



LV DVG AMERICA

# Training Director Handbook

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>Preface</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Organization and administration</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Job of the training director</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>First aid</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Health and safety</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Equipment</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Training your club's dogs</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>The IPO exercises</b>	<b>(under development)</b>



## Preface

In 1995 the VDH adopted a Training Directors' Certification Program. The DVG adopted a similar program for all DVG member clubs. The program was to be fully implemented by all DVG member clubs by April 1, 1997, but LV DVG AMERICA was granted an extended grace period to develop a program compatible with its vast geographical boundaries. This "Manual for Training Directors," initially issued in 1997, was to have been implemented by all LV DVG AMERICA clubs by January 1, 1998. This fulfilled LV DVG America's obligation to institute a training program to fulfill the requirements of DVG and VDH.

## Acknowledgements

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The current members of the LV Board who commented on the document, and all the other individuals who commented on pieces of this document.

References consulted include

*Schutzhund Obedience: Training in Drive*, by Sheila Booth with Gottfried Dildei

*Dog Training with the Touch*, Tom Rose and Annetta Cheek

And the following internet resources -

<http://www.canismajor.com/dog/drives.html>

<http://leerburg.com/drives.htm>

<http://leerburg.com/drives2.htm>

<http://www.schutzhundvillage.com/drives.html>

## Organization and Administration



DVG was founded in 1947. It grew out of several early police dog organizations dating back to the very early 1900s. DVG stands for Deutscher Verband der Gebrauchshundsportvereine—the German Association of Working Dog Sports Clubs (<http://www.dvg-hundesport.de>). LV DVG America is one of over a dozen Landesverbände (regions) of DVG – and the only one not in Germany. You can find a list of the current LVs on the DVG website.

As its name suggests, DVG is dedicated to working dogs. It has never been a breed organization, unlike United IPO Clubs of America, which is specifically a German Shepherd Dog breed club. It does not maintain a registry of dogs. DVG has over 30,000 members, but only about 2000 of them are participants in IPO. The largest number of DVG members participate in agility. Other DVG sports include FCI obedience, flyball, rally obedience, search and rescue, water rescue, and Frisbee.

DVG is a member of VDH-- the Verband für das Deutsche Hundewesen (the German Kennel Club). VDH has over 170 member clubs, most of them breed clubs plus a handful of state dog organizations and DVG. The VDH Working Dog Council (AZG - Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Rassehundezucht-vereine und Gebrauchshundeverbände) writes, adopts, and amends the trial rules not just for IPO but for all types of trials and competitions.

In turn, VDH is a member of FCI-- The Fédération Cynologique Internationale, or World Canine Organization. FCI is the largest canine organization in the world. It includes 91 members and contract partners (one member per country) that each issue their own pedigrees and train their own judges. Every member country conducts international conformation shows as well as working/hunting trials and tests, agility and obedience competitions, races, coursing and

herding trials. DVG is a member of FCI through its membership in VDH. No dog organizations in the US or Canada is a full member of the FCI.

LV DVG America is an administrative body, with authority over its regions (KGs or Kreisgruppen) and the clubs in those regions. KGs are also administrative bodies, with authority over the clubs in their region. In cases where rules or policies of a region or a club may conflict with the LV's requirements, the LV controls.

LV DVG America is the largest LV in DVG, from the viewpoint of geographic area. However, it is one of the smallest from the viewpoint of membership. All the LVs in Germany participate in several different DVG sports.

To find out more about the boundaries of the KGs and the list of clubs in LV DVG America, go to

<http://dvg-america.com/contacts.html>



DVG is dedicated to working dogs.

DVG stands for Deutscher Verband der Gebrauchshundsportvereine—the German Association of Working Dog Sports Clubs



## The job of a Training Director

Being a training director is one of the most difficult and important jobs in our sport. As a training director, you must be a leader, a motivator, and a teacher. The overall success of a club rests on your shoulders. You will have to adapt to many different situations, deal with people with different levels of experience and expertise, and develop dogs with different capabilities.

### Prerequisites

Training director candidates should have titled a dog in both a BH and at least an IPO 1, or a BH and an FH. If you are new to DVG you have a grace period of 24 months to satisfy this requirement. Until you satisfy this requirement we consider you a probationary training director. You must complete the test at the end of this manual with a score of 80% or higher. You should also be actively training a dog – you can't help someone else train a dog if you can't train a dog. You should be familiar with the trial rules and you should keep up to date with changes to those rules.



#### 1. Organizational Goal and Philosophy –

The overarching Goal of LV DVG America is to advance DVG sports, especially IPO, within North America. This means more than just increasing membership; it means increasing the true strength of our organization. This can only be accomplished by improving the knowledge of the members, the quality of our training and, ultimately, the success of our members during both training and trials.

At the most basic level this responsibility falls on the training directors of our local clubs.

