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## Trial Helper Certification Under LV/DVG America

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The Trial Helper Certification Program under LV/DVG America has three primary goals:

1. To test dogs in an assertive, fair, and safe manner under the protection rules of the German Kennel Club (VDH)
2. To produce a high level of consistency in testing dogs in the protection phase of a trial
3. To identify those helpers that excel in these areas to work at a championship level.

If the program seems demanding it is because of the necessity of allowing only the best helpers to test our dogs in trials. The hope is that the score will be meaningful and reflect the work which has been performed by the trainer and recognize the natural abilities of the dog. LV/DVG America recognizes the many fine trial helpers in this country and acknowledges the sacrifices they have made for the sport. If our standards are to be maintained then adherence to the following guidelines must not be compromised. It is our intention that all members of the LV recognize the importance of these guidelines and strive to comply for the good of all our sportfriends.

### A. Qualifications for Certification:

1. The Applicant must be a minimum of 18; however, younger applicants, down to age 16 can be certified if written parental consent is given.
2. The applicant must be a DVG member at the time of certification. A current DVG membership card must be presented to the LV/OFS at the time of certification. Further, the applicant must have regularly worked with some schutzhund club as a training helper for a period of one year immediately prior to certification and give a written statement from that club's president at the time of certification. (Proof to be provided via [Appendix I](#) "Application for Trial Helper Certification")
3. The applicant must have a thorough understanding of the protection trial rules for all three phases. The applicant should also have a general knowledge of dog behavior and training principles. There is no requirement that a person has previously trained a dog to any title, schutzhund or otherwise.
4. The applicant must show good physical conditioning and coordination sufficient to carry out the helper's task in an assertive, fair, equitable, consistent, and safe fashion for all dogs in a trial.
5. The applicant must present evidence that he/she has attended three (3) one day seminars conducted for Trial Helper Training. Two of these seminars must have been given by the LV/OFS or a KG/OFS. Two of these seminar days can be either during one period or at separate times. The third day seminar will be given by the LV/OFS at the time of certification. (Proof to be provided via [Appendix I](#) "Application for Trial Helper Certification")
6. The LV/OFS does have the authority to appoint a DVG Judge to conduct a helper certification via joint approval with the LV/LRO. This does not mean that a judge can hold a certification on the same day of a trial. This also means that all other requirements must be met and is previously approved by both the LV/OFS & LV/LRO.

## B. Application for Helper Certification by a Club.

Any DVG club may make application for a helper certification seminar after first obtaining approval by the club's Kreisgruppe Board of Directors and/or the club's KG/OFS. The following conditions shall apply:

1. The maximum number of applicants which may be tested on one day is ten (10). The minimum is four (4).
2. The request for a certification must be made through the LV/OFS at least six (6) weeks before the time of the event. All applicants' names along with [Appendix I](#) "Application for Trial Helper Certification" shall be completed and given to the LV/OFS immediately before the certification seminar begins to determine eligibility. Applicants not presenting this form will not be allowed to participate in the certification test.
3. Only the LV/OFS or DVG/OFS may hold a certification test. Refer to Section A, 6 for exceptions to this rule.
4. The person certifying the applicants shall be entitled to the same rates of compensation and expenses as those given to a trial judge.

## C. Individual Application for Certification

If you wish to attend a helper certification seminar and do not know where they are scheduled, contact your KG/OFS for information on upcoming seminars and certifications in your area. Then follow these procedures:

1. Contact the club responsible for the certification and obtain an application.
2. Complete the application and obtain the signatures of your club president, training director, and KG/OFS for your region on the application. (see [Appendix I](#))
3. Mail your application to the club holding the certification at least three (3) weeks before the certification. This will allow the host club sufficient time to prepare a list of all applicants and application forms for the LV/OFS to insure proper eligibility of all applicants.

## D. The Certification

The helper certification takes one day and is comprised of the following:

1. A discussion of the rules and updates by the LV/OFS.
2. Reviewing the subjects which are part of the written certification test.
3. Trial procedure critiques on the field.
4. A physical conditioning test in which the applicant must run about 400 yards, at a moderate pace, in full protection equipment without showing physical limitations.
5. Work three (3) dogs showing skill and a correct understanding of the rules in SchHund I, II, III. The number of dogs worked and the rules tested will be at the discretion of the LV/OFS.
6. Satisfactorily complete a written test on the trial rules and procedures. The questions for this test will come from this document, [LV/DVG America's Official English Translation of the VDH Trial Rules](#), and any subsequent VDH Rule changes published in LV/DVG America Magazine or [on the web](#) by the LV/LRO and/or LV/OFS.

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** The helper will more often than not be required to provide his/her own protection equipment and a dog capable of performing the bite requirements for a least SchH II level protection work. Do not expect the sponsoring club to provide this for you. If the applicant fails to have the requisite equipment or dog, the LV/OFS shall excuse the applicant. Also have two passport type photos at the time of certification and your DVG Membership Card.

