As the dog (not the handler) crosses a pre-marked spot 3' from the umbrella (no later), the evaluator will signal the assistant to simultaneously release the catch and open the umbrella directly toward the dog. Timing and distance are very important on this exercise. The umbrella must not be opened closer than 3'. The open portion of the umbrella is then lowered and rested on the ground while the assistant retains shaft in hand to prevent umbrella from moving. Dog is required to move forward (with encouragement if necessary) to make a close inspection of the front of the umbrella.

On this exercise, clarity of instruction and timing by the evaluator are critical. Handler will be instructed to start approach to umbrella from at least 20' from the 9' marker. The handler will align himself with the tip of the closed umbrella with his dog to his left. Upon signal from the evaluator, he will proceed directly, without hesitation, to the tip of the now opened umbrella, pointing at it but not touching it, and encouraging the dog to investigate it. At the beginning of the approach, the dog is on a reasonably slack lead. When the umbrella opens, the dog must have full 6' of slack in the lead. Under no condition is the handler to stop until he reaches the umbrella. He must not walk past it, but go right up to the center of it. The handler is NOT allowed to touch the umbrella nor pull his dog to the stimulus. All dogs will startle on this exercise. Measurement of the 10 seconds elapsed time will commence as soon as the umbrella is opened. A dog need not actually sniff at or attack the umbrella to pass this exercise. He must, however, demonstrate a willingness to approach the front of the umbrella and make a close inspection. When the umbrella opens, the dog must have full 6' of slack in the lead.

EXERCISE 4 - Footing Exercise

Objective: To measure dog's reaction to unusual footing (Standard requires "determined," "fearless.")

Procedures:

A. Handler/dog team approaches a strip of polyethylene 16 feet long and 4 feet wide, laid on the ground and weighted at the corners, if necessary. With dog on a loose lead, they proceed directly along the length (16 feet) of this change of footing.

B. After completing above part, handler/dog team cross an aisle of normal footing at least 10' wide and then proceed directly across an exercise pen laying flat on the ground. This simulated grating should be 16 feet long and 4 feet wide. Handler and dog will move along the length, not across, this change of footing.

On this exercise the dog must demonstrate a willingness to walk over the footings with his handler. The dog does not have to like it, but he must do it. To pass, the dog must walk on the footing for at least 3/4 of its length or 12' of the 16'. He can jump off it as long as he remains on the required distance. The leash must not be tight on this exercise. The lead should be slack enough so that the dog can get off the footing if he so attempts. Handler can encourage the dog by patting his leg and talking to him. A continually tight lead must receive a minus (-) score. The dog must in no way be forced to stay on the footing. Dogs are to be properly lined up with the stimuli before dog and handler proceed. If, in the opinion of the evaluator, the dog is not properly lined up, the dog may be given a second chance on the Footing Exercise.

EXERCISE 5 - Self-Protective Reactions

Objective: To measure the dog's capacity to recognize and to react in a positive manner to a potentially threatening situation and to defend himself or herself in the face of such a threat.

Procedures: This test has four parts. (Dog will wear leather collar, choke chain, and strong 6' leather lead throughout. Decoy should be dressed in slicker or raincoat, a floppy hat and wear a concealed agitation sleeve.)

NOTE: A word about encouragement: some dogs are so keyed to a handler's voice that encouragement will actually cause the dog to focus on them and not on the stimulus. This is particularly true of some dogs who have been extensively trained. If you have such a dog, it is best to keep words to a minimum. Formal commands are not allowed.

In Part A, the evaluator is measuring the strength of the alert and approach/avoidance of the dog to a staggering, weird looking and sounding person crossing his path at a distance of approximately 20'. The stranger is not directing his behavior at the dog. Dog is given a full 6' of slack in the lead. When the decoy appears and the dog alerts, handler will cease all forward motion, but will allow the dog to go out to the end of the lead. He may encourage him by saying, "Watch him," or some such alerting type words. Handler will brace himself and remain standing in the same spot where he stopped. In Part B, the stranger continues his weird behavior but starts approaching the dog rather than crossing his path. In Part C, the weird behavior turns to threatening motions toward the dog. A wide range of behavior is possible on this exercise, including mixed behavior such as approach/protection/avoidance. In a mixed situation, such as protection combined with avoidance, the evaluator must ascertain the predominant mode of behavior. A strong protective response and/or an obvious willingness to defend is the desired reaction. A dog taking a positive stance, indicated by strong eye contact, arched neck, and leaning forward over front legs is an acceptable reaction. In Part D, the dog needs to return to normal behavior once the decoy has disappeared behind the van. The dog has 15 seconds to do this.

A. Handler/dog proceed downwind (if possible) toward decoy hidden behind van. When dog is approximately 20' from hidden decoy, decoy staggers out and crosses dog's path making weird motions and sounds. Handler ceases to move forward as soon as decoy comes into view.

B. After decoy has crossed dog's path for a distance of 20', he then turns toward dog and, continuing to make weird sounds and motions, slowly and tentatively advances on dog. If dog exhibits positive reaction, continue with Part C.

C. Decoy then raises stick and makes threatening gestures toward the dog. Weird vocalizations should change to a growl. The decoy will continue these actions until the evaluator blows the whistle. No contact is to be made between dog and decoy. For all parts of this exercise, the handler must not allow the dog to advance beyond leash length of the handler's stopping point. Pressure on the leather collar should not be in the form of a sudden jerk.

D. At the conclusion of the evaluation the dog must be brought under control within 15 seconds after the decoy retreats behind the van. Protective behavior must stop, carriage and bearing return to normal or the dog will fail the exercise. Handler may verbally instruct dog.

CHAPTER III . GENERAL RULES

1. Handlers should exude confidence to their dogs during evaluation, as hesitation, startle, concern,

etc., “go down the lead” to the dog and may cause the dog to appear less positive than he or she would otherwise.

2. If a dog appears to be distressed or displays inappropriate aggression, the evaluator should discontinue the exercise. In some instances, the dog may become so distressed or aggressive that the evaluator must discontinue the entire evaluation process.
3. The dog is allowed to be encouraged to show either investigative or protective behavior in accordance with the particulars of the exercise. However, while encouraging the dog, the handler must concentrate his focus on the stimulus, not the dog; let the dog lead the way. Physically assisting the dog will result in a minus (-) score.
4. Dogs must not be under command. Should the evaluator note obedience commands before any exercise, a notation to that effect should be made on the score sheet, and the evaluator should caution handler; if behavior continues, a minus (-) score shall be given.
5. Video taping on the evaluation field is at the discretion of the evaluator.
6. Only dogs eligible to earn the Working Aptitude Certificate can be evaluated.

CHAPTER IV. INSTRUCTIONS FOR DOG HANDLERS

1. Dog must be on a loose lead at all times to allow for freedom of movement. On each of the exercises, the amount of loose lead required will be specified.
2. Dogs are not to be under commands at any time during the exercises.
3. Dogs may be encouraged by their handlers to approach an exercise stimulus, unless otherwise noted in the following sections. Such encouragement must be oriented toward the stimulus. Handlers should focus on the stimulus, not on the dog. Handlers may not pull their dogs on a tight lead. Handlers should give dog every opportunity to lead out and approach on his own before resorting to encouragement.

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