DVG's organizational philosophy is to welcome all breeds of dogs, and all skill levels of handlers equally. It is therefore the responsibility of the club training director to evaluate each dog and handler team, not to determine if they are "good enough" for our sport, but to discover where they will fit into the myriad of training and trialing opportunities available to them. As Training Director, you must evaluate:

- a. The actual goal of the team; do they really understand the sport and wish to compete for titles?
- b. The capability of each team member (dog and handler) to achieve their goal, and,
- c. The ability of the team to appropriately and effectively fit within the structure of the club.

During this evaluation you must honestly answer the following question:

"Can I advance this team to attainable goals with safe and humane training techniques, and without undue physical and mental stress on either the dog or handler?"

Recognizing that not all dogs have the drive, nerve, and physical ability to attain the highest titles is crucial. Not all novice handlers initially bring with them the skill sets necessary to train a dog to those levels, or to even handle such an animal. This does not mean, however, that these dogs and handlers can't participate successfully in some DVG sport.

You should help all club members set realistic and attainable goals, and guide those members to success in their aspirations. Each dog and handler, with the proper motivation and guidance, will in some way contribute to the overall success of the club, and therefore help us attain our organizational goal.

2. You should ensure the members of each team achieve value or benefit from every training session. It is NOT your responsibility to train the dogs; instead it is your task to create an environment which allows individual handlers to become skilled at safely, effectively, and humanely training their own dogs.

## First Aid

IPO training presents many opportunities for injury or other health problems for both dogs and handlers. Every club should have a first aid kit handy during training.

For a list of items that you should include, see:

[http://www.paw-rescue.org/PAW/PETTIPS/DogTip\\_FirstAid.php](http://www.paw-rescue.org/PAW/PETTIPS/DogTip_FirstAid.php)

Also, every training director should identify the nearest veterinary hospitals that are open 24 hours a day, on weekends, and on holidays. Keep a list of these facilities and their phone numbers handy at training, and make sure all members know about it.

Injured or sick dogs can be very stressed and may try to bite anyone who attempts to handle or treat them. Your first priority should be the safety of the people dealing with the animal; otherwise someone may get bitten badly. In many cases it's best to muzzle the animal, for example for fractures and external bleeding. Don't muzzle an animal that is unconscious, has difficulty breathing, or has heatstroke.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive manual on first aid for dogs. There are many good citations on-line that are more complete. The following list deals only with common health problems of dogs in IPO training. In most cases first aid should be followed up with a visit to the vet.

### Ripped toenail

Depending on the extent of the damage to a nail, you may be able to treat it yourself. Broken nails are quite painful, so muzzle or otherwise restrain your dog. If the nail is just cracked or partly broken, cut it off just above the crack. Wash the remaining nail, and apply an antiseptic spray. Trimming the nail may cause bleeding, so have a styptic pencil or powder handy to use after you clean the damaged area. Bandage the paw to keep it clean. If the nail has broken down to the quick, it's best to take the dog to a vet.

### Strains and sprains

Strains injure tendons that link muscles and bones. This can happen if your dog stretches too far, too much, or too often. Athletic dogs often get strains. Sprains harm the ligaments that connect bones, which causes joint damage. Jumping the hurdle or coming down hard off the A-frame can easily result in a sprain. The wrist and knee are common joints for dogs to sprain. One of the most serious injuries is a torn cranial cruciate ligament (CCL), which connects the bones of the knee.

Assuming the injury is not too severe, you can treat it with rest, and by applying heat or cold. An acute injury is one that flares up quickly, within 24 to 48 hours of the incident that caused it. Acute injuries usually result from a sprain, fall, collision, or other impact, and they can produce sharp sudden pain, tenderness, redness, swelling, skin that feels hot to the touch, and inflammation. Apply cold for acute injuries because it reduces swelling and pain. Because cold restricts circulation and ice left in place for too long can cause complications, wrap any uncovered ice pack in a towel before applying it, remove the ice pack after 10 or 15 minutes, and wait at least two hours before reapplying. Never apply cold treatments just before exercise, workouts, training sessions, or competition. Do not use heat for acute injuries or immediately after exercise.

Chronic injuries are slow to develop, get better and worse, and cause dull pain or soreness. The usual causes of chronic injuries are overuse, arthritis, and acute injuries that were never properly treated. Apply heat to stimulate circulation and help release tight muscles.

If you suspect some severe problem such as a torn ligament, seek veterinary care or your dog's working career may be over.

If your training field is further than 20 or 30 minutes from the closest emergency vet, it might be very worthwhile to send a few people to an emergency first aid class.

Your vet might oblige you by doing this, or you might find a class at a local humane society. In serious cases such as bloat, it might save a dog's life.

## Dehydration

Dehydration in dogs can be very serious, even fatal. The most common symptom of dehydration is the loss of elasticity in the skin. When pulled lightly, the skin will not readily come back to its original place. In more severe cases the gums lose moistness and become dry and sticky, and the saliva becomes thick.

