



# Airedale Terrier Club of America Gun Dog/Gun Dog Excellent Test

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Definitions:** The word “dog” is being used regardless of sex.

**Gun Dog and Gun Dog Excellent (GD/GDX)** refers to a dog who demonstrates instinct for hunting and has received a parent club (ATCA) issued certificate of achievement. Achievement of this award do not count toward American Kennel Club titles.

### **1: Introduction**

This guideline was prepared to provide a clear understanding of the regulations, performance standards, responsibilities, and procedures necessary for conducting a successful Gun Dog evaluation event. There will always be questions that will arise; however, these guidelines attempt to provide a high degree of uniformity between tests and will be reviewed and revised as required.

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Gun Dog Test is to evaluate the abilities of Airedale Terriers and to determine their suitability, with continued training, as hunting companions. The hunting Airedale must find, flush and retrieve birds in a pleasing and efficient manner. The Gun Dog test was conceived out of the desire to encourage activity in training Airedales as hunting dogs.

### **2: General Regulations**

**Eligibility of clubs:** The ATCA Hunting and Field Committee shall be the only authority to grant permission to clubs to hold Gun Dog events. Ideally Gun Dog Gun Dog Excellent events should be held in combination..

**1. Rules applying to registration and discipline:** All rules, standards, administration, sanctioning, etc. shall be administered by the ATCA

**2. Making application:** Any club wishing to hold an approved Gun Dog/Gun Dog Excellent event must make application to the ATCA. Hunting and Field Chairperson at least 60 days prior to the event.

**3. Entry requirements:** The Gun Dog/Gun Dog Excellent test is open to all Airedales registered with the AKC of at least six months of age; in good standing with AKC, and ATCA. who have not achieved any more advanced level of titling (WD, WDX, or any AKC hunt test title).



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4. **Bitches in season:** Bitches in season shall not be eligible for running in a Gun Dog/Gun Dog Excellent test and shall not be allowed on the grounds. The club sponsoring the test is free to formulate its own policy with regard to refunds regarding bitches in season, illness or death of dog.
5. **Judges' Eligibility and Approval:** One judge is sufficient for purposes of this test although two judges may be utilized. Anyone in good standing with the AKC and ATCA may be approved to judge the Gun Dog/Gun Dog Excellent test provided they have read these regulations and have been active in the ATCA Working Dog Program or AKC hunt test program within the last five years of a judging assignment. A request for exception may be made to the ATCA Hunting and Field Chair. The judge need not be a member of ATCA. All judges' panels containing the names, addresses, assignments, and affidavits must be submitted to ATCA Hunting and Field Chairperson with the test records before any dog is recognized as qualifying for a GD or GDX certificate. A judge cannot judge a dog they co-own, own, or trained. Further, they can not judge an immediate family member, as defined by AKC, handling an entry.
6. **Rosettes:** Any club holding a GD/GDX event shall offer GD/GDX rosettes to all qualifying entries. The rosette shall be inscribed with the words "Gun Dog or Gun Dog Excellent and the logo of ATCA. The sponsoring club may, at their discretion, include the sponsoring club logo on the rosette.
7. **Publications:** All clubs holding a GD/GDX test will have available the latest edition of the Gun Dog Test Guidelines which is available from the ATCA Hunting and Field Committee Chairperson.
8. **Training and Correction:** There will be no training or corrections allowed at a Gun Dog test.
9. **Hunt Test Committee:** Any club sponsoring a GD/GDX test shall appoint an event committee made up at least three (3) people including the event secretary. At least three members of the committee or their appointees shall be at the event and shall set up the field (judges may assist); however, judges control the field. The Event Committee shall be responsible for compliance with all applicable rules and regulations and shall have the authority to decide upon any matter arising during the running of the event except those under the sole jurisdiction of the judges.
10. **Premium List:** The event secretary shall be responsible for issuing a premium list that includes the name of the club, location, date, names and addresses of the committee, start time, judges and their addresses, entry fee, and entry closing date. The premium list should be submitted to the ATCA Hunting and Field Committee Chairperson.
11. **Entry Closings and Limits:** The event committee shall be responsible to determine the entry closing date, entry size, and running orders. Entries shall be made on an official ATCA. GD/GDX form that shall include the following certification: "We certify that the



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following dogs qualified for a Gun Dog/Gun Dog Excellent Certificate.”

