

Dear hunting dog enthusiasts,

the handler of a dog must verify they have a valid hunting license!

This was established at the AGM in 2015. This means that every dog handler must have a valid hunting license. But this also means that everyone who is in possession of a valid hunting license on the day of a test must also perform all the associated tasks as a dog handler and hunter. This also means that every dog handler must shoot for himself/herself at all test subjects for which a test of gun stability in the field, at the water or other test subjects is necessary. In the VZPO this is clearly stated under § 11/§ 12 (The individual test subjects) (6) Test of gun stability, as well as in § 14 Water work part B. Special part (8) Gun stability. If we now look at the conduct of many tests, in many cases the dog handlers no longer shoot for themselves and thus the requirements of the Test Regulations are not met, or more and more exceptions are made, especially at the water. Certainly, at the water under § 14 (8) gun stability paragraph (b) it is stated "While the dog is swimming towards the duck, the handler or a designated and authorized person shall fire a shot on the water in the direction of the duck", but this does not mean that in almost all tests at present the handlers no longer shoot for themselves. Why is this so? Are our handlers no longer able to shoot next to/behind a dead duck or are the requirements at the individual bodies of water such that only authorized persons are now permitted to shoot at the water? There is some leeway in the VZPO and also in the VGPO/VPSO, where shooting at the appropriate subjects at the water by the handler is not a MUST provision, but we should not flagrantly abuse this leeway and leave the execution only to the Association Judges. So, in the future we need to increasingly ensure again that the dog handlers themselves shoot in all areas, because otherwise I wonder why these people have a hunting license in the first place. Why is someone who has taken a hunter's license test not able to shoot for themselves?

However, this should be observed especially in the field because there it is clearly regulated in the test of gun stability. § 11 (6) Test of gun stability: "**For the test of gun stability, the handler... is required to fire 2 shots...**". There are exceptions only if the handler is not in possession of a valid hunting license, whereby the exception (handling without a hunting license) always applies to only one of the dogs' tests and not to the entire test package (VJP/HZP/VGP/etc.). Exceptions are also made for foreign dog handlers who do not have a hunting license from the country in which the test takes place or in legitimate individual cases. We have to follow a clear line here. The handler must handle the dog only with a valid hunting license and shoot for himself/herself, with only a few exceptions, or if safety cannot be guaranteed. A hunting dog test must not become a sporting event. This regulation should be observed and implemented by all breed and test clubs of the JGHV. It is our duty to lay the foundation for this already during the preparation/training in the handler courses. Here we have to instruct not only the dogs but also our dog handlers appropriately and prepare them for the test. Every handler must be able to handle a firearm along with the dog and fire the shots required by the test subject. Ethical and sportsmanlike hunting is only possible if everything (handler, dog and firearm) is available and used properly.

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(Translation: Ken Bremer)