If the dog is not throwing up, mild cases can be treated by giving electrolyte-enhanced waters, so it's good to keep a couple bottles at your training location. Electrolyte enhanced water is water that has electrically charged minerals, or electrolytes, added to it. It's readily available at most grocery stores. Call your vet to discuss the situation. More severe cases require a quick trip to the vet. If your dog's breathing is labored, do not immediately give water, that could result in bloat or torsion. Try to calm the breathing before giving water, and then give ¼ cup, wait 20 minutes, give another ¼ cup. This can be very serious, call the vet to discuss it.

## Bloat and torsion

There are no first-aid remedies for bloat. Get the dog to a vet as quickly as possible. Bloat is one of the leading causes of death in dogs.

Bloat is a common condition that can be dangerous, even deadly. Dogs who have it need treatment right away—even with prompt treatment many dogs with the condition die. Bloat happens when a dog's stomach fills with gas, food, or fluid, making it expand.

The stomach puts pressure on other organs. It can cause dangerous problems, including:

- No blood flow to the heart and stomach lining
- A tear in the wall of the stomach
- Difficulty breathing

In some cases the dog's stomach will rotate or twist, a condition that vets call gastric dilatation volvulus. It traps blood in the stomach and blocks it from returning to the heart and other areas of the body.

## Heatstroke

Heatstroke is a dangerous and potentially fatal condition. If you cannot immediately get your dog to a veterinarian, move it to a shaded area and out of direct sunlight.

Place a cool or cold, wet towel around its neck and head (do not cover your dog's eyes, nose or mouth).

Remove the towel, wring it out, and re-wet it and re-wrap it every few minutes as you cool the animal.

Even better, use a hose to keep water running over the animal's body (especially the abdomen and between the hind legs), and use your hands to massage its legs and sweep the water away as it absorbs the body heat.

Transport the dog to a veterinarian as soon as possible.

## Obstructed airway

One of the most common and dangerous health problems in sport and working dogs is obstructions in the airway, frequently from a toy and especially from a tennis ball. Because tennis balls can compress a bit they can easily become lodged so deep inside of the dog's mouth that you can't get them out - sometimes you can't even see them. In these cases, you must take immediate action to restore the dog's ability to breathe.

If the dog is still standing, place your arms around the dog's stomach and clasp your hands together to make a large "fist" directly behind his ribcage. Thrust your fist firmly and sharply upward and forward and squeeze the ribcage with your arms to compress the lungs and expel the obstruction. Keep the dog's head pointed down and be ready remove the obstruction immediately when it's dislodged.

If the dog is unconscious lay him on his side, and place one of your hands on his back directly above the rear of the rib cage to provide support to push against. Use your other hand to make a fist, and place it on the dog's stomach directly behind the rib cage. Thrust this fist firmly and sharply upwards and forward into the stomach. Watch for the obstruction to become dislodged and remove it immediately. Be prepared to maintain the airway and initiate rescue breathing for the animal if necessary.

Aside from toys, another common natural airway obstruction for an unconscious dog is the tongue. Open the airway by aligning the tongue between the teeth within the mouth and gently pulling it forward to keep it from "bunching up" at the base. Then move the dogs' nose slightly forward and upward into the "sniffing" position. Sweep the dogs mouth to remove any debris, vomit, or other foreign bodies if safe to do so.

In any case of airway obstruction, be aware of the dog's temperature. Because he won't be able to pant to cool off, you may have to treat him for hyperthermia as soon as you restore the airway.

Following any episode of airway obstruction the dog should be taken to a vet for a comprehensive evaluation and to identify any needed follow-up treatment.

## Bleeding (external)

Muzzle your dog.

Press a clean, thick gauze pad over the wound, and keep pressure over the wound with your hand until the blood starts clotting. This will often take several minutes for the clot to be strong enough to stop the bleeding. Instead of checking it every few seconds to see if it has clotted, hold pressure on it for a minimum of 3 minutes and then check it.

If bleeding is severe and on the legs, apply a tourniquet (using an elastic band or gauze) between the wound and the body, and apply a bandage and pressure over the wound. Loosen the tourniquet for 20 seconds every 15-20 minutes. Severe bleeding can quickly be life-threatening—get your animal to a veterinarian immediately if this occurs.



## Fractures

Muzzle your dog.

Gently lay your dog on a flat surface for support.

While transporting your injured dog to a veterinarian, use a stretcher (you can use a board or other firm surface as a stretcher, or use a throw rug or blanket as a sling). If possible, secure the dog to the stretcher (make sure you don't put pressure on the injured area or the animal's chest) for transport—this may be as simple as wrapping a blanket around them.

You can attempt to set the fracture with a homemade splint, but remember that a badly-placed splint may cause more harm than good. If in doubt, it is always best to leave the bandaging and splinting to a veterinarian.

