

**FCI RULES FOR THE WORKING TEST FOR
LIVESTOCK GUARDIAN DOGS
(FCI-GWT)**

(for livestock guardian and herding dog breeds)



June 1st, 2023

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N.B.: Terms referring to natural persons are applicable to both genders and numbers.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The FCI RULES FOR WORKING TEST FOR LIVESTOCK GUARDIAN DOGS (FCI-GWT) is an international test and is carried out in order to preserve the characteristics related to the ability to protect livestock and human properties and obtain its aptitude through the work of many guardian dog generations on livestock animals.
- 1.2. The purpose of the FCI-GWT rules is to assess and demonstrate both hereditary and trained behaviours that are considered desirable for preserving the working skills of livestock guardian and herding dogs living in a civilized environment. The FCI-GWT is to demonstrate the main common features and characteristics of the various livestock guardian and herding dogs and to attest that they are in a suitable working condition, including
 - sociability towards people and animals,
 - the will of obedience to the handler,
 - and if required, the protection of the territory, livestock and the handler.

The test could serve as a useful tool in preserving the unique qualities of livestock guardian and herding dogs.

- 1.3. The breeds eligible for participating in the FCI-GWT have very different backgrounds. Some breeds evolved in livestock protecting as single work, others had to take care of the farm properties or even work with sheep.
- 1.4. Sometimes there was a daily contact with the farmer/shepherd or sometimes these dogs would live alone with the livestock to take care of them as single work. The sheep have no fear of humans or dogs, they just respect them. The sheep trust their shepherd and his dogs.
- 1.5. In the FCI-GWT the dogs have to prove that they have the basics to become a livestock protecting dog. The task of the dog is to respect humans and other dogs, but in a dangerous situation they have to prove their braveness and protect the livestock and the handler or his property. When the danger is over they must be relaxed again.

2. GENERAL CONDITIONS

- 2.1. The main principles of evaluation and admission of the dogs to the FCI-GWT are to be found in the "GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR THE ORGANISATION OF FCI HERDING EVENTS (FCI-NHAT – FCI-HWT – FCI-IHT)", with these completions:
 - the dogs must be 18 months or older at the time of testing,
 - article 7.5. is not relevant, the dog can wear the necessary equipment during the test,
 - the handler can touch the dog, but not reward it during the test,
 - the test must be judged by herding judges with experience in guarding work.
- 2.2. The dog must have a successful FCI RULES FOR LIVESTOCK GUARDIAN DOGS NATURAL APTITUDE TEST "FCI NGAT".
- 2.3. The FCI-GWT must be recognised by all FCI members and contract partners.

- 2.4. Dogs that have successfully passed the FCI-GWT are allowed to compete in the working class at international FCI-CACIB shows only upon approval by the FCI. The list of the breeds involved is available in the Lists of Herding and Livestock Guardian dog breeds that can take part in FCI events and receive FCI titles and awards.
- 2.5. The test does not certify the reliability and safety towards people not known by the dog.

3. SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

3.1. Area and its equipment

The area and its equipment must be in relation to the number of livestock animals used during the test.

- 3.1.1. **Area** – a surface of 40 x 80 meters at least, preferably even larger; it may be with natural barriers such as trees, but clearly framed. Fencing is recommended, but the border can be natural or artificial.
- 3.1.2. **People with dogs** – at least 2 handlers with calm dogs of a different breed are needed for the test.
- 3.1.3. **Pen** – with a perimeter of at least 24 meters (the shape is not prescribed, it may be oval, square or rectangular), with a gate of at least 2 meters wide, ideally on hinges and with functional protection against opening by the sheep or by the dog. The gate post must be strong enough to tie a dog there.
- 3.1.4. **Special equipment**
 - 1 **long leash** – an at least 6-meter long high-tensile leash is an important equipment for the test.
 - 2 **hiding spots** – the triangle form hiding tents are preferred.
 - 1 **spring chain** – a 5-meter tie-out chain with springs. No choke chains are allowed during the exercises. Dogs must wear collars of strong material or harnesses that they cannot get out of.
 - 1 **article** – as for example a common umbrella or a bicycle.
 - 1 **noise box** filled with bolts or pebbles.

