

2025



Virtual Trial Companion Guide

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF RALLY OBEDIENCE
EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2025
Version 1.02

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Welcome Virtual Trial Enthusiasts!

Welcome to the 2025 edition of the Virtual Trial Companion Guide.

This Guide has been designed for use in conjunction with the Rally and Working Handbooks. It contains rules for participating in the CARO Virtual Trials and the exceptions to the general rules contained in the main handbooks. **These rules and rule exceptions are for CARO Virtual Trials only. Participants are responsible for knowing all rules related to the CARO Virtual Trials.**

This handbook is effective as of April 1, 2025.

Errors and omissions should be reported to: handbooks@canadianrallyo.ca

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1. General Information

This guide outlines the exceptions to the standard Rally and Working rules specifically for the Virtual Trial.

CARO generally hosts two virtual trials each year, one in the spring and one in the fall. For exact dates please refer to the Calendar on the website.

The CARO website has a page dedicated to the Virtual Trials with everything a participant needs to navigate the trial. A premium is posted on the Virtual Trial page on the website approximately two months before the trial that shows the events, the judges, and how to enter.

Participants are expected to exhibit responsible pet ownership practices when participating in the virtual trials. All relevant municipal bylaws must be followed.

1.1 Eligibility to participate

Females in season are permitted.

1.2 Move Ups

Move ups are allowed and should be identified as a move up your video submission. There is no need to contact the Trial Secretary.

If moving up a competitor may select ANY round in the higher level. For example, if moving up after Novice Round 1, selecting either Advanced Round 1 or Advanced Round 2 is acceptable.

In Working, a competitor may move up to the next level in the same exercise. They may not replace an exercise with a different one.

1.3 Titles

A link to the form for registering titles earned during trials will be available on the Virtual Trial page of the website.

1.4 Ribbons

Ribbons for individual qualifying scores (Q's) or titles normally presented by trial hosts at in-person trials will not be provided.

Participants may procure their own ribbons.

CARO grants permission for the logo to be used in this case.

There are several clubs or trial hosts that will provide ribbons for purchase. The Virtual Trial Facebook group is a good place to connect with them.

2. Rally Excluded Stations

2.1 Excluded station signs

- The following stations will not be used:
- Station #212 & 515 HALT - Stand – Leave for Walk Around
- Station #213 & 516 Return to Heel
- Station #312 & 440 Broad Jump
- Station #313 & 441 Tunnel

3. Working

3.1 Adjustments to rules

If the ring contains different surface materials, each exercise must be performed on a consistent surface. For example, if a ring included both grass and gravel areas, the Back Away exercise may not start with the dog on one surface and have a different surface in the dog box.

3.1.1 Exercise 5: Designated Retrieve

In an in-person trial, the judge would normally place the objects, however in the Virtual Trial it is up to the competitor to place the objects as required. The competitor MAY place the objects before entering the ring to begin the round. Items must be placed in the order listed on the entry form.

Items may be pre-placed prior to your round or during the round by a helper. In this case, skip to Step 3.

Step 1: Placing Dog in Stay

- The competitor places the dog in a stay in the ring.
- The dog can be in any position (Sit/Stand/Down) and may change positions. If the dog changes positions while items are being placed, it will not result in a Not Yet (NY) as long as:
 - The dog does not leave the general location of the stay.
 - The dog does not approach the retrieve items being placed.

Step 2: Placing the Retrieve Items

- While the dog remains in a stay, the handler will place the designated retrieve items in the appropriate locations and in the order listed in the entry form.
- Once the items are placed, the handler may call the dog or return to the dog.

Step 3: The Exercise continues as outlined in the Working Handbook.

3.1.2 **Exercise 10: Scent Discrimination**

While the judge would normally place the objects in an in-person trial, in the Virtual Trial it is up to the competitor to place the objects as required. The following instructions assume the competitor is placing the items themselves; if a helper is placing the objects, they should follow the procedures outlined in the Working Handbook, with the helper acting as the judge.

