

FOREWORD

The Doberman Pinscher Club of America was formed principally to preserve and protect the Doberman Pinscher and to do all possible to bring its natural qualities to perfection.

The perfection we seek is embodied in three sets of characteristics: those of conformation, those of temperament, and those of trainability. This Register of Merit Award and Working Aptitude Evaluation Program has, as its fundamental purpose, the recognition of Dobermans having those natural qualities of beauty and functional utility that make the breed what it was intended to be.

**RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR
REGISTER OF MERIT (ROM) AWARDS
AND
WORKING APTITUDE EVALUATION PROGRAM (WAE)**

CHAPTER I. CERTIFICATES, AWARDS, AND ADMINISTRATION

Section 1. Introduction

The exercises included herein are designed to measure a Doberman's response to people, footing, visual and auditory stimuli, and to threat situations in order to ascertain the dog's aptitude for the work for which the Doberman was created (e.g., companion/protector, police dog, etc.).

There are five exercises in which the dog's responses to the stimuli presented are measured in accordance with the degree of approach or avoidance behavior to a given stimulus. Approach behavior is defined as investigative (e.g., curiosity and inspection) or protective behavior. Avoidance behavior is defined as an attempt by the dog to avoid (or escape confrontation of) the stimulus. Each exercise is graded on the following scale:

- +3 Very Strong Approach behavior- needs no encouragement, bold, confident, egotistical
- +2 Strong approach behavior - needs little encouragement
- +1 Mild approach behavior - needs encouragement
- 0 No response (measurable) to stimulus
- 1 Mild avoidance
- 2 Strong avoidance
- 3 Panic behavior, very strong escape reaction

Section 2. The Working Aptitude Certificate (WAC)

In order to earn a Working Aptitude Certificate, a Doberman must demonstrate the characteristics required of a dog to be a stable companion and resolute protector. The following exercise profile is the minimal acceptable profile required of a dog to earn a Working Aptitude Certificate.

EXERCISE	MINIMAL ACCEPTABLE SCORE
I	
A. Neutral Stranger	-1
B. Friendly Stranger	-1
II	
A. Hidden Clattering - Alert and discovery	+1
B. Hidden Clattering - Investigation	+1
C. Gunshot	0
III	
A. Umbrella	+1
IV	
A. Footing Exercise - Polyethylene strip	+
B. Footing Exercise - Exercise Pen	+

V

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| A. Threat – Decoy; Crossing | +1 |
| B. Threat – Decoy; Approach | +1 |
| C. Threat – Decoy/Dog; Confrontation | +1 |
| D. Dog Under Control | + |

Section 3. The Register of Merit (ROM) Award

The Doberman Pinscher Club of America will issue the ROM Award to Dobermans which have demonstrated acceptability in the three areas of conformation, trainability, and temperament. In order to be eligible for the ROM Award, a Doberman must attain:

1. An AKC Conformation Championship Title
2. One or more Approved Performance Titles
3. A WAC obtained by passing a DPCA-sanctioned Working Aptitude Evaluation.

The DPCA ROM Award signifies and gives recognition to the TOTAL DOBERMAN, sound in mind and body, **and should be a guide to breeders in the quality of their stock.**

It is the responsibility of the owners or their agent to submit copies of the AKC Conformation Championship, the approved Performance Title(s), and the Working Aptitude Certification promptly to the ROM Secretary through the DPCA website. Upon notification of receipt of these titles by the ROM Secretary, the owner will be eligible to use the ROM title.

Titles, which count toward the Performance component, are in areas such as:

- Obedience
- Rally (Novice titles do not count)
- Tracking
- Agility
- Schutzhund
- Ring Sport
- Search and Rescue
- Herding (Instinct test does not count)
- Barnhunt (Senior and above)
- PSA (Protection Sport Association)
- Other performance events as they are recommended by the ROM Committee & approved by the DPCA Board

For the complete list go to: <https://dpca.org/awards/wae/> Then click on the tab for ROM Titles

Section 4. Conduct of Evaluations

Working Aptitude Evaluations will be conducted under the auspices of DPCA-certified evaluators.