3.2. Helpers

- 3.2.1. There is a need of at least 2 helpers, out of them at least one trained guard dog assistant. The other person is an assisting person who is familiar to the dog.
- 3.2.2. The helper is an assistant to the judge. He or she works following the judge's instructions and the regulations. The helper should aim to perform during the test so that the dogs can be properly evaluated. The actions presented should be like in real life.
- 3.2.3. In order to protect the health of the helper and to meet safety requirements, wearing protective gear is mandatory. (Sleeves, scratch pants, protective vest, jockstrap, gloves, or a complete set of modern protective clothing that offers protection against bites on the entire body)
- 3.2.4. The helper's footwear should be suited to the weather and the ground surfaces involved, should be non-slip and should afford easy motion.
- 3.2.5. The helper should take good care of his health (both somatic and mental).
- 3.2.6. The helper must not cause pain to the dog. When the "out" signal is given, the helper should immediately stop its attack and stand motionless.

3.3. Number of livestock animals

- 3.3.1. The flock for each run must consist of a minimum of 10 sheep/goat or 4 horses/cattle.
- 3.3.2. Livestock used during the test must be used to dogs and should not react to them by fleeing.
- 3.3.3. The total number of the competing teams must be limited by the organizer in view of the total number of the animals available, with respect to the requirements on arranging the animals' welfare.

3.4. General considerations of guard dog exercises

- 3.4.1. When the helper attacks, the dog should act bravely, purposefully and without fear.
- 3.4.2. Evaluation of behaviour during the grip: the unique characteristics of individual breeds must be taken into account.
- 3.4.3. Maximum score should be given to dogs that bark before the attack, defending by using his calmness and immediately letting go on the handler's command.
- 3.4.4. If the dog is brave, energetic and confident but does not grip, its performance can still be considered very good.
- 3.4.5. Evaluation of the release: If the dog fails to let go of the attacker even after a second voice signal from its handler, the judge can allow or instruct the handler to give a third signal to release the grip. If the dog continues to maintain the grip, the dog must be removed by the handler. The judge immediately stops the test and the offender is barred from further work. The test must be considered failed due to disobedience. "Disqualified for disobedience" should be entered in the score sheet, and all previously accumulated points are cancelled.
- 3.4.6. The use of a collar is mandatory. It should be of sufficient quality to prevent the dog from escaping it. Choke and prong collars as well as electric collars are banned from the event. Using choke chains is not allowed.
- 3.4.7. The use of harness is allowed during the guard dog exercises and the behaviour test with other animals. The harness cannot contain or hold accessories or tools that provide an unfair advantage.

3.5. Time

- 3.5.1. The judge decides and tells at the briefing, how much time is given for the tasks, which will be the same for all dogs.

4. EXERCISES

4.1. Basic task

4.1.1. Unknown person

Purpose: Check the behaviour when encountering an unknown person.

Description: The judge enters the designated area before the dog arrives. The handler walks the dog in an open area for about a minute. The dog is on a leash (use of a 2-meter training leash is recommended). After a minute, a person wearing normal street clothes whom the dog does not know appears when called by the judge and calmly walks towards handler and dog. The person stops a meter or two from the dog and starts talking to the handler in a calm and friendly manner. The judge then gives a signal and the person leaves the area.

The dog should be indifferent or naturally trustful, friendly to people, attentive, curious, interested, calm, confident. It can also display a defensive, distrustful behaviour, which should not be considered a fault if the dog immediately relaxes when the handler instructs it so and can be lead and controlled.

If the dog displays a somewhat distrustful or defensive behaviour but immediately calms when so instructed and can be lead and controlled, it should be considered a minor fault and the score should be reduced according to the severity of the misconduct.

If a dog backs away or is uneasy or slightly upset but is not afraid of the person, its performance should be considered acceptable but the score should be reduced according to the severity of the misconduct.

Serious mistakes: If the dog attempts to go wide to the unknown person; displays insecure or timid behaviour; attempts to flee, tries to escape, or is wandering aimlessly; becomes aggressive and difficult to handle and control or attempts to bite out of fear, the performance is insufficient.

4.1.2. **Leash work**

Purpose: Check the dog's cooperation on the leash with handler.

Description: The handler enters the designated starting position with the dog. The exercise begins on the judge's signal. After taking 30 regular steps, the handler must demonstrate first a right turn, then a left turn. After turning, at least five steps must be taken in the new direction. The handler and dog then take regular steps towards the starting point, followed by new speed steps, then proceed back to the starting point at normal pace.

The dog should be attentive and cooperative and should follow its handler. The leash should be loose at all times. It is to be appreciated if the dog focuses on the handler and performs a lively exercise in a good manner.

Serious mistakes: It is a fault if the leash is tight and the dog is pulling or is lagging behind. For smaller deviations forward, behind or to the sides, points should be deducted in proportion with the fault.

4.1.3. **Group of people**

Purpose: Behaviour of the dog in an irregularly moving group of 4 or 5 people, who subsequently surround the dog completely.