The competitor MAY place all but the object to be scented before entering the ring to begin the round. Scented article must be placed in the position specified by the judge.

Step 1: Presentation of Article to be Scented

- Before beginning the exercise, the competitor shows the camera the mark/number of the object that will be scented.
- While this confirmation can be done inside the ring, it is usually too far for the judge to see clearly. It is recommended that this be done before entering the ring as exiting the ring during the round is not permitted. The competitor may then carry the object to be scented on their person during the round as long as it remains fully in a pocket.

Step 2: Conducting the Scent Exercise

If the unscented articles are pre-placed:

1. The competitor moves to the handler box with the dog by either
 - collecting the object to be scented while on the way if convenient, or
 - cueing the dog to stay in the sit while the article to be scented is collected, then moving to the handler box with the dog in heel.
2. The dog is then cued to sit in heel position, facing away from where the unscented articles are located.

If the competitor is placing the unscented articles during the exercise:

1. The team moves to the handler box.
 2. The competitor cues the dog to sit in heel position facing away from where the unscented articles will be placed.
 3. The dog is cued to remain in a sit stay while the competitor places the unscented articles appropriately.
 4. The article to be scented is collected and the competitor returns to the handler box and stands in heel with the dog.
- The article is scented.
 - The dog is cued to stay while the competitor places the scented article in the appropriate position.
 - The competitor then returns to the dog and continues the exercise as outlined in the Working Handbook.
 - The dog must stay in the initial sit/stay during this process to pass.

Step 3: Confirming Article

- After completing the scent exercise, the competitor must show the camera that the retrieved scent article is the same one shown at the start.
- If this was the last exercise of the round,

- The competitor should keep the scented item with them while leashing the dog.
- The competitor shows the camera the mark/number of the item confirming it was the same as shown at the start of the round.
- If this was not the last exercise of the round, the competitor should:
 - Clearly place the scented article separate from the unscented articles so the judge can see they have not been mixed.
 - At the end of the round, return to where the scented item was left.
 - Take it out of the ring with the leashed dog and show the camera the mark.
- While this confirmation can be done inside the ring, it is usually too far for the judge to see clearly.

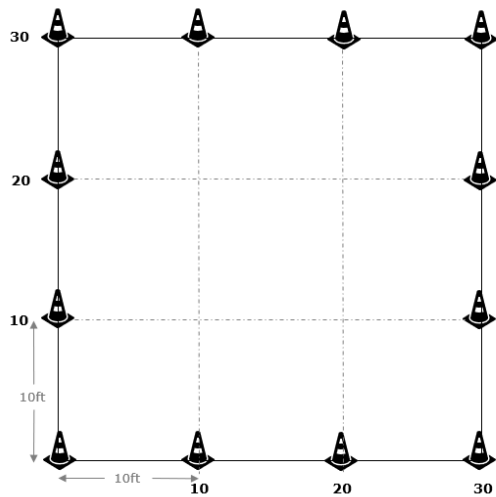
4. General Ring Setup

Ring size is 30 feet x 30 feet.

Ring area must have a prominent marker in each corner and every ten feet along the sides that can be seen easily on the video. There must be 12 markers in total as illustrated below.

There is no requirement for all markers to be identical, corner markers may be different from those used along the side.

All equipment, markers, boxes and/or lines must be clearly visible to the judge.



4.1 Flooring

- Flooring must be a non-slip surface.
- If, in the opinion of the judge, the dog's performance is affected by the surface, the run will be given an NQ or an NY.

4.2 Station Signs

Station signs must be:

- 8.5x11 letter size or half letter size.
- Printed or handwritten.
- Placed on the ground, taped to cones, or in holders.

4.3 Jumps

- Jumps must be constructed in a manner that provides stability and safety for all dogs.
- May be a bar or panel jump or equivalent with a minimum width of 4 feet.
- Jump bars and panels must be displaceable in both directions with cups made of plastic or rubber.
- In cases where the jump has a bar across the bottom which connects the two wings, the bar may not be metal.