Section 5. Eligibility of Dobermans

In order for a Doberman to be eligible to participate in a Working Aptitude Evaluation, the dog must be 18 months of age or older on the date of the evaluation and must be registered with a listing from an organization which is accepted by the AKC. The registration could be an AKC registration number, a Purebred Alternative Listing (PAL), an Indefinite Listing Privilege (ILP), or a registration number from a foreign registry accepted by the AKC. A Doberman of an allowed color with a Z-coded registration number with the AKC, or on the current AKC list of dogs bearing the albinistic trait, is eligible to participate as long as proof of neuter (spay or castration) is presented at the time of registration for the evaluation. Proof of neuter is defined as a written veterinary certificate to document the completion of the procedure. Any Doberman that is not of an allowed color according to the Doberman Standard is not allowed to participate in the evaluation.

Section 6. Re-evaluation of Dogs

Dogs that have been evaluated but have not passed may be re-evaluated at a later date. There is no limit to the number of times a dog can be evaluated but past experience has indicated that a dog that has not passed the Evaluation on three prior attempts will probably never certify, even with extensive conditioning. If the re-evaluation occurs at the same grounds as the original Evaluation, a waiting period of six months must elapse before the dog is re-evaluated to prevent the dog from remembering past experiences. Otherwise, a thirty (30) day waiting period between Evaluations is required.

Section 7. Disqualification of a Dog

A dog that in the opinion of the Evaluator inappropriately attacks any person on the course shall be disqualified. The Evaluator shall mark the Score Sheet for that dog "Disqualified," state the reason, and forward it to the WAE Secretary. Any dog that, in the opinion of the Evaluator, has attacked a person inappropriately or dog at a WAE event resulting in an injury or is believed by that Evaluator to present a hazard to people or other dogs shall be disqualified by the Evaluator. A report shall be filed with the ROM Chairperson and WAE Secretary. The disqualified dog may not participate again at any WAE, nor be on the grounds of a WAE, unless and until the owner has received official notification in writing from the ROM Chairperson that the dog's eligibility has been reinstated. An owner may apply to the ROM Committee for reinstatement.

CHAPTER II EXERCISE DESCRIPTIONS

THE NEUTRAL AND FRIENDLY STRANGER (Exercise 1A and 1B)

Objective: To measure the dog's reaction to strangers in a non-threatening situation.
(Standard requires "alert, watchful, fearless, loyal"; faults are "shyness or viciousness")

Procedure: The dog and handler will approach first the neutral, then the friendly stranger. The handler should give the dog the full 6' of lead. Observation of the exercise will begin as soon as the handler/dog team and stranger start walking toward each other. In Part A, the neutral stranger will walk directly up to the handler of the dog. The handler may **NOT** encourage his dog in this exercise. The evaluator will observe the reaction of the dog throughout the neutral encounter. Upon completion of the encounter, the evaluator will motion to the handler and friendly stranger to approach each other. The handler will not move on with the dog toward the friendly stranger until signaled by the evaluator to do so. As in the neutral stranger exercise, observation will commence upon the approach of the handler/dog and friendly stranger to each other. The handler may encourage the dog on this exercise.

Part 1A - Neutral Stranger: On this exercise, the handler will let the dog have a full 6' of slack in the lead as they approach the neutral stranger. An assistant who is a stranger to the dog approaches the handler directly to a distance of about 2' and engages the handler in a normal conversation. No physical contact is to occur, such as handshaking. The neutral stranger must **NOT** act familiar with the handler or joke with them. That is **NOT** a neutral occurrence. The assistant ignores the dog throughout and, after a bit of non-confrontational conversation, the assistant continues on his or her way. The handler may not talk to the dog during this exercise. Handler and dog then proceed along the directed course where they encounter the friendly stranger.

Part 1B - Friendly Stranger: On this exercise, the handler will let the dog have a full 6' of slack in the lead as they approach the friendly stranger. A different assistant, who is also a stranger to the dog, approaches happily and briskly and is exuberantly friendly to the dog. Do not use the dog's name. When about 6' from the dog, the stranger stops and pats his or her leg to get the dog to come for petting. He or she does **NOT** reach out for or bend over the dog. Words such as "Puppy, puppy, what a pretty puppy," spoken by the friendly stranger, will be used to encourage the dog to approach. When the friendly stranger tries to coax the dog over for play/petting, the handler may encourage the dog or reassure with words such as "It's OK."