## Impalement

The most common cause of impalement injuries in sport dogs is a sharp stick or other similar object which the dog encounters while running or leaping through tall grass or bushes. Leave the impaled object in place, cutting it off several inches away from the body to free the animal if necessary. Removing an impaled object in the field may cause sudden and life threatening bleeding or, in the case of an object inserted into the patient's chest, a lung collapse.

Since you probably won't know how deep the object goes, carefully stabilize it so it doesn't cause more damage during transport to emergency care. Try to keep the animal calm and comfortable and take him to a vet at once. A light blanket over his head may help keep him calm.





## Poisoning

If you know your dog has consumed something that may be harmful, or if the animal is having seizures, losing consciousness, is unconscious or is having difficulty breathing, telephone your veterinarian, emergency veterinary clinic or the **Animal Poison Control Center hotline (888.426.4435 – available 365 days/year, 24 hours/day)** immediately. There is a fee for the consultation.

If possible, have the following information available:

Breed, age, sex, weight

Symptoms

Name/description of the substance that is in question; the amount the animal was exposed to; and the length of time of the exposure (how long it's been since your dog ate it or was exposed to it).

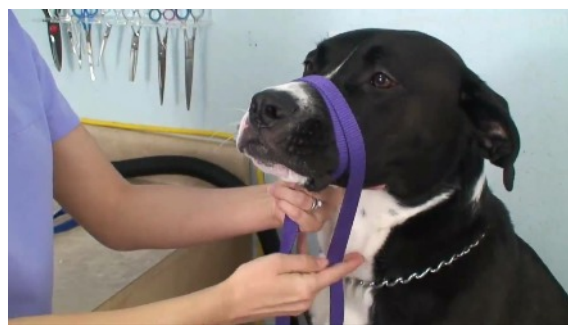
Have the product container/packaging available for reference.



## Improvising a muzzle

In an emergency, you can use the dog's leash to make a muzzle. With the swivel snap still attached to the dog's collar (must be a collar - not a harness) and while holding the collar in one hand, rapidly wrap the leash around the dog's muzzle two or three times. Then pass the leash through the hand holding the collar and around the dogs' neck once or twice, grasping each wrap with the hand holding the collar. Tightly hold the leash while using the free hand (which had previously been used to wrap the leash around the muzzle and neck) to stabilize the dog's head. You have to hold this in place until you can replace it with a commercial muzzle or a more stable improvised muzzle.

You can make a slightly more stable temporary muzzle from a 5'-6' strip of vet-wrap bandage, gauze strip, necktie, leg from a panty hose, etc. In the middle of the material make a loop with a large overhand knot. Place the loop over the dog's muzzle with knot on the top of the nose and pull tight. Pass each end of material down and under the dog's chin and knot again, then bring the ends up over the top of the neck. Pull the material tight enough to keep the dog's head down and secure it in place with a suitable knot. This method is slightly more secure than an emergency leash wrap, you need to watch it to make sure it stays on, especially if the animal is agitated or exhibiting rapid or aggressive movements.



## Transporting a sick or injured animal

When moving or transporting an injured animal, minimize motion of its head, neck, and spine. Unless you know of a specific reason to place the animal in some other position, it's generally best to have the animal on its side, with the head slightly elevated. A flat, firm surface of wood, cardboard, or thick fabric can be used to provide support. Avoid any jerking or thrashing motions, and prevent anything from pushing on the neck or jugular veins.



## Health and Safety

Training directors should require all handlers to certify that their dogs are inoculated against certain canine infections, including rabies, parvo, and DHLPP. In addition, owners should be asked to certify that their dogs are worm free, including heart-worm free. Training directors should ensure the following guidelines are followed during organized group training sessions and DVG sanctioned events:

1. Alcohol and illegal drugs may not be used during any organized training session. Any person under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs may not be allowed to participate in training activities.
  2. When guests and non-members visit an organized club training session, the training director should explain, or appoint a seasoned club member to explain, the sport of IPO, the club's guidelines for conduct at training sessions and these safety rules.
  3. Never leave children alone with dogs, particularly infants and toddlers. Children may believe they are playing with a dog when they are actually provoking it. Even dogs that belong to a child's family may be so excited at training that they inadvertently hurt the child.
  4. The training director should examine the equipment before each training session to insure it is in good shape and suited for the safety of all participants.
  5. All dogs at training sessions should remain on-leash when socializing off the training field. Only two dogs at a time should be allowed off-leash- the dog that is practicing the off-leash obedience phase, excluding the "send-out" exercise, and another dog is on a long down. However, at the discretion of the training director and under precautionary measures, other dogs may be off-leash only for specific instructional and training purposes.
  6. Dogs living in separate households should **never** be allowed to roam freely with each other at a training session. To introduce two dogs, both handlers should walk with them together on leash and under close control. Don't make a fuss about being with another dog. Walk until the dogs seem relaxed about the situation. If either dog starts acting aggressively both handlers should back straight away from each other on leash to prevent a full scale dog fight.
  7. It can be very dangerous to intervene in a dog fight. Generally it is best to stand back and let the fight run its course. If for some reason that is not possible, under no circumstance should any person attempt to physically break up the two dogs.
  8. During the protection practice at a training session, only one dog at a time should be allowed on the training field. All other dogs should be secured in pet carriers or another secured enclosure. If new or young dogs need to watch an experienced dog or if they are to be worked in a protection training group, they should be double collared and held firmly on leash at a safe distance from one another as determined by the training director. No matter how careful you are, inevitably there will be some unfortunate instance at training.
- The LV strongly recommends that each club purchase liability insurance. Contact [DVGinfo62@gmail.com](mailto:DVGinfo62@gmail.com) for information about available carriers.



