

## Levels of Helpers

### • Apprentice level Helper

An Apprentice level Helper is allowed to be a Trial Helper **ONLY** at the Club they are a member of, and **ONLY** for 2 trials. These helpers are not allowed to do Helper Work at any other Club trial. The Apprentice level Helper must be capable of working Club dogs in a trial setting. The Apprentice level Helper can serve for 2 trials maximum with this status and must be certified as a Club Level Helper within 2 years.

### • Club level Helper

A Club Level Helper may travel to any club and be the helper for any club trial. They are responsible for working dogs in all three levels of protection work during any local club trial PLUS the work during a breed survey. The Club level Helper must be capable of working both club dogs as well as those from outside the club in a **fair, correct, and safe fashion**. More importantly, Club level helpers are considered the building blocks of the organization. They are responsible for teaching new and existing members the intricacies of protection work. They need to be able to communicate this to the owners and should be able to make a training plan with owners to guide the handlers and dogs to trials and Breed Surveys in the future. Club level helpers must work a minimum of two events for the club that has submitted their application for certification or forfeit their certification. **Club helpers that don't pass the training portion of the certification will not be able to certify as a club level trial helper.**

### • Regional Trial Helper

A Regional Trial Helper is responsible for working dogs in all three levels of protection work at a Club or Regional competition. The Regional Helper must be capable of working powerful, quick dogs that they have not worked before, **in a fair, demanding, correct and safe fashion.**

### **• National Trial Helper**

A National Trial Helper is responsible for working dogs in all three levels of protection work during a Club, Regional, National, Combined Qualifier, Universal Sieger and National Sieger competitions. The National Helper must be capable of working powerful, quick dogs that they have not worked before, **in a fair, demanding, correct and safe fashion.**

### **• Teaching Helper**

A Teaching Helper has the responsibility of teaching and certifying Helpers at the Club, Regional and National level. A Teaching Helper should have extensive knowledge about dog behavior and training principles and demonstrate the ability to conduct yearly seminars and to disseminate that knowledge to diverse groups of Helpers on a regularly scheduled basis.

### **Prerequisites for Certification**

\*The applicant must be a minimum of 16 years of age. Applicants between the ages of 16-18 years of age will require a “waiver” signed by a parent or legal guardian.

\* For Club Level certifications the applicant needs to be signed up by a club.

\*The applicant must be a GSDCA member or a member applicant. If membership is pending at the time of the seminar, the Helper applicant may still participate and receive a rating according to his/her skill level (without a Trial Helper Book). The Helper applicant will receive his/her Trial Helper Book only after all membership requirements have been fulfilled.

\*The applicant should have a thorough understanding of the protection trial rules for all Working Dog levels and Breed Survey. *The Helper must understand that they work for the Judge.*

\*The applicant should show good physical conditioning and coordination sufficient to perform the Helper's duties in a fair, consistent, and safe manner during an event.

## **The Certification Process**

### **Helper Reciprocity**

At this time there is no helper reciprocity in this program.

**All candidates, at any level, must provide a video of their certification evaluation.**

### ***Apprentice Helper***

GSDCA Apprentice Level Helpers may be certified through a one or two-day certification event, depending on the number of Helpers to be certified and may be presented by one (1) Teaching Helper.

### ***Club Trial Helper***

GSDCA Club Level Helpers may be certified through a one or two-day certification event, depending on the number of Helpers to be certified and may be presented by one (1) Teaching Helper. Clubs that have started within the last year and want to host a trial can contact the GSDCA Director of the Helpers Program for a one-time apprentice level by video submission. This will only count for 1 trial.

### ***Regional Trial Helpers***

The applicant **MUST** attend an official GSDCA Helper Certification event. All requirements must be successfully completed within a single event. Regional

Certification events may be hosted by local GSDCA clubs. Regional Certification may be a one (1) or two (2) day event depending on the number of Helpers to be certified and may be presented by one (1) Teaching Helper.

### ***National Trial Helpers***

To become certified an applicant must attend the yearly “GSDCA Helper Nationals” event. This National Helper Event is hosted by the GSDCA.

Only those helpers that attend the yearly GSDCA Helper Nationals will be able to perform Helper work at the following year’s Nationals and Qualifier. National Trial Helpers certification will be videotaped. Nationals certification may be a one (1) or two (2) day event depending on the number of Helpers to be qualified and must be presented by two (2) Teaching Helpers, one of which is the Director of the Helpers committee. The Director of the Helpers committee holds the right to appoint any other “judge” for this event.

