



National Shoot-To-Retrieve Field Trial Association, Inc.

203 N. Mill Street, Plainfield, Indiana 46168

Phone: (317) 839-4059 Fax: (317) 839-4197

Email: office@nstra.org

**GUIDELINES FOR PROTESTS, DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS, AND GRIEVANCES
(Updated April 2017)**

Protests: Only NSTRA field trial rules and applications may be protested. Protests are only used in association with a rule or application during scheduled association trials. A protest does not result in any disciplinary action. Protest forms are included in the trial packet sent to trial chairpersons or available on the NSTRA website. **THE FORM MUST** be filled out entirely.

Disciplinary Action: Penalties imposed upon a member of NSTRA as a result of a complaint that is investigated and found to be valid. (for example: probation, suspension, removal of licenses). Disciplinary actions may be initiated at the Regional or National level, but the final approval authority for all disciplinary action lies with the National Elected Officers and Board of Directors. (*Reference: National Shoot to Retrieve Field Trial Association, Inc. By-Laws, Article I, Section IV*)

Grievance: A complaint filed by a member or employee of NSTRA seeking relief for an unjust act committed against them by NSTRA, its official representatives, or its employees. **A Grievance form (attached) must be filled out entirely.** Grievances are resolved by the National Elected Officers and Board of Directors. (*Reference: National Shoot to Retrieve Field Trial Association, Inc. By-Laws, Article VI, Section V, General, paragraph C*)

Protests and Grievances are similar in that there is an alleged complaint against a member, official, officer or employee of NSTRA for a serious action, or actions, that could result in some form of discipline. All protests, disciplinary actions and grievances shall be handled in accordance with the NSTRA rules and by-laws.

These guidelines are intended to aid the National Elected Officers, Board of Directors, Region Officers and Board, individual members, and employees by outlining the steps to follow when submitting or reviewing such actions.

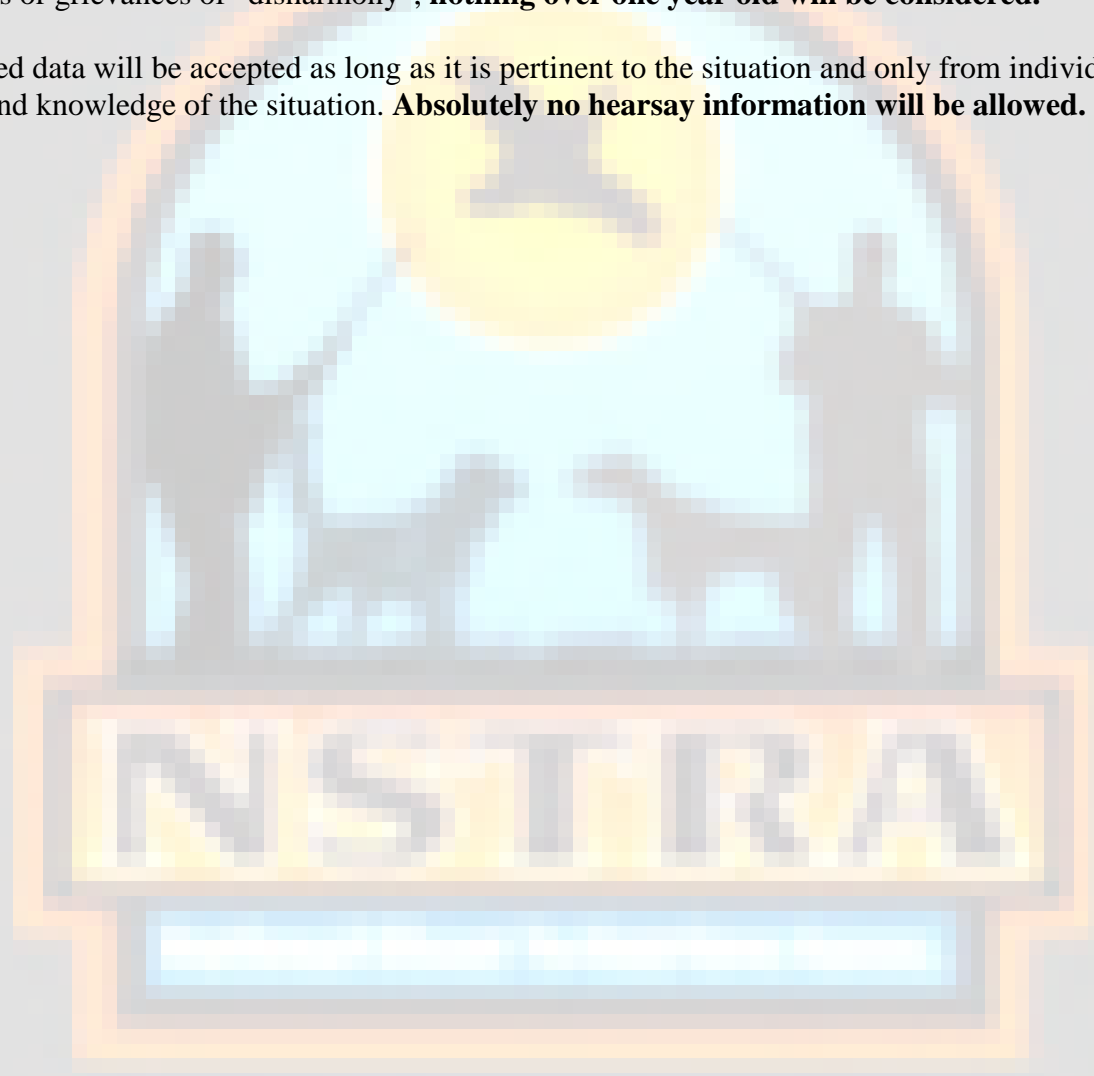
Historically, the steps taken to resolve such actions have not been handled in a similar fashion and the rulings have taken too much time to resolve. Therefore, these guidelines are written to provide uniformity in handling the information and shorten the time taken to resolve issues.