# Equipment

## Collars

Handlers need several kinds of collars. Training directors should instruct handlers in the proper fit and positioning of each collar type. Emphasize proper placement, high on the dog's neck.

**Flat collars** distribute the force of any leash tension across the widest possible surface area of the dog's neck, resulting in a minimum of corrective force being transmitted to the dog. These collars should be constructed of sturdy nylon or leather, with strong metal buckles. Plastic "snap" type buckles are inappropriate for any type of training collar. Flat collars are the best choice when you expect the dog to pull hard for an extended period.

Flat collars should be worn snug enough to prevent the dog from backing out of the collar, but loose enough to allow totally unrestricted breathing. Generally, if the handler can place two-three fingers under the collar when it is at the highest point on the dog's neck, it is considered appropriately tensioned. Properly sized flat collars will have approximately 1.5 – 3.0 inches of material which passes through the buckle.

**Fur saver collars** are a very broad (large) link slip-chain collar. Supposedly, the large links minimize damage to the animal's neck fur that can be caused by trapping and sawing the hairs within the links of the collar. They are worn in the same manner

as a traditional choke chain, with the live end passing over the top of the dog's neck and pointed directly at the handler.

Properly sized fur saver collars are the smallest length which will fit over the dog's head. Once placed over the dog's head, there should be 2 or 3 inches left when you pull the collar snug but not tight. If there's more, catch a few links in the clip to shorten it so it stays high on the dog's neck. The links of the collar focus all leash tension in a small horizontal area across the dog's neck. Do not allow a dog to pull hard for an extended period on a fur saver. Do not allow a fur saver to be used to give exceptionally forceful corrections. Both can collapse and potentially damage the dog's airway.

**Traditional choke chain collars** are a small link slip-chain collar which rapidly constricts around the animals neck when the handler pulls on the leash, and releases as soon as leash tension is relaxed. It derives its name from the fact the collar tightens around the dog's neck in a choking fashion. They are worn with the live end passing over the top of the dog's neck and pointed directly at the handler. Properly sized choke chain collars are the smallest length which will fit over the dog's head.

**CAUTION NOTE: Use caution with any collar which can catch or snag on kennels or other obstacles, potentially trapping and choking the animal.**



Having the right equipment is very helpful in getting the most out of your training experience. It is always best to purchase quality equipment even though it may cost a bit more in the beginning. If you take good care of it, most of the equipment needed will last a long time. The equipment needed for IPO training can be extensive. This list is designed to assist training directors in suggesting equipment needs to club members. Each club training director may wish to add to but surely not delete any of these items. This is a list of basic starter equipment.

## Leashes

Every handler must provide suitable leashes of the appropriate size, weight and strength relative to the age and power of their dog. These leashes, like all training equipment, must be well maintained and in good repair. Leather is the best material for leashes, because most types of nylon and rope can cause friction burns when they pass rapidly through a handlers hands.

We suggest every handler have a 3-4 foot lead, a 6 foot lead, a short tab, a 10-15 foot long line, and a 33 foot tracking line.

Training directors should inspect leashes periodically to ensure they are in good repair. Poorly maintained leashes may snap during training, with resulting bad consequences for all. Training directors may also need to instruct handlers in how to use the various leashes, especially the appropriate way of holding them to provide a firm anchor when needed, and to avoid getting tangled in them.

## Harness

For many, but not all, dogs, a harness may be preferable to a collar during early phases of protection work. Make sure this is a protection harness that attaches around the belly, over the shoulders, and between the front legs. Not a weight pull, carting, or utility (single chest strap) harness.

## Crate

A crate is essential to contain dogs especially while other dogs are doing protection. Keeping dogs loose in a car with the windows partly open is an invitation to disaster. Training directors should make sure all animals are confined safely.

Crates should:

- Protect the animal from environmental hazards such as direct sunlight and heat in the summer, wind, rain and snow in the winter, and undesired access by snakes, insects, other animals, etc.
- Securely contain the animal during the protection training of other teams.
- Protect the animal from self-injury through inadvertent or aggressive contact with sharp objects, tooth entanglement with metal objects and enclosure components, and ingestion of material secondary to chewing.

