



The South Australian Working Sheepdog Association

Standard procedure for the handling, loading and releasing of sheep at any South Australian Working Sheepdog Association Sheepdog event.

The intent of this document is not to address specific past practice; nor is it to impose limitations on experienced stock handlers. It is to ensure a common and up-to-date approach to the handling, loading and release of sheep which is in line with the values and obligations of the South Australian Working Sheepdog Association Inc.

All volunteers may be required to attend a short training session on the handling, loading and release of sheep prior to any trial, depending on their previous experience with stock and stock handling.

Any volunteer assisting in the release are under the age of 16 years as at the 1st January of each year MUST be under parental supervision. The parent of the volunteer under the age of 16 years is required to co-sign this document.

Animal welfare

Animals in South Australia must be treated in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 1985 and the Animal Welfare Regulations 2012. The Act applies equally to all animals regardless of their value or status (ie. threatened or pest species). Compliance with the requirements of the Act is mandatory.

I understand my obligations to the welfare of any animal (sheep or dog) at an event run by the South Australian Working Sheepdog Association or affiliated bodies.

Volunteer Name: **Signature:** **Date:**

Parent name and signature if the volunteer is under the age of 16 years as at the 1st January of each year:

Parent Name: **Signature:** **Date:**

Work health and safety

The Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA) provides for the safety, health and welfare of persons employed or engaged in industry in South Australia. The Act, together with the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA), set up health and safety duties to provide protection from hazards and risks in the workplace.

I understand my obligations to the health and wellbeing for myself and others at an event run by the South Australian Working Sheepdog Association or affiliated bodies.

Volunteer Name: **Signature:** **Date:**

Parent name and signature if the volunteer is under the age of 16 years as at the 1st January of each year.

Parent Name: **Signature:** **Date:**



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Volunteer information to be kept by the volunteer

Personnel:

Only persons who are competent in sheep handling and have read and signed the above declarations should enter sheep yards for the event, unless they are under the direct supervision of someone who has.

A minimum of three (3) people are to be in the yards to pen up and release sheep to enable the smooth-running of the event. This number may be increased or reduced to suit the needs of the event.

Advice for Handling Sheep in the Yards:

When handling sheep in the yards, all helpers must be wearing closed in shoes. Sheep can and will become flighty in a small area and the safety of yourself and others is critical. Some sheep will run through you, potentially causing you leg injury. They may also jump the fence.

If a sheep catches its leg this MUST be dealt with immediately as it may easily break, necessitating its humane destruction!

DO NOT direct sheep by PULLING SKIN or WOOL. Instead, turn their heads and apply firm pressure to the side or rump.

DO NOT move sheep in such a way as to cause them to crash into yard panels.

DO NOT put yourself in harm's way just to move a sheep. Always ask others for assistance if the sheep is too large or hard to move. We have a range of sheep that are used from lambs to mature adults, and all can be very temperamental.



How to load a pen for let out

1. When loading the release pen or trailer, try to keep the sheep settled and facing the way out. It makes the job much easier when opening the gate.
2. Once the sheep are in the pen, keep away from the pen until it is time to let out.
3. Do not leave sheep in the pen or trailer during extended breaks as they may injure themselves, become heat stressed or suffocate while unattended.
4. As a guide, release them back into the forcing pen with others if they are found not to be required in the following 15 minutes.
5. At all times a consistent routine must be adhered to for the benefit of all competitors and sheep.
6. Do not refill the release pen or trailer while the current competitor and dog are near the release. This activity and noise may disrupt the dog's concentration and/or draw the attention of the sheep being worked. This may disadvantage the current competitor.
7. As you are loading the release pen or trailer, MAKE SURE that the sheep have been checked for soundness and are fit for working. Remove any sheep that are injured, lame, sick, or demonstrate any other physical defect which may affect their ability to complete a trial.

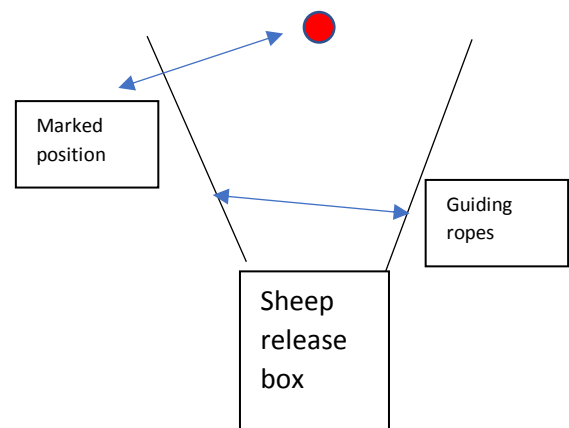
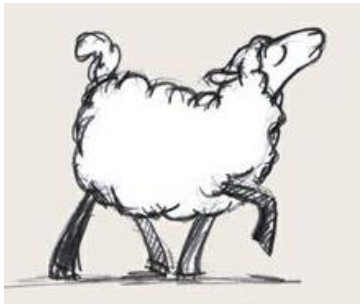


Releasing the sheep

1. With 3 physically sound/inspected sheep in the release pen or trailer, wait for the judge's signal to release the sheep.
2. As quickly and carefully as possible, open the release gate/door and quietly guide the sheep out to the trial ground to the marked position. Use the ropes and guides to influence the sheep to the predetermined position and signal to the judge for the trial to start. CONSISTANCY is critical!
3. If the sheep split badly or cannot be guided back together to the judge's satisfaction, that particular run will not start, and the sheep need to be herded off the ground. A suitable dog may be used.
4. If, in the process of release, a serious injury to a sheep has occurred, signal the judge and carefully try to retrieve the sheep.

5. If a minor limp or something that may cause a sheep to be inconsistent is noticed after release, leave it to the judge and handler to assess. If it is regarded as unfit by them that run will be terminated.
6. A consistent release for all competitors is the most important part of the trial. While it is impossible for all releases to be exactly the same as all sheep differ, a great trial is always remembered for the quality and consistency of the sheep and the releases.

Where sheep are released from the perimeter of the field, there must be 3 people helping with the release. One to release the sheep and the other two on the wriggle ropes or to guide sheep out to the marked position. These ropes are not there to wave in the air, but to keep the sheep in the triangle shape from the release box to a point, generally designated by a cone or marker on the ground.



Retrieving the sheep at the end of each run

At the completion of the run competitors are required to return the sheep to the holding pen. In the event this is not possible an experienced sweeper dog may be used to bring the sheep back to the holding pen. If a sweeper dog is not available, the release team may assist in removing the sheep off the ground.

Remember, sheep may be flighty after being worked so sheep should be taken off the ground slowly.

Retrieving the sheep that may have escaped

If a sheep has escaped the working area, holding pen or release area they must be caught prior to the next run taking place or held in an area to ensure the next competitor is not disadvantaged by activity outside of the trial arena.

Loading and unloading sheep from the truck or trailer

Loading and unloading the sheep from the truck or trailer must only be undertaken by the owner, truck driver or a volunteer well versed in handling stock on trucks or trailers. Stock must be loaded and unloaded ensuring that no animal is injured in the process. Where trained truck dogs are used, the truck driver is responsible for its wellbeing.

Moving sheep around the ground or into a holding paddock

Depending on the location of the trial, when sheep are required to be moved around the ground or into a holding paddock at the end of the day this must be undertaken slowly to avoid sheep becoming flighty. Low stress stock-handling will ensure sheep are not injured or stressed.