**Dates and exact weekend program will be announced no later than September 30th of each calendar year.**

### ***Teaching Helpers***

The candidate for Teaching Helper must:

- ✓ Be a member in good standing of GSDCA
- ✓ Have at least four (4) years of experience as a Helper
- ✓ Have served as a Club Training Director or assistant to the Training Director or an equivalent position for a service dog agency.

Prospective candidates must attend a GSDCA Helper Certification Event wherein, through the interaction with people and dogs, the presiding Teaching Helper can determine if they possess the physical and communication skills to be a Teaching Helper. The seminar can be a two (2) day event or two one (1) day event, but the candidate must complete the process and be evaluated by two (2) different Teaching Helpers. Following the completion of the GSDCA Helper Seminar/Certification, the reports from the two (2) Teaching Helpers shall be forwarded to the GSDCA SV Office

within 14 days. The Helper Committee will issue a decision about the candidate. A prerequisite may be waived by written request and with the approval of the Head of Helper Program and the SV Chair.

## **Certification Events**

Certification events may be scheduled for one (1) or two (2) days.

**All Certification events must be video recorded.**

Certification events shall include a presentation of the fundamentals of protection work with emphasis on TRAINING and TRIAL procedures and practical implementation followed by the evaluation of the applicant Helpers.

The Club Level helper must work several dogs, at least 1 in the training portion and 1 in the trial portion.

Helpers must provide the dogs needed for certification.

The Teaching helper holds the right to ask for more dogs if he wants to see anything in particular.

A new Regional Level aspirant who is attending a certification event for the first time shall work with several dogs.

The Teaching helper holds the right to start the day with a type of stamina testing. The applicant Helper should show good physical conditioning and coordination sufficient to carry out a Helper's task in an assertive, fair, equitable, consistent, and safe fashion for all dogs in a trial.

The protection phase in a Working Dog trial is a contest between Helper and dog. The National Trial Helper has to be able to put real psychological and physical pressure on the dogs and has to do so correctly.

- **All Apprentice and Club level certifications must be videotaped.** After the test their work will be discussed with the Teaching Helper while watching the videotape.

- **All Regional Level Certifications must be videotaped** and sent to the Helper Committee for review.

- **All National Helper level certification must be videotaped** and sent to the Helper Committee for review. A Helper who is attending re-certification shall successfully work dogs at the IGP 3 level. The number of dogs worked will be at the Teaching Helpers discretion.

The Helper should be able to recite all applicable rule changes to the evaluator.

Note: The applicants will be required to provide his/her own protection equipment. If the applicant fails to have prerequisite equipment, the examiner may excuse the applicant.

### **Maintaining Certification**

1. GSDCA Apprentice Helper Certification is good for 2 years only. **You cannot re-certify as an Apprentice Helper.** You must move up to a minimum Club Level Helper before your 2 years' time frame expires.
2. GSDCA Club Trial Helper Certification is valid for two (2) years. The Helper should do helper work at a GSDCA sanctioned trial at least once every two (2) years and if the officiating licensed judge at the trial approves of the work and marks this in the GSDCA Trial Helper Book, the Helper's certification will be extended for another two (2) years. These level helpers must work a minimum of 2 trials for the club that submits their name for certification. Judge's Helper evaluation sheet must accompany trial result paperwork to the GSDCA SV Office.
3. GSDCA Regional Trial Helper certification is valid for a period of two (2) years. The Helper must re-certify on or before his/her anniversary date either by attending a certification event or by working at a GSDCA Club or Regional trial with one of the teaching helpers present. If the officiating judge at the trial approves of the work and so does the teaching helper, his certification will be renewed for two (2) years from that date. Judge's Helper evaluation sheet must accompany trial results paperwork to the GSDCA SV Office.
4. GSDCA National Trial Helper certification is valid for a period of two (3) years. The Helper must re-certify every 3 years by participating in a National Helper Certification or by working a National event. These events secure the quality of the helpers' work that the GSDCA puts out there, without any favoritism. Upon retirement as a GSDCA National Level Helper they will have the designation of "**Honorary**" after their name on the Helper list. These retired helpers may continue to perform Helper work at Club Level Trials and Breed Surveys and must re-certify every 5 years.

5. Teaching Helper certification is valid for three (3) years, as long as the Teaching Helper is a member of the GSDCA and as long as there are no undergoing disciplinary actions. Abeyance of Teaching Helper certification will require re-qualifications. Teaching helpers must schedule and teach educational programs or helper certification events on a regular basis.

6. Certified Helpers of all levels are responsible for reviewing all information published about rule changes as they occur. Certification may be revoked if the Helper is not aware of current rules. All Helpers are encouraged to attend various seminars, whenever possible, for their own continuing educational improvement.