4.4 Weave Poles

Weave poles may be those used in agility or similar sport and meet the following criteria:

- Set must consist of 6 poles positioned twenty-four (24) inches apart.
- Poles should be between three (3) and four (4) feet in height.

5. Rally setup

For specific equipment requirements refer to the CARO Rally Handbook.

An equipment and ring setup demonstration can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/zdg5O Putn4>

5.1 Placement of station signs

Station signs should be placed as illustrated on the course maps. The maps are shown on a 10x10 grid for easier alignment.

5.2 Stations with pylons

Weave Once & Weave Twice

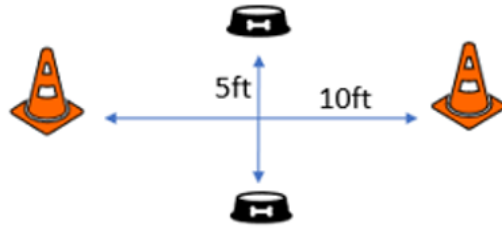


Spirals



5.3 Off-Set Figure 8

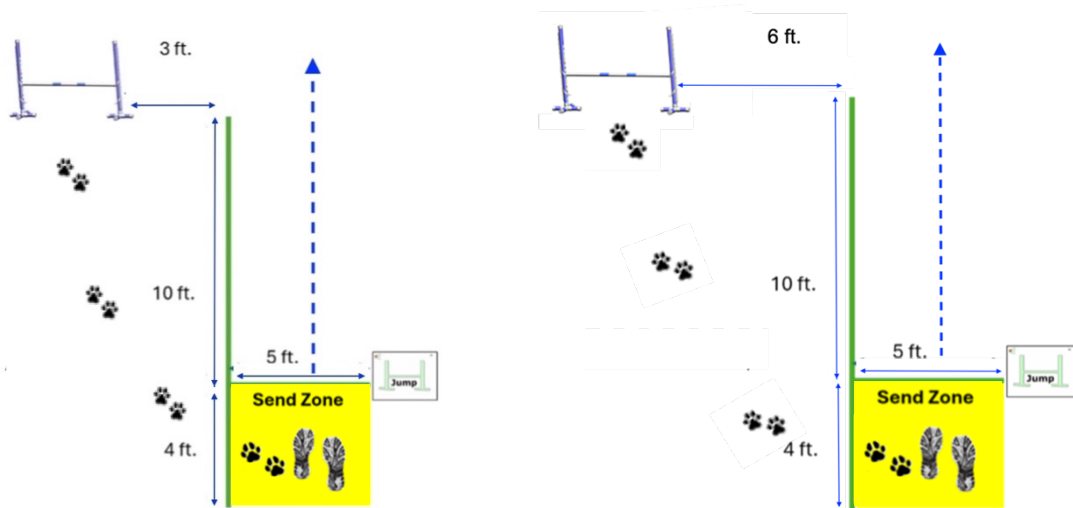
- Food bowls must be securely covered so that the dog cannot access the food.
- Food in the bowls must be tempting to the dog.



5.4 Jump Send Zone

The 10-foot line and the lines for the send zone must be clearly indicated and visible on the video.

The following illustrations assume left sided heeling. Lines are to be placed to the left of the obstacle for right sided heeling.



5.5 Adjustments for Brace

- For the Weave Once, Weave Twice and Spirals increase distance between pylons by 1 foot.
- For the Offset Figure 8 increase both the distance between the food bowls and the distance between the cones by 1 foot.

6. Working Setup

6.1 Station Signs

Station signs are optional.