12. **Catalog:** A formal catalog is not required, but if issued shall be of a format to correspond to the description in the AKC Hunting Test for Flushing Spaniels regulations.

13. **Submission of Records:** At the conclusion of the event, the test secretary shall send all records to the ATCA Hunting and Field Chairperson within 30 days.

14. **Unsportsmanlike conduct:** It shall be deemed unsportsmanlike conduct if any person in connection with a GD/GDX event abuses or harasses a judge, event committee member, or other participant. Any judge or Event Committee member may expel any person displaying unsportsmanlike conduct or is seen kicking, striking, or abusing a dog during the event. The Event Committee shall investigate any alleged unsportsmanlike conduct immediately and after investigation make a determination if the person should be expelled and report such instance with their submission of event records.

15. **Safety:** All persons in the field must wear an item of blaze orange; a hat alone is not considered sufficient blaze orange. It is recommended that all bird planters wear protective eyewear.

16. **Guns:** Only official guns appointed by the Event Committee shall be allowed to shoot over the dogs if live ammunition is utilized. The official gun used shall be a break apart 20 or 12 gauge shotgun. It is strongly recommended that all gunners have attended the AKC Gunners seminar.

17. **Birds:** Only game birds shall be used for the GD/GDX test (pheasant, chukars, pigeons). The Event Committee shall appoint a bird steward to be responsible for the care of all live and dead birds. Dead birds shall be kept out of the general public's eye. Bird planters should wear gloves.

18. **Courses:** The course shall be of sufficient size and cover to allow dogs to be evaluated. The Event Committee shall set up all courses, but it is recommended that judges' input be solicited.

19. **Marshal:** The Event Committee shall appoint a marshal who will assist the judges, control the gallery, manage the entries' test times, and any other responsibilities necessary to keep the event moving in a timely and enjoyable manner.

20. **Scorecards:** The official entry form includes a scoring record, which is accorded a "pass" or "non-qualifying" rating. If more than one judge is utilized, Judges must agree on which dogs qualify. The scoring record shall be available at the end of the event only to the individual handler scored.

21. **Handlers:** Handlers warned three times as being unsafe or unsportsmanlike by the judges may have their dog excused.



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22. **Certificate:** A certificate of achievement shall be issued at the direction of the Hunt Test Chairperson in accordance with the awards policy of the ATCA as to the time for distribution of awards. The certificate shall state “ATCA Gun Dog or Gun Dog Excellent Certificate” and shall include the logo of the ATCA., the full registered name of the dog, the owner of the dog, and the date of issue.

23. **Other:** It is recognized that further definition and refinement will occur as the program progresses.

### 3: Test Procedures/Judges Orientation

#### Overview

The Gun Dog Test (GDT) is a test which allows participants’ dogs the opportunity to demonstrate the abilities expected of a companion hunting dog. While no portion of the test may be failed in order to qualify for the GD or GDX title, the judge should consider the overall performance of the dog to be of greater importance than minor flaws in any one aspect of the test.

#### Standard of Performance

The dog is expected to demonstrate the ability to hunt and locate game, flush it from cover, and to retrieve it to the handler. The dog need not be steady to wing and shot but should be in reasonable control by the handler. The dog should not demonstrate fear of cover or game and should maintain a reasonable working distance. Retrieves do not need to be made to hand.

The dog is expected to be steady at the line, be it land or water; the dog may be restrained gently by the collar or lead. Excessive leaping, lunging, or vocalizing by the dog is undesirable but not grounds for failure.

Handling is ideally done quietly. Dogs that require excessive coaxing to perform any aspect of the test are demonstrating a lack of those abilities required on a hunt.