7. Certification status will automatically expire if the Helper's membership in the GSDCA expires or is canceled for any reason. Helpers will be reconsidered by the GSDCA Helper Committee after reactivating their membership. Re-entry in the program **is not automatic**.

8. Teaching Helper certification will automatically expire if the Helper's membership in the GSDCA expires or is canceled for any reason. Any Teaching Helper will be reconsidered by the GSDCA Helper Committee after reactivating their membership. Re-entry in the program **is not automatic**.

9. All GSDCA helpers certifications, **for ALL levels**, must be obtained at GSDCA events. All certifications need to be submitted to the Director of Helpers for review and to the GSDCA SV Office for record keeping.

### **Event Requirements and reimbursements**

- Helpers at National, Combined Qualifier, Universal Sieger Show and National Sieger show must be certified National Trial Helpers. - Helpers at Breed Surveys must be certified Club, Regional or National Trial Helpers. - Helpers at Regional trials must be certified Regional or National Trial Helpers. - Helpers at local club trials must be at a minimum certified Club Trial Helpers. (With the exception of an Apprentice Helper who is allowed to be a helper at their own Club Trial). Exceptions for Helpers at all trial levels can only be made by the GSDCA SV Chair and Head of Helper Program.

-The Helper expenses on regular club events are agreed upon between the helper and the club in writing and are the responsibility of the host club.

**-National Events:** Travel, hotel accommodations, meals (\$35 x day) and per diem (\$50 x day) for the Helpers selected for a National Event (IGP National Championship, Combined Qualifier, Universal Sieger Show, National Sieger Show) will be the responsibility of the GSDCA. This includes roundtrip transportation (e.g., airfare or driving, whichever is less. Mileage shall be reimbursed at the current year's Federal Mileage Rate). The maximum reimbursement amount per Helper is \$750 per event based on receipts provided. In addition, the Host Club shall also

provide one (1) banquet ticket, and one (1) stadium pass for each Helper for the Event if stadium entry fees are requested. A reimbursement form provided by the GSDCA Treasurer must be submitted, accompanied by receipts.

### **-Helpers Equipment**

Complete Helper equipment consists of protection pants, protection jacket, protection sleeve, trial helper padded stick and proper shoes and, if wished, a groin protector. The Trial Helper stick must be padded, and the outer cover should be leather. Helpers are required to have jackets available at a club trial. At Breed Surveys, Regional and National trials, wearing the jacket shall comply with the rules in force at that time.

### **-Record Keeping and Privileges**

All original Helper Certification documents (tests, evaluations, videotapes, etc.) will be sent to the GSDCA SV Programs Office by the Teaching Helper within five (5) business days of the Helper Certification event by a download link from [www.wetransfer.com](http://www.wetransfer.com) with [helpers@gsdcasv.org](mailto:helpers@gsdcasv.org) as the recipient.

The GSDCA SV Programs Office shall maintain a list of Certified Helpers and expiration dates.

A listing of all Certified Helpers shall be posted on the GSDCA website. All Certified Helpers must maintain a Trial Helper Book in which trial performances will be documented and assessed by the presiding judge. The Trial Helper Book is available at the GSDCA SV Programs Office.

The position of GSDCA Certified Helper is an honorific designation. Certified Helpers may "advertise" their GSDCA Helper status only in association with official GSDCA events. National Trial Helpers and Teaching Helpers will be given free entrance and a catalog to all GSDCA SV events. This is in effect only if the Helper is a spectator or working as a Helper, not if he/she is an entrant in the event.



**Disciplinary Action**

Any Certified Helper, of any level, who fails to perform at any trial in an equitable, safe, and sportsmanlike manner shall be excused from such trial by the judge who may recommend censure or other disciplinary action to the Helper Program Committee. Improper behavior on the part of any GSDCA Certified Helper, of any level, shall be reported to the Helper Program Committee for disciplinary action. If all original Helper documents are not sent within ten (10) business days, the Helper may be subject to disciplinary action as recommended by the Helper Program Committee. The GSDCA will take measures with respect to Helpers who are found acting in violation of Helpers Regulations, GSDCA statutes, and the program's spirit of sportsmanship. Disciplinary decisions will be final upon review from the GSDCA Board of Directors.

Disciplinary measures will include:

- Warning
- Retraining
- Abeyance of the Helpers status
- Withdrawal from the Helpers program
- These measures may be imposed concurrently.

Helpers who are dismissed, suspended or in any way separated from the program expressly waive the option to file an appeal against the dismissal.

I have reviewed and agreed to the GSDCA SV Program Helper Program Rules and Regulations. My signature indicates my understanding and agreement of these rules.

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Print name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Current Helper Level \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_