6.2 Lines and boxes

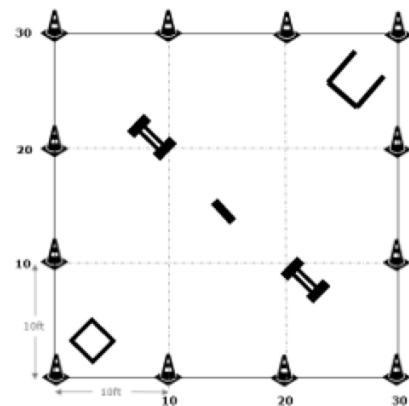
- Dog boxes are 3-sided with the interior measurement approximately 4ft x 4ft. Handler boxes are 4-sided with an interior measurement approximately 2ft x 2ft.
- Lines and boxes may be constructed using tape, pvc, spray paint, or rope secured on all 4 corners or a similar material that is safe to use and is set up to minimize any tripping hazards. Materials must be a minimum width of 0.5 inch to a maximum width of 2 inches.
- For the handler box only - A 2ft x 2ft mat may be used.
- When handler lines are used instead of boxes, they must be 2 feet long. Handler boxes are mandatory for Barrel Racing and Round the clock. For the other exercises either a handler box or line may be used.
- Participants are encouraged to use colours which contrast with the floor.
- Small pylons may be used to mark the 5-foot line in the Back Away exercise.

6.3 Pylons (Barrel Racing & Around the Clock)

- Pylons must be a minimum 18" tall. A pylon of lesser height with an addition that brings the visible height to 18" is permitted.
- Where numbering is required, numbers must be at least 2" in height.

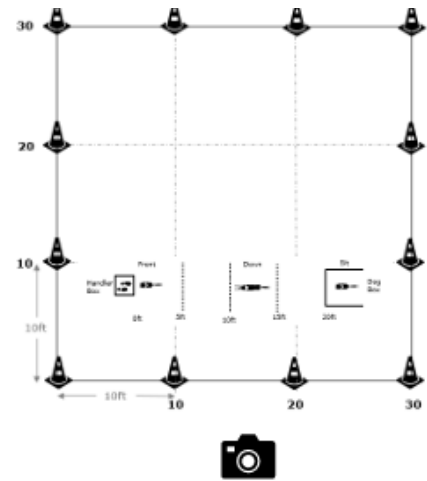
6.4 Exercise set up

- The set up of equipment depends on which exercises have been selected, and it is up to the participant to organize the exercises within the ring.
- The Directed Jumping exercise must be placed diagonally from corner to corner in order to fit the exercise within the 30'x30 ring.
- If both Directed Jumping (DJ) and Retrieve Over Jump (ROJ) are selected one of the Directed Jumping obstacles may be used for the Retrieve over Jump exercise.



- Drop on Recall (Ex 1) and Back Away (Ex 6) must be perpendicular to the camera placement in order to ensure the judge can clearly see the lines and the dog's position. A NY will be assessed for these exercises if the camera is not placed as required.

See the diagram to the right for an example of this setup.



6.5 Equipment Distances & Setup

The distances for each exercise and level are detailed in the Working Handbook.

For any exercise where the distance between the handler box or line and the dog box is indicated, the measurement is taken from the front of the handler's box (or line) to the front of the dog box.

6.5.1 Barrel racing (BR/W3)

- Distance between pylons 1 and 2 is taken from the nearest edge to the nearest edge.
- Distance for pylon 3 is from the nearest edge of the pylon to line between the nearest sides pylon 1 and 2.
- Distance from handler box to the line between the front sides of pylons 1 and 2 is measured from the line to the front edge of the handler box.

6.5.2 Round the Clock (RTC/W7)

- The distances between pylons and handler boxes should be taken from the nearest edge of each pylon to the middle of the handler box.
- The cone numbers should be set so that they face the specified camera location. Cone numbers must be clearly seen in the video.

6.5.3 Directed Jumping (DJ/W4)

- For winged jumps the distance is measured from the upright portion of the wing, not the outside end of the wing.
- Front edge of handler boxes or lines.

6.6 Managing equipment during the run

Cones can be set to the side and moved into or out of position if needed. No additional time is allotted, dog must stay in the ring under control while the ring is being adjusted except for exercises 5 and 10 where the dog must stay in place. A helper can also be used.