Dogs will be given the opportunity to find, flush, and retrieve two birds from land and to make one marked retrieve from the water.

Demonstration of natural abilities is to be regarded with greater importance than trained abilities for the GDT tests.

A dog worthy of a GDX should demonstrate a level of enthusiasm, skill and control as would be expected of a dog with a greater degree of experience and training.

#### Description of the test:



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1. The dog's nose will be judged primarily during the search for a bird. The young dog who investigates other scents, including old game bird scent, shall not be penalized as this is part of the learning process so long as the handler is able to redirect the dog within a reasonable amount of time not to exceed 5 minutes.
  - a. A bird shall be planted a distance not to exceed 30 yards nor closer than 10 yards in sufficient cover. The field set up shall mimic a hunt test with gunners to either side.
  - b. The handler shall walk the dog toward the area of the plant off-lead and should demonstrate reasonable control off-lead.
  - c. The handler may encourage the dog to find the bird at all times.
  - d. This test may be repeated twice to give the dog sufficient opportunity to demonstrate desire to use the nose and flush.
  - e. **The dog shall be considered successful** when it is obvious to the judges that the dog is searching deliberately and showing a desire to use the nose to investigate the source of the scent.
2. The range at which the young flushing dog flushes is of no consequence. However, flushing attitude will be evaluated in this test. The dog must flush quickly and cleanly. A slight hesitation, in keeping with the hunting description of the Airedale Terrier breed is allowable.
  - a. A GD test may opt to use no live ammunition. However, if live ammunition is utilized, a shot will not be fired when the bird is flushed, except on express permission of the owner who certifies that the dog has been exposed to gunfire previously as a test event is not the time to introduce the dog to being shot over. This certification shall be evident on the entry form and the judges will so inform the gunners prior to the test of the dog. If a shot is fired, the intent shall be for the gunner to bring down the bird and this shall be considered a sufficient test of the dog's tolerance to gunfire. A dog at the GD level shall not be penalized for reasonable time to come back to the handler should the bird fly away.
  - b. Gunners shall flag the young dog back and forth in a standard three-man drill training exercise and the dog shall be worked into the general area of the bird.
  - c. **The dog shall be considered successful** if showing a desire to flush by the manner in which the dog goes in to investigate the scent. A dog that momentarily leaves the immediate area of the bird and then returns to flush shall not be downgraded although deliberate blinking of the bird shall not be considered qualifying. Should the dog trap and retrieve the bird, this may be considered sufficient to demonstrate retrieving and mouth (see point 3).
3. **Retrieving & mouth:** The dog must demonstrate a strong retrieving instinct and a soft mouth in handling the retrieve. Line steadiness is not required and the dog may be gently restrained by the collar. A standard canvas bumper with bird wings attached will be utilized to evaluate willingness to retrieve and mouth. A dead bird may be substituted for the winged bumper at the discretion of the handler as some dogs, once introduced to birds, may no longer desire a bumper.