Description: On the same grounds as in the first exercise, the handler leads the dog through a group of four or five people who are moving irregularly, then turns and heads back through the group again. Members of the group should be roughly two or three steps apart. On the judge's signal, the handler then stops in the middle of the group for about 3 seconds. The dog can be in any position right next to the handler. The dog should be indifferent to the people in the group. It should be alert, calm, confident and should cooperate with its handler. When the group closes around the dog, it should remain indifferent to people.

If the dog displays a somewhat distrustful or defensive behaviour but immediately calms down when so instructed and can be lead and controlled, it should be considered a minor fault and the score should be reduced according to the severity of the misconduct.

If a dog backs away or is uneasy or slightly upset but is not afraid, its performance should be considered acceptable but the score should be reduced according to the severity of the misconduct.

Serious mistakes: If the dog attempts to get away to the unknown people; displays insecure or timid behaviour; attempts to flee, leave the course, or is wandering aimlessly; or becomes aggressive and difficult to control, the performance is insufficient.

If the dog attempts to flee, displays signs of panic or becomes aggressive and uncontrollable, the performance must be stopped.

4.1.4. **Contact with other dogs.**

Purpose: Behaviour among other dogs

Description: The handler leads the dog on a leash at a normal pace between two people standing facing each other, each holding a dog. The judge tells the route and distance what the handler and the dog must follow. The dog should be indifferent to both people and the other dogs.

If a dog backs away or is uneasy or slightly upset but is not afraid, its performance should be considered acceptable but the score should be reduced according to the severity of the misconduct.

Serious mistakes: If the dog attempts to get away of the group; displays insecure, cowardly, skittish or timid behaviour; displays aggressive behaviour towards the unknown people or dogs; or attempts to attack, flee, or leave the course, the performance is insufficient.

4.1.5. **Recall**

Purpose: Recalling from freely chosen position.

Description: The handler informs the judge about the position of where the dog will be (standing, sitting or down). The dog must keep the position until the voice signals the recall.

From the starting point, the handler moves ten steps at a regular pace, then handler is told to recall the dog while continuing to walk away from the dog. The dog must follow the handler after the signal and take a position near the handler's left foot before the handler finishes own movement. Then, the dog and the handler follow 10 steps together. At the signal of the judge, the handler gives the command to stop. A slightly slower but focused approach should not be considered a mistake.

If the dog is overly excited or not enthusiastic to follow the handler, the points should be deducted in proportion to the offense.

If the dog is sent to the handler before the call signal is given, points must be deducted in proportion to the illegal behaviour.

Serious mistakes: If the dog cannot be recalled by the handler after three attempts, the performance is insufficient.

4.1.6. **Unknown noise**

Purpose: Sensitivity to noise.

Description: The exercise involves dropping an approx. 1-liter metal can half filled with bolts or pebbles from a height of approximately 1 meter. All dogs must be provided identical conditions! The contents of the can should not be changed during the exercise, and it should be dropped on the same surface (stone, gravel, grass) throughout. The dog should be about 3 meters away from the source of the noise at a designated spot, in any posture. The dog is on a leash. Roughly 3 seconds after the dropping of the can, the judge instructs the handler to walk the dog to the unknown object.

The dog must not be scared of the dropped object and should be indifferent to the noise. It is to be appreciated if the dog shows interest or curiosity.

If the dog is upset or distrustful of the noise, but after it is calmed down by the handler it goes to the dropped object, its performance is still satisfactory, although points should be deducted in proportion with the misconduct.

Serious mistakes: If the dog is insecure, scared, restless, aggressive or attempts to leave the area, the performance is insufficient.

4.1.7. **Unknown person brings an unknown article.**

Purpose: Check the behaviour in a strange sudden situation.

Description: The handler stands in the designated spot. The dog is on leash. When instructed by the judge, a person the dog does not know opens an umbrella (by hand, not a push button umbrella) roughly three steps from the dog. The umbrella should be towards the dog, with its open dome pointing skywards at a roughly 45-degree angle. The person opening the umbrella places the object on the ground and calmly stands next to it. (In case of strong winds, the umbrella should be held in place.) After about 5 seconds, the judge instructs the handler to go around the umbrella and the person at a close distance.

The dog should be calm, confident and attentive and must not display aggression towards the unknown person. It is to be especially appreciated if the dog is interested or curious and sniffs the unknown object.

If the dog is upset or distrustful but is calmed down by the handler it goes to the dropped object, its performance is still satisfactory, although points should be deducted in proportion with the misconduct.

Serious mistakes: If the dog backs down or is scared, attempts to leave the area, cannot be calmed down or is aggressive and out of control, the performance is insufficient.

