

The WA Sleddog Sports Association recognizes that the care and welfare of our dogs is of the utmost importance. WASSA will not tolerate any abuse or overworking of any dog. Due to our climate it is advisable to only run your dog/s in temperatures of 15oc or below.

Respect and responsible conduct will ensure our sport continues to have positive representation in our community.

The following could be considered a guide to 'Mushing Etiquette'.

## **DOG ETIQUETTE**

ALWAYS ask permission before patting other peoples dogs and especially when approaching other dogs with your dog(s). Many dogs are very excitable when out running in harness, many are in their family group packs and therefore may not accept strange dogs approaching them.

If you have children, who are most welcome to our events, please make sure they are supervised at all times and do not approach dogs alone and without asking, not all dogs are use to children and an excited dog can easily knock a child over.

It is a good idea to stake your dog(s) away from others so that all dogs have adequate space to move and not encroach on others territory. For the safety of all, dogs should be staked out well away from the tracks and not be able to reach the tracks when on their lines.

Please make sure stakes and lines are well secured and not too long, a short line is all that is needed when staked out. It is best to use a metal line to prevent loose dogs through chewing.

## **KEEP TRAINING AND RACING AREAS CLEAN.**

Please remember to clean up after yourself and your dogs. Taking rubbish home with you ensures that there is no visible impact of our sport on the environment. It is also for the safety of your dogs as well as for future use in these areas.

## **ASK PERMISSION**

If you are training on private land it is a good idea to seek permission first. WASSA has been granted permission to hold Club events in

certain areas so check with a committee member to see where we have been granted access to train. With having very limited areas to run our dogs in Perth we don't want to risk losing such places by upsetting landowners where we don't have permission to run.

## **BE SEEN**

Adequate lighting at night is essential, preferably on both your scooter or rig for trail visibility, on your dogs and also a headlight for when you need to stop and work with your dogs. Be visible from both front and back.

Wearing bright clothing with reflective material is a good idea. These can be in the form of or added to clothing, helmets, vests, jackets, scooters, rigs or wheel valves.

To increase visibility of your dogs, flashing lights can be added to their collars and reflective material added to their harnesses and collars.

## **KEEP CONTROL OF YOUR DOGS**

Always keep your dogs under control. Make sure your dogs are not left loose to roam or harass wildlife or other people using the area. Take along extra handlers if you have a large number of dogs. Your dog's behavior and safety is your responsibility.

It is a good idea to have ID tags on all your dogs in the event of an escape.

## **EQUIPMENT**

It is a good idea to check your equipment before leaving home to prevent problems on the trail. Check ganglines, harnesses, collars, BRAKES, lights and wheels for signs of wear and tear. Make sure nuts and bolts are done up adequately. Have spares just in case.

A quick check before you leave home can save equipment failure or worse, losing your team. Don't forget that you need to be able to safely stop and control your team while on the trail.

Cutters attached safely to your scooter or rig is important. Dogs can get in a tangle quickly and you may need to cut your lines to remove a tangle.

Having a first aid kit (dog and human) is essential; a tool kit with spares is also good to have on hand.

## **TRAIL ETIQUETTE**

When training as a group, discuss your dog's abilities before you head out for a run. Ask people in front of you how their dogs are at being overtaken. Let the people behind you know how your dogs are when being overtaken.

REMEMBER that an OVERTAKING TEAM has right of way. It is best to overtake on the right hand side of the trail where possible. As you approach a team clearly shout, "TRAIL" so that the team ahead is aware of your intention to overtake.

If your dogs can't be passed cleanly you MUST stop your dogs, pull them off to the side of the trail and hold them until the overtaking team has passed.

It is not fair on an overtaking team to have dogs interfering or lunging at them from the team they are trying to pass. Some trails are wide enough for two teams to fit side by side and passing can be done smoothly. Other times it is necessary for you to hold your dogs when being passed by another team.

Practice overtaking and being overtaken with others so that your dog's learn how to do it. Head on passing, while rarely used at our races, is another thing to practice. This can take more time to learn though and patience is the key. DON'T leave overtaking to race time!

Passing is often best practiced after the dogs have had a good run and are tired. Try with smaller teams of 1-2 to start with and even just while walking on lead until they get the idea of ignoring other dogs.

## **EDUCATE AND PROMOTE**

Take time to talk to people when you can, answer questions if asked and always remember you are representing OUR sport of MUSHING when you are out with your dogs.

Any chance to educate people about what we do is great in building solid support for our sport in our community.