THE AUDITORY/VISUAL STIMULI EXERCISES (Exercise 2A and Exercise 2B – Hidden Clattering; Exercise 2C - Gunshots)

Part 2A and 2B- Hidden Clattering

Objective: To measure the dog's alertness to auditory/visual stimuli and the degree of the dog's investigative behavior toward those stimuli.

Procedures: Handler/dog will begin this exercise at least 10' before the 20' marker. The handler/dog will approach the van, moving parallel to the side of the van, about 3' away from it, with the dog between the handler and the van. The leash should be slack but the dog should not have enough lead to sniff at the van. When the dog is 20' from the assistant, the evaluator will signal the assistant to start rattling the can with a 180-degree wrist-twisting motion, with the can held by the top and bottom for best sound production. The can is not to be rattled too vigorously. Consistent rattling of the can will continue until Part B is completed. It is okay to make a handle that will not muffle the can.

As the can starts rattling, the handler will give the dog 6' of slack and proceed around the end of the van to the can, pointing at it. The handler's motions should be smooth and positive. Upon commencement of the rattling, the handler may say, "Hey, what's that?" or "Let's find it," excitedly. Upon discovery, the

handler may point toward the rattling can and say, "Look at that!" or some other means of encouragement. The handler should not look at his dog when giving encouragement. Focus should be on the stimulus. The dog does not have to touch the can, and the handler may NOT touch the can. The evaluator will then signal the assistant to stop rattling the can.

Part 2A: Handler and dog walk directly toward a van behind which is an assistant seated with his or her back to the van, looking straight forward, and whose right hand, holding a soda pop can partially-filled with pea gravel and taped shut, is extended as parallel as possible to the back of the van in the direction from which the dog will approach. The arm of the chair closest to the dog's approach should never be closer than the midline of the vehicle. The assistant's elbow should rest on a consistent portion of the chair's arm, with the forearm parallel to the ground. The purpose here is to present the minimum human profile upon discovery by the dog with the assistant ignoring anything the dog is doing. When the dog is about 20' from the assistant, the evaluator will signal for the can to be rattled by a twisting motion of the wrist, not a violent up and down motion. After the rattling begins, the dog may be encouraged to approach the van to discover the source of the noise. Some males may try to urinate on the van; handlers must be cautioned not to allow this.

Part 2A of this exercise, evaluator is looking for strength of alert and investigative responses of the dog.

Part 2B: Assistant continues to rattle the can as the dog comes around the van to discover the source of the noise and investigate the can. The dog is given 10 seconds from the time the can is first in view of the dog to make a close inspection. (NOTE: A close inspection is focused attention to the stimulus within 12" from the stimulus to the dog's nose. For a close inspection to occur, there has to be focus and interest.) The handler may encourage the dog but shall NOT pull the dog toward the can. To do so will result in a minus (-) score.

Part 2C - Gunshots

Objective: To measure the dog's sound sensitivity, Dobermans should not be noise sensitive.

Procedure: The exercise will begin at a spot that is at least 15 feet beyond the can rattling. That start point should be at least 10' minimum before the shooter. From that spot, the handler will move with the dog to a marked spot 15 feet beyond the shooter of the gun and stop. The shooter will stand with his/her back to the dog in a marked spot that is approximately 10 feet off the path of the handler and dog. The shooter shall not raise his arm until the handler and dog are past him. Upon instruction of the evaluator, the handler and dog will PASS the shooter and stop at a marked point 15' beyond the shooter. The evaluator will then motion for the three shots to be fired toward the sky as follows: BANG! (pause) BANG! BANG! The shooter should then remain as motionless as possible after that until after the dog has left the 2C exercise area. The evaluator is to observe the posture of the dog, and any recovery needed is to be within 10 seconds. The evaluator should position himself/herself to be able to view the posture and expression of the dog before, during, and after the shots. Upon hearing the first shot, the handler is allowed to encourage his dog to find the source of the shots and may turn toward the shooter but should not leave the marked spot. Should the dog startle, it is to be given 10 seconds to recover.