4.2. **Main task I.**

4.2.1. **Contact with livestock.**

Purpose: When judging livestock guardian and herding dogs, their behaviour towards other animals is an important consideration. The dog guards and defends its territory and the livestock entrusted to its care, but it cannot display aggression towards the animals and must never cause harm to them.

Description: An effort should be made to adhere to animal protection rules during the test. A 6-meter-long leash is required for leading the dog.

The handler approaches the animals in the pen with the dog on leash, then calmly stops 8 to 10 meters away from the pen of livestock animals. The dog can be in any position. The dog must remain stationary for 1 minute without further instructions. It should be attentive or indifferent towards the livestock. Then the handler with the dog can enter the pen on command of the judge.

If the dog moves to the herd or stops the animals on the long leash (outrun move), it should be appreciated as a virtue. If the animals begin to move, the dog is allowed to react to the motion, but the reaction must not be aggressive.

Most of the guardian dogs will behave in an uninterested manner, that is also fine.

Serious mistakes: If the dog attempts to chase or hunt the animals, or displays aggressive behaviour or panic, the judge immediately stops the exercise, the handler puts the dog on a short leash and, when instructed by the judge, proceeds to leave the area. The test result should be considered as insufficient.

4.3. Main task II.

4.3.1. Guarding the livestock.

Purpose: Guarding the flock, protecting the flock when the handler is away.

Description: The handler ties out the dog in a designated spot near the pen door or pen gate post using a spring chain (taking care not to harm the dog), so that the dog can control the entrance to the pen. The handler goes to a hiding spot ~~20 to 25 steps~~ away from the tied dog and hides behind the object so that the dog cannot see the handler.

Optionally the dog can also perform the exercise without being tied out. The handler should inform the judge about the intention how to do so before the exercise begins. For performing the exercise without tie-out, the rules are the following: Enough distance must be measured from the pen entrance, and this distance must be visibly marked around the entire pen. The dog must not leave the animals entrusted to it even when seeing the helper and can only move within the marked area. In both cases, the dog must perform the exercise on its own.

Performing the exercise:

The handler takes cover behind one hiding spot, while the helper hides behind the other. The judge gives the signal for the helper to begin the exercise. The helper steps out of the hiding place, approaches the pen and attempts to take one of the sheep. The helper may provoke or threaten the dog, but hitting or harming the dog is not allowed!

Expected behaviour: The dog should face the threat and actively defend the livestock and itself.

The helper may not tease or provoke the dog further once it begins its active defence. Upon instruction from the judge, the helper leaves the area running, pretending to flee.

On the judge's signal, the handler emerges from the hiding spot and puts the dog on a leash, and the two of them prepare for the next exercise.

During the exercise, the handler may not encourage or instruct the dog or give any kind of signal from the hiding spot.

The judge should watch the behaviour of the dog as its handler leaves and should note the reactions of the dog once it is left on its own before, during and after the threat. The work of a dog displaying active defence should be scored highly.

Serious mistakes: In the case of dogs not tied out, if the dog leaves the designated area, runs to meet the handler or the helper (attacker) or runs after them, or abandons the livestock in its care, the judge shall stop the exercise and the test should be considered insufficient.

If the dog displays cowardly or insecure behaviour and avoids the threat or is completely indifferent to the helper (attacker), the test should be considered insufficient.

The dog must prove beyond doubt that it is fit to guard the flock. If the helper gains access to the pen unimpeded and the dog remains indifferent or uninterested, the test should be considered insufficient.

4.3.2. Protecting the flock and the handler

Purpose: protecting the handler when attacked. The handler (shepherd) is doing his usual daily work near the pen when a stranger stealthily enters the area and attempts to neutralize the handler (shepherd). The two begin to shout and struggle, and the handler (shepherd) calls for help from his dog.

Description: The next description is an example, but any kind of solution is accepted to guarantee safety for these parts of the test. If the dog only barks but demonstrates active work it is also accepted.

The handler sits the dog at the starting point designated by the judge. He may use an assistant who keeps the dog on a long leash, which can be released instantly, making sure the dog can move easily. Or the dog can be free near the handler. The judge gives the signal to the helper to begin the attack. The helper should be in position in a hiding spot at the far end of the course. The helper then attacks the handler, shouting loudly and making threatening motions. The handler calls the dog. Once the dog is called the assistant releases the dog. When the dog runs off to protect its handler, the long leash slips through the ring on its collar so that the dog can perform the exercise.

Reacting to the call for help, which the handler may give no more than three times, the dog must immediately counter the threat and immediately demonstrates its bravery and active defencing skills. If the dog grips the protecting clothing, the handler gives the command to release after three or four seconds, on the judge's instruction. After releasing, the dog must guard the helper (attacker). Once the exercise is completed, the handler puts the dog on a leash and they escort the helper to the judge.

