

Before You Visit An AKC Dog Show

Advance Planning Makes Your Dog Show Experience Better

Dog shows can be confusing for first time visitors; be well prepared and enjoy your dog show visit.

What To Expect At An AKC Dog Show

The term dog show in AKC terms, means competition in conformation, which judges how dogs conform to their breed's standard of perfection. This is the type of show competition most often televised on cable television, where beautifully groomed dogs are examined carefully and moved by handlers affecting a distinctive, almost slow motion running gait.

AKC Performance Events – Obedience, Rally, and Agility Trials

There are other kinds of AKC events referred to as Obedience, Rally or Agility trials where dog and handler teams perform specific exercises where they are scored on their performance rather than their looks. Agility trials are also televised; these are the competitions where dogs race around a timed course with jumps, tunnels, ramps and weave poles. Obedience competition is very structured and requires the dog to work with their handler with very little direction; Rally is a less formal style of obedience competition where handlers are allowed to talk and signal to their dogs throughout the performance.

Locating An AKC Dog Event

Sometimes local media will announce upcoming dog shows and trials, but smaller shows do not always benefit from advance publicity. A great source for finding shows is MB-F's Infodog website; they post show information by date and by state for shows throughout the USA. Codes next to each club's name indicate which competitions will be held on a specific date and location.

Plan Your Day At The Dog Show

Most shows are unbenched, which means dogs are only required to be on site while they are competing. If you are interested in seeing a particular breed, this means it is important to find out if any dogs of that breed are entered, and when and where they will be shown. When you look up show information, look for a contact person and ask to talk to someone who has the show's judging schedule with information for the breed(s) of interest. If you are primarily interested in a trial, the schedule is published by competition class, rather than by breed.

When To Arrive At The Dog Show

It's best to plan on arriving at least an hour before the breed or event you want to see will start. This allows you plenty of time to park, get through the gate, and locate the ring and even the grooming area where the dogs you want to see are located. The ONLY time at an unbenched show that specific dogs are required to be in a specific place at a specific time is when they are being shown, so it is essential to locate the right ring and be there before judging starts. Most and sometimes all the

dogs of a particular breed will leave after being shown, so if seeing a specific breed or competition is important to you don't be late!

What To Bring To The Dog Show

When you talk to the club or superintendent about the schedule, ask if there are any items not allowed at the site, for example some shows do not allow strollers. Ask if there is seating for spectators. If you don't want to stand for long periods, you may want to bring a portable chair. AKC shows do not allow un-entered dogs on the grounds, so leave your pets at home. Wear comfortable shoes and avoid clothes that will show hair, be damaged by a dusty footprint or that might dangle into dogs' faces. Clothing with fur trim can also be a great temptation to dogs and should be avoided. At an outdoor show, dress for the weather; it never hurts to throw an umbrella, some sunscreen and a jacket in the car!

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