A person who satisfactorily completes the above will receive a "Helfer Sportpass" published by the DHV, which then makes a person eligible to work any DHV trial, subject to the following restrictions. The LV/OFS will classify the helper at one of the three following levels:

Class 1. This helper will be eligible to work in any trial or championship within DVG or DHV.

Class 2. This helper will be eligible to work in any trial or championship at the Kreisgruppe or local club level only.

Class 3. This helper will be eligible to work in any local club trial only.

Normally, a newly certified helper will receive a Class 3 ranking, but this may be upgraded by the LV/OFS as the helper gains experience and is recommended for a higher ranking by trial judges, the KG/OFS and the LV/OFS.

## E. Maintaining Certified Helper Status.

1. A helper must work four (4) dogs in a trial every three (3) years.
2. Attending helper seminars are no longer required, but, strongly recommended because of the ongoing changes in rules and regulations. In the alternative, certified helpers are responsible for reviewing the information published in LV/DVG America Magazine to stay current on rule changes as they occur.
3. A "Helper Sportpass" will automatically expire if the helper's membership in DVG is canceled for any reason. This means the helper will have to go through certification again should they decide to reactivate membership in the future and wish to revalidate their "Helper Sportpass".
4. A "Helper Sportpass" is valid ten (10) years from date of issue, subject to the helper complying with all other qualifications. If he/she decides to maintain certified status with an otherwise valid card he/she must:
  1. Attend and pass a certification seminar.
  2. The prerequisite of two training seminars will be waived
  3. The only exception to this rule is for those who have current LV/OFS or KG/OFS status.

## F. Sanctions.

Any helper who fails to perform at a trial in a fair, equitable, consistent, and safe manner in accordance with the DHV rules may be corrected in accordance with the following:

1. The "Helper Sportpass " may be retrieved by the trial judge under which the helper is working, the KG/OFS or the LV/OFS witnessing the violation. The LV/OFS shall correct the individual helper in a manner consistent with the violation, including suspension or cancellation of the "Helper Sportpass". The trial judge or KG/OFS should retrieve the "Helper Sportpass" and return it to the LV/OFS in the case of a flagrant violation, act, or in the case where it is impossible to adequately judge the dogs protection skills based on the work of the helper. All infractions will be subject to review and final decision by the LV/OFS. The LV/OFS retains the authority to develop a corrective action plan and place conditions on the referenced helper in order to regain or have his/her sportpass reissued.
2. Helper classes may be downgraded from a higher class at the direction of the LV/OFS. These actions will be based upon feedback from judges and KG/OFS's via the Trial Helper Evaluation ([Appendix II](#)) or ([Appendix IIa](#)).

## G. Trial Requirements

1. Helpers are no longer required to be certified to work local trials. However, Germany requires that the level of helper work be of such quality that is expected of a Class 3 helper. If a non-certified helper is used in a trial and can not or will not perform at a level expected of at least a Class 3 certified helper, the trial judge shall excuse that helper. If the host club does not have a competent substitute helper, either certified or uncertified, the trial must be canceled.
2. In order for a helper to have his/her sportpass signed by the judge, he/she must have worked four dogs in that trial (there is no distinction made between two consecutive one day trials and one two day trial).
3. The trial judges are requested to submit a report on all certified helpers that work under that judge ([Appendix II](#)) or ([Appendix IIa](#)). This form is invaluable to the LV/OFS in identifying helpers that are working both above and below standards. It is also used as one mechanism to identify championship helpers.

## H. Helper Equipment

1. Helpers are required to wear complete protection equipment when working a trial. Complete helper equipment consist of protection pants, protection jacket, groin protector, protection sleeve, and proper shoes.
2. Helpers are also required to carry a Trial Helpers Stick as follows:
  1. The outer cover of the stick must be leather.
  2. The SEAM OF THE COVER MUST BE SEWED TO THE INSIDE.
  3. The length shall be a minimum of 60 cm (23 5/8") and maximum of 70 cm (27 1/2")
  4. The inside of the stick should consist of approximately 10 mm (25/64") flexible material (preferably a fiberglass rod) in which the space to the outer skin is padded.
3. LV/DVG America has maintained an exclusion for the jacket if the temperature is over 75 degrees. Below this temperature the jacket must be worn.
4. Complete helper equipment must be worn including jackets at our Championship trials.

## I. Championships

No helper is allowed to work in an LV or KG championship unless he/she is certified. Further, no helper will be allowed to work in the LV championship unless he/she has first worked in another championship. (This could be any type of championship helper work held in a KG or elsewhere under the rules of the VDH)

**\*\*Note\*\* To all Championship Helpers:**

**LV Championship Helpers, for the year they are selected, are not allowed to work any dog(s), SchH I, II, or III, participating in the LV Championship from 12:00 midnight the Sunday prior to the week of the Championship until**