



GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG CLUB OF AMERICA

HELPER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

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 have a basic understanding of drive states and how to reinforce these. 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 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 or National competition. 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 seminars and to disseminate that knowledge to diverse groups of Helpers.

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. Drive state knowledge will be taught throughout the GSDCA seminars marked with the “Training Knowledge” seal. Additional course material will be provided during these seminars.
- 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

Certified Helpers from other sanctioned IGP organizations will be granted Club level helper status, provided they are GSDCA members and can present their helpers book and video.

This will be a one-time exception.

For further helper assignments they must schedule certification with the GSDCA Director of the Helpers program.

Procedure:

1. Email request along with the videos of helper work must be submitted to the GSDCA SV office to helpers@gsdcasv.org
2. Evaluation feedback and recommendations will be requested from all GSDCA Teaching Helpers. This can be done via ZOOM.
3. A minimum of two GSDCA Teaching Helpers must give approval, one of which must be the GSDCA Director of the Helpers Program.
4. Feedback and determination will be provided by the GSDCA Director of Helpers Program.

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 helper 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 may be hosted by the GSDCA. Only those helpers that attend the GSDCA Helper Nationals yearly will be able to perform Helper work at the following Nationals and Qualifier. The moment GSDCA will start hosting Regional Championships, some of the helpers for these events may be picked during this event. National Trial Helpers certification will be videotaped. Helper 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.

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.

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.

During the National Helper days, the National Level aspirants and the current National level Helpers will all work in pairs.

No more than Four (4) dogs shall be worked in the front half, and no more than four (4) dogs shall be worked in the back half. This means that a dog will stay on the field to work on both helpers.

After a helper has done a few dogs in the front half and in the back half, they will switch with another helper and work dogs accordingly.

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 understand drive state stimuli in order to do so correctly.

- All Apprentice and Club Level Helpers 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 for re-evaluation 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 year 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.
3. GSDCA Regional Trial Helper certification is valid for a period of two (2) years. The Helper must requalify on or before his/her anniversary date either by attending a certification event or by working 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.
4. GSDCA National Trial Helper certification is valid for a period of one (1) year. The Helper must re-qualify yearly by attending The Helper Nationals certification event. This event secures the quality of the helpers work that GSDCA puts out there, without any favoritism.
5. Upon retirement as a GSDCA National Level Helper they will have the designation of "retired" after their name on the Helper list. These retired helpers may continue to perform Helper work at Club Level Trials and Breed Surveys with the approval of a Teaching Helper.
6. Teaching Helper certification is valid for as long as the Teaching Helper is a member of the GSDCA and as long as there is no undergoing disciplinary actions. Abeyance of Teaching Helper certification will require re-qualifications.
7. 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.
8. Certification status will automatically expire if the Helper's membership in the GSDCA is cancelled for any reason. Helpers whose membership is cancelled will be reconsidered by the GSDCA Helper Committee after reactivating their membership. Re-entry in the program is not automatic.
9. Teaching Helper certification will automatically expire if the Helper's membership in the GSDCA is cancelled for any reason. Any Teaching Helper whose membership is

cancelled will be reconsidered by the GSDCA Helper Committee after reactivating their membership. Re-entry in the program is not automatic.

Event Requirements and reimbursements

- Helpers at National trials 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 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 be made by the GSDCA SV Chair and Head of Helper Program.
- The Helper expenses on regular events are agreed upon between the helper and the club and are the responsibility of the host club.
- Travel, hotel accommodations, meals (\$35 x day) and per diem (\$50) for the Helpers selected for a National Event 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 two (2) banquet tickets and two (2) stadium passes for each Helper for the Event if stadium entrée fees are requested. A reimbursement form provided by the GSDCA Treasurer must be submitted, accompanied by receipts.

Helper 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 with 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 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.