## Water and water bowl

Many novice handlers don't realize how important it is to provide water for their dog. Always have water readily available to provide for your dog when appropriate at training. As a note it is not always advisable to provide your dog water during training. When your dog's breathing is excessive or labored, providing water could lead to bloat or torsion. Wait for the dog's breathing to calm down before giving water, and then give just  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup every half hour.



## Training your club's dogs

As training directors you should keep an open mind that each dog is an individual and may be more apt to respond to some training methods than to others. And handlers are not always capable of applying every training method equally. So training used must fit both the dog and the handler.

One of the most significant changes in the sport has been the realization that we can be successful using largely positive training methods. This has been accompanied by a change in the rules to REQUIRE that our dogs work with a happy attitude. The FCI rules, on which the DVG rules are based, require that during all obedience exercises "a happy work ethic and the required concentration must be displayed towards the handler. Attention must be paid (by the judge) to the happy work ethic in conjunction with the correct execution of the work and will be evaluated as such." When this rule first came out, judges simply commented in critiques that dogs did not look happy. But increasingly we are seeing judges lowering scores as much as a full level when they see a dog showing stress. You do not want your club members to spend 18 months or more training their dog, only to lose a good score because their dog does not look happy. You should aspire to learn how to train your club dogs to the highest level of achievement while maintaining a happy and overall positive training environment. There is no doubt that this is harder than the old methods of jerking your dog around and enforcing compliance, but those old methods, which once might have guaranteed good scores, now guarantee unhappy dogs that will not pull down the top scores in trials.

### Basic concepts of IPO training

Three key topics that you should know about are

- drives in the dog,
- how your dog learns to associate the correct behavior with a reward
- how to communicate effectively with the dog.

### Drives in the dog

By drives we mean what motivates a dog's behavior. The concept of drive is an overly-simple way of looking at the causes of a dog's behavior, but nevertheless it is useful in IPO training. With few exceptions, all dogs have the same drives, but they have them to different degrees and in different proportions. It's important for you to understand something about drives because you use the dog's drives in training, and you train differently depending on the individual dog's mix of drives.

The literature on training talks about many different drives, but the ones we are most concerned about are these:

**Pack drive** involves a dog's affinity for humans or other dogs. A dog with a high pack drive cannot get enough of people; does not like to be left alone, wants constant interaction with others. At the other end of the spectrum is the independent dog, who could care less whether you were around or not. Ideally you want a dog to have a moderate amount of pack drive. It's hard to train a dog with very low pack drive because he doesn't care about interacting with you. On the other hand a dog with very high pack drive may be too dependent on your presence to be an effective IPO dog.

Our sport has changed a lot in the last 15-20 years, and we can expect it to keep changing. Even if you are currently having success with your club dogs, you should be learning all you can about training so you are in a better position to adapt to other dogs, and to changes in the sport. Those of us who decline to expand our understanding of dogs and training methods may find in the future that our current skills are not enough to guarantee continued success in the sport.



**Aggression** is related to pack drive, because it is the result of competition over things (territory, food, mates, and so on within the dog's pack.) The goal of the drive is to cause avoidance or submission in the rival, which can include the helper in protection training.

**Prey drive** includes a variety of behaviors such as chasing a toy and chasing a helper. You can see prey drive in a puppy at a very early age. This drive is essential to a successful protection dog-dogs with low prey drive are unlikely to be successful in protection. It's also an important drive in both obedience and in tracking. Prey drive is present to some degree in all dogs, and it tends to diminish as the dog gets tired. There are many aspects to prey drive, including toy drive and possessiveness.

**Play drive** may or may not be distinct from prey drive. Regardless, it is critical to training IPO dogs in obedience. The best way to achieve a dog who is happy in his work is to train with methods that are fun for you and your dog. Through play, you can develop and channel your dog's prey and pack drives so he expects that every time you take him out to "work" he is going to have fun and so are you. You have to put a lot of energy into playing with your dog; you have to be excited and exciting. Your obedience sessions should always look like a game to the dog. Having fun, along with excellent timing in delivering rewards so your dog understands what you want from him and what brings on the fun, will produce a dog who is always up for obedience and performs happily and with great energy.

**Defense and avoidance** may be different aspects of the same drive; a dog's perception of a threat and his willingness to protect himself from the threat. The dog who perceives some aspects of protection training as threatening must be willing to defend himself. In fact, we teach the dog to meet a threatening situation not by running away but by reacting strongly to drive the threat away. If the dog reacts to the training situation with avoidance, he is unlikely to be successful in our sport. Unlike prey drive, defense does not diminish as the dog gets tired. No matter how tired he is, he will still react to a situation he perceives as threatening. Dogs as young as 4 or 5 months can begin to show this drive by barking at strange circumstances, but it rarely develops to its full extent until the dog is 18 to 24 months old and with some dogs not until they are 3 years old.