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- a. The judge or assistant will show the dog the bumper and will throw the bumper (or dead bird) to a distance not to exceed 10 yards nor closer than 5 yards.
  - b. The handler may encourage the dog to retrieve.
  - c. **The dog shall be considered successful** if the dog picks up the winged bumper and carries it at least a distance of approximately 5 feet or sufficient distance that the judge is clearly able to determine the dog's willingness to retrieve. The dog need not return completely to the handler with the bumper, though this is encouraged. A tendency of the dog to damage the bird/bumper shall be a serious downgrade to the point of non-qualification. The judge shall examine the bird or bumper if there is a question regarding mouth and shall demonstrate to the handler that damage has occurred.
4. **Gunfire Tolerance:** A shotgun (or starter pistol if the test uses no live ammunition for the GD test) will be fired at a distance not to be closer than 30 yards, nor farther than 60 yards. At the same time, a bird/winged bumper will be thrown. The dog may be shown the bird/winged bumper and enticed with it before the throw.
- a. The handler shall advance toward the thrown bird/winged bumper with the dog off lead.
  - b. **The dog will be considered successful** if staying its' ground for the shot and being willing to go toward the thrown bird/bumper. A slight startle is acceptable provided the dog does not run away from the noise of the shot or show other behaviors indicative of gun-shyness. Handler encouragement is permissible and desirable.
5. **Desire:** The dog must show a willingness to work and interact with the handler and find birds at all times. This is best shown by the dog's attitude, more than by his speed, range or the completion of a given task. Desire will be judged in all phases of the test.
6. **Cooperation:** Cooperation is the innate willingness that a dog has to work with and to please his handler. For example, a chase of a bird during the flushing evaluation provides an excellent opportunity to judge both desire and cooperation in relation to one another. Cooperation will be judged during all phases of the test and reasonable control of the dog off-lead without excessive hacking is expected.
7. **Water Ability:** The handler and dog will be at the water, a distance of no more than 6 feet from the water's edge. The dog shall be under reasonable control but need not be steady. The handler shall throw a winged bumper and command the dog to retrieve it from the water. The bumper shall travel a distance sufficient that the dog shall demonstrate ability to enter water and swim. The dog may be shown the bird/bumper and enticed with it before the throw. At the handler's option, another individual may throw the bumper on the handler's ready signal. This individual will remain perfectly quiet and shall not provide additional encouragement or commands. **The dog will be considered successful** if entering the water willingly and demonstrating swimming ability. The bumper need not be retrieved as the purpose of this test is to demonstrate water entrance ability and swimming ability. Handler encouragement is permissible and



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desirable, but repeated commands and avoidance of entering the water may be downgraded to the point of nonqualification. A pick-up dog shall be at the ready to retrieve the thrown bumper.

### GD/GDX Test Elements and Scoring

**STEADY ON LINE – LAND:** At the start the dog should sit and stay unleashed beside the handler for a short time until the judge instructs the handler to proceed.

- **Satisfactory** score, the dog should make no more than minor movements.
- **Excellent:** The dog stays in place quietly with a minimum of commands until released by the handler.
- **Poor:** The dog fails to stay and can't be immediately brought back under control, and/or whines and barks excessively.

**DOG UNDER HANDLER'S CONTROL:** At the judge's instruction the handler "sends" the dog and walks behind the dog on the course as necessary.

- **Satisfactory:** The dog shows fairly reasonable, not necessarily immediate response to whistle and/or command.
- **Excellent:** The dog demonstrates superlative responsiveness to the handler with a minimum of direction.
- **Poor:** The dog is out of control, continually running out of gun range or constantly ignoring commands.

### COVERS GROUND IN A WORKMAN-LIKE MANNER:

- **Satisfactory** score, the dog should demonstrate a reasonable quartering of the field, use of wind and sufficient hunting desire to search in cover and seek game in a workman-like manner.
- **Excellent:** The dog performs with enthusiasm, covering the field thoroughly and in a superlative manner.
- **Poor:** The dog shows evidence of "pottering" or requires undue urging to hunt. Barking while quartering is objectionable.

### FINDS AND FLUSHES BIRDS:

- **Satisfactory** score, the dog should have sufficient hunting and scenting ability (nose) to independently find and put up game without undue urging.
- **Excellent:** The dog performs this with enthusiasm and in a superlative manner
- **Poor:** The dog displays lack of nose, requires extensive urging to flush or avoidance of the bird.

**MARKS AND RETRIEVES BIRDS:** Dogs are not required to be steady to flush or shot.

- **Satisfactory** score, the dog should mark the fall of game and retrieve it to within the close proximity of the handler (within a couple of steps). The handler may direct the dog to the fall if the dog has not marked it due to a reasonable circumstance.



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- **Excellent:** The dog marks well, retrieves the bird enthusiastically and delivers it to hand.
- **Poor:** The dog refuses to retrieve or require excessive urging.