Recovery is indicated by the posture of the dog, including ears, tail, and overall carriage, which should approach the baseline bearing of the dog prior to the shots. The evaluator is looking for stability of nerve, and the purpose of the exercise is to identify gun-shy dogs. All dogs, unless deaf, will show some startle response to the shots. It may be mild, such as a flash of ears or turn of head, or it may be extreme, such as crouching, laying back of ears, tucking of tail, etc. The key to scoring this exercise is ascertaining whether or not the dog recovers from the startle. For example, does his carriage or bearing return to normal within 10 seconds or does the dog continue to slink, roll his eyes, and appear distressed.

NOTE: To pass this exercise, the dog must receive a positive score or a zero (0). The ideal response on this exercise is an alert with no measurable startle; that is, a zero (0).

THE VISUAL STIMULUS (Exercise 3 - The Umbrella Exercise)

Objective: To measure dog's reaction to sudden visual stimulus, degree of dog's investigative behavior, and startle-recovery time.

Procedure: Handler/dog team proceeds toward an assistant who is sitting on a lawn chair with an umbrella hooked over the arm of the chair directly in the dog's path but facing ninety degrees to the side. As the dog crosses a marked point 9' from the tip of the umbrella, the evaluator will give a signal to the assistant to slowly raise the umbrella whose tip has been resting on the ground. (NOTE: Abruptly raising the umbrella as the dog approaches might indicate challenging behavior to the dog. This is why the exercise stresses that the umbrella is to be raised slowly.) The 9' spot will be pre-marked from the tip of a raised umbrella. As the dog (not the handler) crosses another pre-marked spot 3' from the raised umbrella (no later), the evaluator will signal the assistant to simultaneously release the catch and open the umbrella directly toward the dog. Timing and distance are very important in this exercise. The umbrella must not be opened closer than 3'. The open portion of the umbrella is then lowered and rested on the ground while the assistant retains the shaft in his hand to prevent the umbrella from moving. The dog is required to move forward (with encouragement if necessary) to make a close **frontal** inspection of the umbrella.

On this exercise, clarity of instruction and timing by the evaluator is critical. The handler will be instructed to start the approach to the umbrella from at least 20' from the 9' marker. The handler will align their dog with the tip of the closed umbrella and themselves to the right of their dog. Upon signal from the evaluator, the handler will proceed directly, without hesitation, to the tip of the umbrella, pointing at it but not touching it, and encouraging the dog to investigate it. At the beginning of the approach, the dog is on a reasonably slack lead. When the umbrella opens, the dog must have a full 6' of slack in the lead. The handler must not walk past it, but go right up to the umbrella. The handler is **NOT** allowed to touch the umbrella nor pull his dog to the stimulus. All dogs will startle on this exercise. Measurement of the 10 seconds elapsed time will commence as soon as the umbrella is opened. A dog need not actually sniff at or attack the umbrella to pass this exercise. He must, however, demonstrate a willingness to approach the front of the umbrella (convex side) and make a close frontal inspection. (NOTE: A close frontal inspection is **focused** attention to the stimulus within 12" from the stimulus to the dog's nose. For a close frontal inspection to occur, there has to be focus and interest.) The assistant should not move nor close the umbrella until the dog has left the exercise (3) area.

THE FOOTING EXERCISES (Exercise 4A - Polyethylene Strip; Exercise 4B - Exercise Pen)

Objective: To measure the dog's reaction to unusual footing (Standard requires "determined" and "fearless")

Procedure: Part 4A - Polyethylene Strip; The handler and dog will start from a marked spot which is 3' from the initial footing exercise. The handler is allowed to gather his dog up and direct it at the center of the footing right up until the team has stepped on to the plastic; at that point, the lead goes loose. Evaluators will position themselves on the dog's side as the handler/dog team approaches the strip of polyethylene 16' long and 4' wide, laid on the ground and secured at the corners and sides if necessary. With the dog on a loose lead, they proceed directly along the length (16') of this change of footing.

Part 4B - Exercise Pen; After completing the above part, the handler/dog team will cross 10' of normal footing and then proceed directly across an exercise pen lying flat on the ground. This simulated grating should be 16' long and 4' wide. Handler and dog will move along, not across, the length of this change of footing. The evaluator should suggest that if the handler chooses to pause and regather his dog on the normal footing aisle that he should make a circle instead of stopping and jerking his dog to a halt just prior to the second footing.

