

SITE SELECTION FOR A DALMATIAN ROAD TRIAL

SELECTION

When selecting a site for a Road Trial, look for an area that is *accessible* and *appropriate*. Keep in mind the following requirements:

1. **CART ACCESSIBILITY:** Is the proposed trail cart accessible? The Host must make every effort to find a trail that is cart-accessible. Both carts and horses under saddle must complete the judged exercises on the same course. For the endurance portion of the Trial: if the main trail is not cart-accessible, the Host may designate a separate (shorter) trail for carts. All teams must complete the required distance (a shorter trail means more "loops"). If the Host is unable to secure a site that would be at least partially cart-accessible, then the Host must designate in the Premium List that the course is not cart-accessible, and exhibitors must ride horse under saddle.
2. **AVAILABILITY OF RENTAL HORSES:** How difficult will it be to bring rental horses to the site? The ideal situation is to host a Trial on the trails attached to a commercial rental horse operation. If such a location cannot be secured, how will the rental horses be brought in? Is there ample trailer parking? Are you able to secure a rental horse provider who is willing to haul horses?
3. **TRAILS:** Are there sufficient trails available? The suggested trail length is 6 ¼ miles. This course design allows the mid-point and start/finish vet checks to be at the start of the course. It also saves labor on marking the course. Successful trials have also been run on 3 mile and 12 ½ mile courses.
4. **PERMISSION/PERMITS:** How difficult will it be to secure the required permits, or permission from landowners? Conditional-use permits can be applied for on federal or state lands, but usually require a year or more for approval. Private landowners must give written permission, and may require proof of insurance and/or liability releases. Some cities require permits for any organized activity. Written permission and/or permits should be applied for/requested at least 1 year in advance.
5. **JUDGED EXERCISES:** The five judged exercises (Hock, Hock with Distraction, Stay, Recall, Speed) should be conducted on a mostly flat surface *without too many distractions*. Exhibitors must be allowed ¼ mile of warm-up after leaving the vet check, and before meeting the mounted judge. The RD hock exercise requires two hundred yards, in an approximately straight line. The RDX hock exercise requires a figure 8 for a total of 200 yards. The speed exercise must be level or slightly uphill, with no rocks, potholes, or overhanging obstacles, for 100 yards. The same length of trail may be used for more than one exercise. Does the proposed site offer an area that would meet these minimum requirements?
6. **WATER:** Is water readily available to horses and dogs? Water must be provided for dogs every two miles along the trail. Water should be available for horses at least every 6 miles. Each horse will require a minimum of 20 gallons of water for the day. If water is not available in the form of accessible creeks, you may need to provide buckets and troughs. Will you need to haul water out on the trail? Is the trail accessible to vehicles?

7. **SAFETY:** Horses are easily spooked, especially in an unfamiliar environment. Is the trail "horse-friendly?" Are there road crossings? You will need to provide at least 1 horse-wise steward for every road crossing or bridge. The trail should avoid running alongside a busy road. Keep in mind the safety of the dogs, also.
8. **VET-CHECKS:** Both vet checks will need a table, water, and some shade. Are these available or will you need to haul them? Is the course designed to make the mid-point vet check accessible?
9. **OTHER PROVISIONS:** Where will spectators be located? Are there restroom facilities? Where will un-entered dogs be kenneled? (Un-entered dogs are not allowed on or near any part of the course or the judged exercises.) Is there shade for exhibitors, horses, the distraction dog?