Reacting to the call for help, which the handler may give no more than three times, the dog must immediately counter the threat by gripping the protecting clothing quickly and forcefully, and must demonstrate its bravery, confidence and active defence skills. It should be attentive when guarding the helper.

If the grip on the helper is slightly insecure, the performance of the dog can still be rated very good. If the dog rushes to the aid of the handler (shepherd) and does not grip the helper but behaves bravely, averts the attack, barks actively, guards the helper closely and attentively and is confident and brave, its performance should be rated very high.

If after averting the attack, the dog remains close to the helper and is slightly insecure but is visibly guarding and watching the helper, its performance can be rated but points should be deducted in proportion with the shortcoming.

Serious mistakes: If a dog goes off to help the handler but then avoids the helper, backs away, displays insecure, cowardly or scared behaviour or is completely indifferent to the attacker, the test should be considered insufficient. If the dog needs more than one command to release the helper, the exercise score should be significantly reduced. If the dog does not release the helper on the third command, the exercise is considered not completed.

4.3.3. **Phlegm**

Purpose: Set the dog at ease. Once it is done with the guard dog exercises, the dog must show how quickly it recovers to a calm state of mind.

Description: Once exercise 2 is completed, the handler puts the dog on a leash and goes away near the group of people. The handler informs the judge that the exercise is complete.

Serious mistakes: If a dog displays aggressive behaviour towards the group of people and the handler cannot calm it down or if the dog bites or tries to bite any person, the test should be considered insufficient and all previously accumulated points are lost.

5. EVALUATION

5.1. Evaluation points

5.1.1. The judge decides how many points to take off for each task (it can be all points for one task).

5.1.2. The judge can only take off whole point (not half or less).

5.1.3. The handler can use short, single-word commands depending to the current activity in a normal voice. The voice signal used by the handler should be heard and understood easily. It does not count as a repeated voice signal if the handler combines the command with the dog's name, e. g. "Max, come!" One extra voice signal may be given without point deduction.

5.1.4. Dogs that do not receive at least 70% of the maximum score for each separate task (Basic, Main I-II) may not continue the test.

5.1.5. Judge's point-table:

Name of exercises	Points
Basic task:	
1. Unknown person	5
2. Leash work	5
3. Group of people	10
4. Contact with other dogs	5
5. Recall	5
6. Unknown noise	5
7. Unknown person opens an umbrella	5
Main task I.:	
1. Contact with livestock	15
Main task II.:	
1. Guarding the livestock	20
2. Protecting the flock and the handler	20
3. Phlegm	5
Sum	100


5.2. Qualifications

Evaluation	Abbreviation	Points
Excellent	EXC	90 - 100 points
Very Good	VG	80 - 89 points
Good	G	70 - 79 points
Not Passed	NP	less than 70 points
No points awarded	NPA	no points
Retired	RET	no points
Disqualification	DIS	no points

6. CLOSING PROVISIONS

- 6.1. These rules were approved at the meeting of the FCI Herding Dogs Commission held in Dortmund (DE) on 9th-10th July 2022.**
- 6.2. These rules were approved by the FCI General Committee in Budapest, on March 21-22, 2023. They are valid from 1st June 2023.**
- 6.3. In case of translation discrepancies, the English text is considered the original.**

ANNEX 1: RECOMMENDED JUDGES SHEET "FCI-GWT"

 SCORE CARD "FCI-GWT"					Catalogue No	
					Start No	
Event			Place		Date	
Dog name					Born	
Pedigree Reg. No			Chip		Sex	
Owner					Breed	
Handler					No	
Exercises	Max	Minus	Score	Max. time	Time	
1. Unknown person	5			BASIC TASKS / <i>The dog fails the test if the score is below 70% of the maximum.</i>		
2. Leash work	5					
3. Group of people	10					
4. Contact with other dogs	5					
5. Recall	5					
6. Unknown noise	5					
7. Unknown person opens an umbrella	5				PASSED	NOT PASSED
1. Contact with livestock	15			MAIN TASK I: / <i>The dog fails the test if the score is below 70% of the maximum.</i>		
					PASSED	NOT PASSED
1. Guarding the livestock	20			MAIN TASK II: / <i>Dog must receive at least 70% for each of the 3 exercises and reach 70% of the combined total to pass.</i>		
2. Protecting the handler	20					
3. Indifference	5				PASSED	NOT PASSED
Total points	100			Qualification	PASSED	NOT PASSED
Judge No., Name, Signature				Clarification by		