In protection training, we take a dog who is willing to defend himself (he has defense drive) and teach him that the best defense is a good offense-if he shows strength in response to the threat he will be successful. We gradually increase the threat level, always being careful to let the dog win so we do not push him all the way into avoidance. If you don't stop the threat in time, and the dog goes into avoidance, you will spend months building the dog up again.

However, our ultimate goal is to move the dog beyond a defense-based response to a threatening situation to a state in which he wants to take the fight to the helper simply because he enjoys doing that.

Although a strong **fight drive** is your ultimate goal in training a protection dog in IPO, the literature is very inconsistent in its discussion of this drive. Some people consider it a type of defense; others say it's the interaction of defense and prey. Most acknowledge that dogs with high prey drive are more likely to develop a strong fight drive than are dogs high in defense. In fact, you will occasionally meet a dog with very high prey drive, high fighting drive, and little or no defense.

Regardless of where it comes from, a strong fight drive is the desired end state of your protection training-a dog who engages the helper because it's fun, who (like human athletes engaged in contact sports) ignores obstacles such as stress and pain and focuses solely on the fight. The TSB rating that you get following your protection routine in a trial is an evaluation of your dog's fight drive. Why is it important to understand drives? The drives of a specific dog, at a specific time in his training, affect what methods you should use with him.

Example: A dog is not focusing on the helper in the blind. He is looking around, especially when his handler approaches. How do you stop this? The answer depends on whether the dog is working primarily in defense or in prey. You need to apply some stimulus that the dog does not like to correct the inattention. A dog in defense, because he has some concern about the situation, wants the helper to stay away, to be passive. So try attacking the dog when he looks away. If he really is in defense, he will keep a closer eye on the helper, because he doesn't want to be attacked again. The prey dog, on the other hand, likes to engage the helper. If you attack him when he looks away, he is more likely to look away again, to get you to engage with him. So instead, you pull him back and the helper runs away and hides in another blind for a few seconds. The prey dog does not want the helper to leave, he wants him to stay and engage, so he is more likely to keep a closer eye on the helper the next time.

## Working on drives

There are many different ways of working on individual drives, and the method must suit the dog. All dogs do not react the same way to the same training methods. However, as a generalization, there are traditional ways of working on defense and prey drives in protection.

In most dogs, the helper can bring up the prey drive by running past the dog, as in a run-by bite. Keeping your face turned slightly away is also a prey movement. Working in prey requires fast movement - remember, you are imitating the movement of a dog's prey.

In contrast, working directly into the dog is more likely to bring up defense, as is making and maintaining eye contact as you approach the dog. Slow, deliberate movements are more suitable for working in defense - you act as if you are stalking the dog.

## How a dog learns

You can teach dogs to have both involuntary and voluntary responses. Most of our training involves voluntary responses on the part of the dog, but there are some important involuntary responses.

**Involuntary responses** include drooling, panting, rapid heartbeat, pitch of bark, and so on. For example, you elicit salivation - an involuntary response - by repeatedly associating the tracking line with food on the track. Eventually, the dog will start to salivate when you put on the tracking line. This involuntary response is important in instilling in a dog the desire to track. Research shows that for most mammals it takes about 23 days to develop a conditioned involuntary response- training does not happen overnight!

The most important application of involuntary responses in IPO training is to build a general pleasure response to the training situation. There likely will be occasions in training specific behaviors that the dog will not be happy. Instilling an involuntary pleasure response to the overall training environment will ensure that the dog maintains the positive, happy attitude required by today's IPO rules.

**Voluntary responses** make up the bulk of what we work with in training. The dog learns the behavior because we teach him that the correct response results in some reward that he wants. It takes hundreds of repetitions for the dog to learn associations between his behavior and the reward. And handlers may slow down the process by being inconsistent in what specific behavior they reward.

Because in working with the dog's voluntary responses we want the dog to be trying to figure out what exactly results in the reward, we need to create a training environment in which the dog is not afraid of trying a behavior to see if it's the correct one. That doesn't mean we don't tell him when he's wrong. But we need to do this by showing him that the incorrect response will not lead to a reward - not by dropping a brick on his head.

## Communicating with the dog

Human-dog communication is complex. We'll consider 3 aspects.

**a) Types of reinforcement.** Training consists largely of reinforcing desired behaviors and discouraging undesired ones. We're all familiar with giving the dog a reward for correct behavior - he gets the toy or the food or the sleeve, and correcting him for incorrect behavior-we pop the leash, we nick him with an electric collar. The first is called positive reinforcement and the second is called positive punishment (positive meaning we've added something to his environment). But there are two other types you should recognize, because we do use them in training.