**STEADY ON LINE – WATER:** Dogs should not go into the water to retrieve until sent by the handler.

- **Satisfactory** score, the dog may be held on leash by the handler or by collar until the judge directs the handler to send the dog.
- **Excellent** score, the dog must be line steady (sit and stay unleashed beside the handler).
- **Poor:** The dog struggles against being gently restrained by leash or collar, or if unleashed, the dog fails to stay until commanded to retrieve.

**RETRIEVES BIRD FROM WATER:**

- **Satisfactory** score, the dog should mark the fall of the bird, enter the water and swim without undue urging to retrieve the bird out of the water within close proximity of the handler (within a couple of steps).
- **Excellent:** The dog marks well and retrieves the bird enthusiastically to the hand of the handler.
- **Poor:** The dog refuses to swim, refuses to retrieve or requires excessive urging.

**NO DISPLAY OF GUNSHYNESS:**

- **Satisfactory** score, the dog should display enough hunting desire that he shows little reaction to gun shots.
- **Excellent:** The dog has such intense desire that it takes no notice of the gun, or it even increases his willingness and enthusiasm to retrieve and hunt.
- **Poor:** The dog displays a shy or fearful reaction to the gun.

**NOTE:** “Hardmouth” is a serious fault. If a dog delivers a damaged bird – meaning chewed or crushed by the dog (not damaged by gunshot) such that it is either not suitable for the table or it cannot be used in a training session for another dog, he will not qualify, even if it has fulfilled all other test requirements.



## Airedale Terrier Club of America Gun Dog/Gun Dog Excellent Certificate Event Entry Form/Judges Scorecard

Name of Dog: \_\_\_\_\_ Breed: **Airedale Terrier**  
 AKC # \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ Call Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sire: \_\_\_\_\_ Dam: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Owner: \_\_\_\_\_ Handler: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Test offered by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Test Location \_\_\_\_\_ Judge \_\_\_\_\_ Judge \_\_\_\_\_  
 Test Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Chair's address \_\_\_\_\_

Certification as to experience of dog with gunshot: unless authorized, the dog shall NOT be shot over on the flush evaluation and only a starter pistol or shotgun with popper rounds shall be used for evaluation of tolerance for gunfire. This dog has been shot over and live ammunition is authorized by the handler. Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### JUDGES REPORT

**Instructions: place an "X" in the appropriate box. Sign completed form & return as indicated below**

Excellent	Satisfactory	Failed	Test Component
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>STEADY ON THE LINE:</u> Sits with handler until ordered to seek game. Any physical restraint of the dog must be gentle prohibits award of the Excellent mark
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>QUARTERS EFFICIENTLY:</u> Covers ground in a workmanlike manner within gun range, displaying scenting ability and use of the wind. Barking while quartering is objectionable.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>FINDS AND FLUSHES BIRD:</u> Flushes without urging
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>MARKS DOWNED BIRD:</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>RETRIEVES ON LAND:</u> Finds and picks up bird, returning briskly to handler
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>RETRIEVES FROM WATER:</u> Voluntarily enters the water, swims to the bird and returns to handler
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>DOES NOT DISPLAY GUN SHYNESS:</u>

### Final Judgement

Not Qualified	Reason	Quali- fied	Level of Qualification
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hard-Mouthed. Delivered Dam- aged (chewed/ crushed bird)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>GUN DOG (GD) CERTIFICATE</b> Dog displayed behavior which would make him a satisfactory companion hunter during a day in the field. He worked within gun range of the handler, was under reasonable control and was never a nuisance. Dog can find, flush, retrieve birds from land and water, and does not display gun shyness or hard mouth.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Did not receive at least satisfactory score in each area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>GUN DOG EXCELLENT (GDX) CERTIFICATE.</b> Dog displayed all of the above qualities, but in a superlative manner. Dog must deliver to hand on all retrieves, and be steady on the line without restraints for both land and water.

Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_  
Judge # 1
Judge # 2

This entry form/judging sheet, signed by the judge (s) should be mailed to:  
 ATCA Hunt Test Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

One copy: Sent to ATCA Hunt Test Chair

One Copy : To be retained by the owner/handler of the dog