

## Association of Island Obedience Clubs “Fix ‘n Go” Pilot Project

The American Kennel Club (AKC) introduced a new concept called “Fix ‘n Go” on a one year pilot project in 2021 and has since incorporated it into their rules on a “permanent” basis . The Association of Island Obedience Clubs (AIOC) decided to implement a similar trial for one year starting January 1, 2022 based on the AKC model even though it varies from the current Canadian Kennel Club (CKC) Obedience rules which we try to follow as closely as possible.

Based on the results during 2022, the trial was extended to the end of 2023, pending a decision by the CKC as to its inclusion in the next update of the Obedience Trial and Rally Obedience Trial Rules & Regulations effective January 1, 2024.

Change can create anxiety as, like our dogs, we’re all creatures of habit who take comfort in the familiar. To alleviate any anxiety, you might be feeling with respect to this new concept, here are some things to remember.

The “Fix ‘n Go” concept is intended to allow the handler to reattempt an exercise to help their dog while performing in the obedience ring. Under current CKC obedience rules, any attempt to help the dog was considered “training in the ring” and has not been permitted. Such training is to be penalized; however, these penalties have been inconsistently applied by judges and misunderstood by handlers.

Our goal is to bring clarity to what a handler may and may not do during an AIOC Obedience Trial to help their dog to be successful at future events. As we are all guided by the principles of good sportsmanship, we expect our judges to be kind and patient, and our exhibitors to be thoughtful and respectful, while we work together to implement this new procedure.

At the current time, Section 8.13.1 of the CKC Obedience rules state “The judge shall not permit any handler to train any dog or practice any exercise in the ring either before, during or after being judged.” This section will be temporarily replaced in AIOC Obedience Trials with the following:

When the dog’s performance does not meet the handler’s expectation, the handler may choose to use a “Fix ‘n Go” option once, which allows the exhibitor to **immediately** reattempt a single individual exercise. This allows the team to reattempt that one exercise, and then leave the ring. In a two-part exercise, the handler may choose one part to reattempt but **before** attempting the second part. The option cannot be chosen in the Group Exercises.

It is entirely the handler’s responsibility to tell the judge they are choosing to “Fix ‘n Go”. Using the “Fix ‘n Go” option will result in a non-qualifying score (NQ). The handler may begin the reattempt from the start or at any point during the exercise. The judge will call the orders for the reattempted exercise as normal. If a jump needs to be reset, it will be set to the original height.

The handler may choose to help the dog through the “Fix ‘n Go” exercise. Helping the dog may be accomplished using verbal encouragement, including additional commands and praise, and/or approaching the dog in a friendly/positive manner without touching the dog.

Spectators form their opinion of the sport through seeing the action of the handler and the dog. Care must be taken to avoid any action that might reflect poorly on the sport. Harsh verbal and/or physical corrections can not be tolerated. If there is any determination by the judge of harshness, the handler will immediately be excused from the ring.

### In the following circumstances the “Fix ‘n Go” is not used.

- When a dog is not under control and willingly working with its handler, the judge must determine if the team should be excused from the ring. In the process of doing so, judges are reminded to be kind (and handlers are reminded to be respectful of the judge’s decision and kind to their dogs). There is no option for a “Fix ‘n Go” here.
- If the handler corrects or disciplines the dog, the judge must excuse the team. There is no option for a “Fix ‘n Go”. In both cases above, if the team has NQ’d an exercise the judge would write an NQ in the exercise box. If an NQ did not occur but the judge excuses the team, the judge would write Excused. In both cases, an NQ is written in the Total Score box.
- An additional command should be scored according to the *Obedience Regulations*, Section 8.4.6 and does not, in and of itself, require the team to be excused or to not qualify. Only if the team is excused is “Fix ‘n Go” not allowed.
- If the behavior of the dog or handler requires the judge to excuse the team as in Section 8.4.7, the “Fix ‘n Go” is not an option.
- Examination exercises: Deductions will be made for shyness. Any display of fear or nervousness must be penalized. Judges should not entertain the notion of reapproaching a shy dog. The Fix n’ Go is never an option in cases of shyness or aggression.
- The “Fix ‘n Go” option may be used during an individual exercise; it is not allowed in the Pre-Novice, Novice or Open **Group** Exercises.

### Using the “Fix ‘n Go” Option

- The handler must begin an exercise to choose to use the “Fix ‘n Go” option.
- The team does not have to NQ an exercise for the handler to choose to use the “Fix ‘n Go” option.
- If the option is going to be used, the handler must do so before moving onto the next exercise or the second half of a two-part exercise.
- It is entirely the handler’s responsibility to tell the judge they are choosing to “Fix ‘n Go”.
- Once the handler tells the judge they are going to “Fix ‘n Go”, the exercise being reattempted is marked as an NQ and the NQ is carried down to the Total Score box.
- Only one part of a two-part exercise may be reattempted. Two-part exercises are Heel on Leash and Figure Eight, Heel Free and Figure Eight, and Directed Jumping.
- If a jump needs to be reset, it will be set to the original height.
- The handler may begin the reattempt from the start or at any point during the exercise.
- The judge will call the orders, and act as if judging for the reattempted exercise as usual.
- The handler may help the dog using verbal encouragement, including additional commands and praise, and/or approaching the dog in a friendly/positive manner.
- The handler may not touch the dog; the judge should simply release the team at that point if they do.
- Once the reattempt is done, the team immediately leaves the ring.
- Judges are not to revert to “instructor” mode. Leave the training to the handler.
- Exhibitors, please be mindful of your own and your dog’s behavior in the ring. In the process of helping your dog, your actions should not be disruptive to adjacent rings.
- Additionally, competitors will need to be prepared; be ready a couple of dogs before your turn just in case teams before you are choosing to use the “Fix ‘n Go” option.