Negative reinforcement means removing something that the dog did not like to get him to repeat a desired behavior. Negative punishment means we've removed something from the dog's environment that he liked, to get him to stop a behavior. The example above of removing a helper from the blind to punish a prey dog who is distracted is an example of negative punishment, as is taking away his toy when he is too distracted by it to work.

**b) Reinforcement schedules.** Research into animal behavior shows that reinforcement schedules are critical to training. In some cases, training a particular exercise might call for starting out with one schedule and switching to another later in the training process.

Continuous Reinforcement. In continuous reinforcement, you reinforce the desired behavior every single time it occurs. This schedule is best used early in the process of training a behavior; it creates a strong association between the behavior and your response (the reinforcement). But it is very easy to extinguish the association based on continuous reinforcement - if you omit the reinforcement just a few times, the association disappears. So once your dog clearly associates the behavior and the reinforcement, you usually switch to a partial reinforcement schedule, which is harder to extinguish.

Partial Reinforcement. In partial reinforcement, you reinforce the dog's response only part of the time. Learned behaviors are acquired more slowly with partial reinforcement, but the response is less likely and slower to fade in the absence of reinforcement.

There are different partial reinforcement schedules, but you will get the highest steady rate of the response you want if you reward after an unpredictable number or responses, so that is the best schedule to follow after the initial teaching phase in which you use continuous reinforcement.

As you train more and more complex behaviors, don't forget to reward all the parts of the behavior, not just the final outcome. IPO handlers are far too likely to reward just the final completed exercise, and as a result the pieces start to fall apart.

Example: If you are teaching a recall with a front and then a finish, randomly reward the dog for starting to come quickly and for sitting in front-don't reward just for the finish. If you reward only the end product, the chain that builds up into that product will start to look sloppy and the dog will perform them less enthusiastically and quickly.

Contrary to common usage, when we talk about negative reinforcement and negative punishment we are talking about taking something out of the dog's environment. Positive reinforcement and punishment means we've added something to the dog's environment.

How often you reward and how you schedule the rewards plays a major role in your dog's learning. Some schedules are more suitable to the initial teaching phase of an exercise, others are more suitable to polishing the behavior.

**c. Markers.** Markers are verbal or other signals that you teach a dog to help you consistently communicate important concepts quickly. There are 3 standard markers that many trainers use.

- 1) A reward marker, such as "yes" or "OK," to tell the dog he has done the right thing and a reward is coming now,
- 2) A continue on marker, such as "good" or "that's it," to tell the dog he is going in the right direction but isn't yet doing it well enough to get a reward,
- 3) A no reward marker, such as "nope," to tell the dog the behavior is incorrect and will never lead to a reward.

All of these should be specific words or signals you have taught your dog. You can also use a fourth marker for those situations where you can tell what your dog is about to do and you don't want him to do it - a "don't even think about it" marker. This can be a signal such as the commonly used "uh-uh" or simply reinforcing the desired behavior - you tell your dog "good platz" when you can tell he's considering getting up. The reward marker is especially important because it serves as a bridge between the dog's correct behavior and a reward. You can say the marker word a lot more quickly than you can deliver an actual reward, especially if the dog is at a distance when he performs a correct behavior. By saying the reward marker and then delivering the reward, the marker becomes first a predictor of a reward and eventually a reward in itself. To teach the association between the marker and the reward, always say the marker before you begin to move to deliver the reward. If you start to move first the dog will learn to associate your movement and the reward, instead of the marker and the reward.

## A brief word about corrections

While there will be some occasions that you need to correct your dog, you should temper corrections reasonably to preserve the happy attitude required by the rules. Be careful to correct only for disobedience - not for mistakes or confusion. Correcting mistakes will create a stressed and depressed attitude. Rather, consider how training might have been inadequate to ensure correct performance of an exercise. Obviously, a handler must understand when the dog is being disobedient, and when he has simply made a mistake. Very often we think that a dog is being disobedient when actually we have changed something in the training environment that has confused the dog. A common example occurs when you introduce the stand in motion and the sit or down, or both, fall apart. Your dog is not being disobedient - yes he knows the word for sit and down, but you have confused him by introducing a new variable. Remedial training is in order, not corrections.

Don't nag. If you do correct your dog, the correction should be strong enough to convince the dog not to repeat the behavior. Many ineffective nagging corrections are harder on the dog than one effective one. But no correction should rise to the level of being harsh.

When administering a correction, consider the state of the dog's drive. Even dogs that really enjoy obedience or tracking are generally not in as high a drive in those phases as they are in protection. Effective corrections in protection may need to be at a higher level than in obedience or tracking. After corrections, provide the dog with an opportunity for a successful behavior, even if it's a small one, which you can reward. Every training session should begin and end on a happy note. With dogs who have already been over-corrected and who have a bad attitude toward training, it may be useful to reward the dog immediately after corrections for a while (without the dog being required to do something you want). This teaches the dog that corrections are good and result in rewards and may repair the attitude of a dog that has been over-corrected.