Please note that unforeseen difficulties can arise with obtaining information. Any delays or extensions may only be granted by prior approval of the National Officers.

*****NOTE*****With regards to the “disturb the harmony” language (*NSTRA By-Laws, Article I, Section IV*):

Proving that an individual violates this section may require demonstration of multiple offenses for which the individual may or may not have been warned, verbally or in writing. All warnings issued in this type of circumstance should be documented and copies sent to the National office and retained for one year. For complaints or grievances of “disharmony”, **nothing over one year old will be considered.**

All documented data will be accepted as long as it is pertinent to the situation and only from individuals having firsthand knowledge of the situation. **Absolutely no hearsay information will be allowed.**



Protests:

You must complete the official protest form (available in all trial packets and on the NSTRA website).

- Cite the rule (including number and page) from the Recognized Field Trial Rule Book that is currently being used. If a rule cannot be cited, then there is no protest.
- Judgment calls cannot be protested.

National Trial Protests:

Submit to Field Marshal at time of occurrence or no later than one hour after the conclusion of the last brace on the day of occurrence. Untimely protests will not be considered.

National Officers shall render their decision in a timely manner after reviewing the protest with the Field Marshal, Handler(s) and Judges.

After the National Officers have reached a decision, they will notify all parties involved. Due to the time constraints of national trials, National Officers' decisions are final.

Regional Elimination Trial Protests:

Submit to Field Marshal at time of occurrence or no later than one hour after the conclusion of the last brace on the day of occurrence. Untimely protests will not be considered.

Regional Officers and Board of Directors shall render their decision in a timely manner after reviewing the protest with the Field Marshal, Handler(s) and Judges.

After Regional Officers and Board of Directors have reached a decision, they will notify all parties involved. Due to the time constraints of regional elimination trials, Regional Officers and Board of Directors decisions are final.

Local Trial Protests:

Submit to Regional Officers and Board of Directors within 10 days of occurrence. Untimely protests will not be considered.

Regional officers shall render their decision in writing within 21 days of protest after reviewing the protest with the Field Marshal, Handler(s) and Judges.

If the protester agrees with the Regional decision, the trial results are updated and submitted to the office if changes occur.

If the protester disagrees with the Regional decision, he/she may submit the protest to the National Officers and Board of Directors within 10 days of the Regional decision.

The National Officers and Board of Director must provide a final answer within 21 days of receipt of protest.

Disciplinary Action initiated by the National Elected Officers:

Revocation of judging licenses, judging instructor status, field marshal certification, and bird planting privileges may be handled by the National Elected Officers without National Board of Directors' approval.

The following process is for, but not limited to, disciplinary actions such as probation, suspension, and revocation of elected office.

The National Elected Officers shall document all data and provide such to the accused individual(s) by certified mail, return signature required within 15 days of incident.

The accused individual(s) have 10 days from the date of receipt of said package to respond to the National Elected Officers in writing either by post or e-mail.

The National Elected Officers shall review the accused individuals' response and determine a plan of action to be recommended to the National Board of Directors within 21 days of receipt of individuals' response.

A packet including all data along with a letter from the National Elected Officers outlining their recommendations will be mailed to the National Board of Directors' members within 7 days of the National Elected Officers' decision. This packet will also include a ballot to be returned by the Board member within 15 days with their vote. Ballots may include alternative recommendations by the National Elected Officers and in all cases include a position of no action to be taken. Votes may be submitted by post, fax or previously established e-mail to the National Office. Telephone votes will not be accepted.

The votes will be tallied by the National Office staff and the decision tendered to the National Elected Officers within 3 days of the deadline.

The accused individual will be notified in writing and by certified mail, signature requested of the decision within 14 days of the deadline. All disciplinary action timelines will commence on date of letter of notification.

(85 days from notification to completion)

Disciplinary Action initiated by the Region:

The Regional President and Board of Directors shall document all data and provide such to the individual(s) by certified mail, return signature required within 15 days of incident.