Designated Retrieve (Ex 5) and Scent Discrimination (Ex 10) - Handlers may place the items themselves while the dog sits. See section 3.1.1 and 3.1.2

Designated Retrieve (Ex 5) – Items must be placed in the order that they were listed on the entry form.

7. Videos

7.1 General requirements

Videos must be recorded during the period of the trial.

Videos must be clear, stable, and recorded from one stationary position.

- The camera may be on a mount or held by a helper.
- The video may follow the movement of the team but both the dog and the handler must be fully on screen at all times.
- The judge must be able to see the entire ring over the course of the video. Failure to show the entire ring will result in a NQ in Rally or Not Yet for all exercises in Working.

Audio must be turned on and the camera must be placed so the judge can hear the competitor. The use of wireless headphones with a microphone is encouraged for clarity of audio.

Videos and courses may not be shared or posted on social media prior to trial closing date.

7.2 Preparing to record

Confirm the camera angle required by the judge and ensure you are filming from that side of the course.

Check that the full ring and all lines and markers are clearly visible on video.

7.3 While recording

Either before starting, or after finishing the course handler must state:

- The type of collar or harness the dog is wearing.
- The name of the judge and/or the round.

Video must include the team entering and exiting the ring on leash. For Team runs, the video must show both teams entering the ring, and the waiting team in the waiting area and both teams exiting the ring after the run is complete.

Video must include the following timings:

- In Rally rounds, include a minimum of 5 seconds before passing the START stations and a minimum 5 seconds after passing the FINISH station.
- In Working rounds, video must include a minimum of 5 seconds before approaching the first station and at least 5 seconds after ending the final station.

The dog and the handler must stay within the boundaries of the ring from ring entry to ring exit. This includes when the handler moves any equipment or retrieves the leash at the end of the run.

For the Team category the full bodies of both dogs and handlers must always be in the video.

Ensure that anyone near the ring remains silent. Comments coming from off camera may be considered as outside interference and result in an NQ for rally or a Not Yet in Working.

7.4 Editing

No editing of the video is permitted other than to trim the ends to meet the requirements below, or it will result in an NQ/NY for the round:

- A minimum of 5 seconds before passing the START stations and a minimum 5 seconds after passing the FINISH station.
- A minimum of 5 seconds before approaching the first station and at least 5 seconds after ending the final station in Working.

7.5 Submitting videos

- All video submissions are final. Participants are strongly encouraged to verify that they are sending the correct video link prior to submitting it to the judge.
- Upload videos to YouTube (as “Unlisted”) or Vimeo (as “Private”).
- In the submission email include the following information:
- The Level, round number, stream (B or C for Rally, not applicable for Working), dog name, CARO Dog # and handler name and identify if the run is a move-up.
- The link to the video
- Sample: Novice 2, B Stream, Fergus, #6294, Sally Smith. <https://youtu.be/xxxxxx>

Note: For Team submissions – submit one email noting both teams’ information and copying the Team partner.

8. Judging

Videos will be judged within a few days. The judge will email the competitor a copy of their scoresheet.

Judges have set up automated responses to submissions. HOWEVER, some email programs will only send a response for the first email received from a competitor within a given timeframe. For this reason, competitors are not guaranteed to receive an automated response.

9. Results Processing

The virtual trials include multiple rounds of each class. Results are entered into the CARO database in round order.

All results are dated as of the last day of the trial.

A Title Achieved Sheet is provided for each virtual trial. The link to the sheet will be available on the CARO website and premium.

Appendix A - Change Log

Version	Date	Section	Change
V1.01	Apr 26, 2025	Section 6.2	Dimensions of dog and handler boxes added Maximum and minimum width of lines added
		Appendix A	Change log added to document
V1.02	June 7, 2024	Section 4.4	Weave Pole description and dimensions added
		Section 6.5.2	Direction of pylon numbers for Working Exercise 7 (Round the Clock) added.
		Section 1.2	Strengthened wording about notifying judge about move ups.
		Section 5.5	Adjustments for Brace changed from inches to feet to match other measurements.