The accused individual(s) have 10 days from the date of receipt of said package to respond to the Regional President in writing either by post or e-mail.

The Regional President will send the Regional Board of Directors all documentation and call for a vote within 10 days of receipt of information from individual(s).

The Region will notify the individual(s) of their decision by certified mail within 3 days of the vote. If disciplinary actions are to be taken, the region will also notify the National Officers by mail or e-mail to the National Office within the 3 day period. In either case, all documentation shall be sent to the National Office for filing.

If the member filing the grievance disagrees with the region's decision, they may file the grievance with the National Elected Officers within 5 days of region's decision. All documentation previously sent to the region should be included in the packet sent to the National Elected officers. No additional information may be included.

The National Elected Officers shall review all information and determine a plan of action to be recommended to the National Board of Directors within 5 days of receipt.

A packet including all data along with a letter from the National Elected Officers outlining their recommendations will be mailed to the National Board of Directors' members within 7 days of the National Elected Officers' decision. This packet will also include a ballot to be returned by the Board member within 15 days with their vote. Ballots may include alternative recommendations by the National Elected Officers and in all cases include a position of no action to be taken. Votes may be submitted by post, fax or previously established e-mail to the National Office. Telephone votes will not be accepted.

The votes will be tallied by the National Office staff and the decision tendered to the National Elected Officers within 3 days of the deadline.

The accused individual will be notified in writing and by certified mail, signature requested of the decision within 14 days of the deadline. All disciplinary action timelines will commence on date of letter of notification.

(87 days from notification to completion.)

Grievance initiated by member (Regional Level):

The member shall send the entirely filled out grievance form to the Regional Officers and Board of Directors in writing within 10 days of the incident. All documentation and witness statements are to be included in the grievance.

The Regional Officers shall investigate the grievance and obtain any additional documentation that pertains to the grievance within 15 days of notification. Such documentation should include at the minimum, a statement from the individual or group accused of the grievance. Any additional documentation received shall be forwarded to the member filing the grievance.

The Regional President will send the Regional Board of Directors all documentation and call for a vote within 10 days of receipt of information from individual(s).

The Region will notify the individual(s) of their decision by certified mail within 3 days of the vote. If disciplinary actions are to be taken, the region will also notify the National Officers by mail or e-mail to the National Office within the 3 day period. In either case, all documentation shall be sent to the National Office for filing.

The National Elected Officers shall review all information and determine a plan of action to be recommended to the National Board of Directors within 5 days of receipt.

A packet including all data along with a letter from the National Elected Officers outlining their recommendations will be mailed to the National Board of Directors' members within 7 days of the National Elected Officers' decision. This packet will also include a ballot to be returned by the Board member within 15 days with their vote. Ballots may include alternative recommendations by the National Elected Officers and in all cases include a position of no action to be taken. Votes may be submitted by post, fax or previously established e-mail to the National Office. Telephone votes will not be accepted.

The votes will be tallied by the National Office staff and the decision tendered to the National Elected Officers within 3 days of the deadline.

The accused individual will be notified in writing and by certified mail, signature requested of the decision within 14 days of the deadline. All disciplinary action timelines will commence on date of letter of notification.

(82 days from notification to completion.)

Grievance initiated by member or employee (National Level):

The member or employee shall send the entirely filled out grievance form to the National Office in writing within 10 days of the incident. All documentation and witness statements are to be included in the grievance.

The President shall appoint a Grievance Committee which will be approved annually by the National Officers at their meeting at the Trial of Champions Trial. The Grievance Committee will consist of 5 members in good standing and from all different regions.

The Committee members will be noted in the meeting minutes.

The Grievance committee shall investigate the grievance and obtain any additional documentation that pertains to the grievance within 15 days of notification. Such documentation should include at the minimum, a statement from the individual or group accused of the grievance. Any additional documentation received shall be forwarded to the member filing the grievance.

The Grievance committee shall review the accused individuals' response and determine a plan of action to be recommended to the entire National Board of Directors within 21 days of receipt of individuals' response. If the recommended action requires a vote by the National Board of Directors, it will be the responsibility of the unaffected National Officers to call for said vote. (Elected Officers, April 2014).

A packet including all data along with a letter from the Grievance committee outlining their recommendations will be mailed to the National Board of Directors' members within 7 days of the Grievance committee decision. This packet will also include a ballot to be returned by the Board member within 15 days with their vote. Ballots may include alternative recommendations by the Grievance committee and in all cases include a position of no action to be taken. Votes may be submitted by post, fax or previously established e-mail to the Chair of the committee as noted on the ballot. Telephone votes will not be accepted.

The votes will be tallied by the Grievance committee and the decision tendered to the unaffected National Officers within 3 days of the deadline.

The accused individual(s) will be notified in writing and by certified mail, signature requested of the decision within 14 days of the deadline. All disciplinary action timelines will commence on date of letter of notification.

(100 days from notification to completion.)