On this exercise, the dog must demonstrate a willingness to walk over the footings with his handler. The dog does not have to like it but must do it. To pass, the dog shall move at its own pace on the footing for at least 3/4 of its length or 12' of the 16'. The dog can jump off it as long as it remains on for the required distance. The leash must not be tight on this exercise. The lead should be slack enough so that the dog can get off the footing if it so attempts. The handler can encourage the dog by patting his leg and talking to them. A continually tight lead must receive a minus (-) score. The dog must in no way be forced to stay on the footing. Dogs are to be properly lined up with the stimuli before the dog and handler proceed. If, in the opinion of the evaluator, the dog is not properly lined up, the dog may be given a second chance on the Footing Exercise. If that happens, then **they are to go over the surface in the reverse direction.**

THE THREAT EXERCISE (Exercise 5A - Decoy Crossing; Exercise 5B - Decoy Approach; Exercise 5C - Threat/Confrontation; Exercise 5D - Dog Returns to Normal)

Objective; To measure the dog's capacity to recognize and to react in a positive manner to a potentially threatening situation and to defend itself in the face of such a threat

This exercise has four parts to it.

Dog will wear a leather collar of sufficient strength, **at least 1"** wide, and fit to safely control the dog with a 1" wide by 6' long leather lead, also attached to the live ring of a standard choke chain or fur-saver throughout. The decoy should be dressed in an oversized raincoat or long overcoat with a large, floppy, wide-brimmed hat, and wear a concealed, protective gauntlet sleeve.

Directions to the Decoy: Part 5A: Upon signal from the evaluator, the decoy will tap the bumper with the stick, and move from the van to the 20' marker. The decoy will move in a low profile, shuffling movement with a low moaning noise, and the stick is to be carried close to leg (non-visual). Their back will be toward the handler/dog, and the decoy will shuffle/moan the entire time before starting his approach. When the 20' marker is reached, the decoy may turn in either direction.

Part 5B: The decoy continues with low profile shuffling and low moaning noise with stick still alongside of leg, as he/she approaches the handler/dog for another 6 feet (roughly two, long dragging steps).

Part 5C: For the final six feet, he/she pops-up in a more frontal and expanded profile toward the dog and handler. The decoy will start stick work which will be a vigorous side-to-side motion at chest-height with the tip pointed toward the sky. This 6' rush toward the final mark will involve "running" in place which will simulate continued running toward the dog. The decoy will vocalize using a combination of growls, shouts, etc. When the evaluator blows the whistle, the decoy will turn and walk calmly back behind the van. **No contact is to be made between the dog and the decoy.**

Procedure; Part 5A; Handler/dog proceeds downwind (if possible) toward the decoy hidden behind the van. When the handler reaches the marked spot and stops, the decoy staggers out and crosses the handler/dog's path making weird motions and sounds. **Handler ceases to move forward as soon as the decoy comes into view.** (The evaluator is measuring the strength of the alert and approach/avoidance of the dog to a staggering, weird looking and sounding person crossing his path.) The decoy is not directing their behavior at the dog. The dog is given a full 6' of slack in the lead. When the decoy appears and the dog alerts, the handler will cease all forward motion, but will allow the dog to go out to the end of the lead. The handler may encourage the dog by saying, "Watch him," or some such alerting type words. The handler will brace himself and remain standing in the same spot where they stopped.

Part 5B; After the decoy has crossed the handler/dog's path for a distance of 20', they then turn towards the handler/dog, and continuing to make weird sounds and motions, slowly and tentatively advances on the handler/dog. If the dog exhibits positive reaction, continue with Part C. Exercise must be discontinued at any point where -2 or -3 reaction is noted.

Part 5C; The weird behavior turns to threatening motions towards the handler/dog. A wide range of behavior is possible on this exercise, including mixed behavior such as approach/protection/avoidance. In a mixed situation, such as protection combined with avoidance, the evaluator must ascertain the predominant mode of behavior. A strong protective response and/or an obvious willingness to defend is the desired reaction. A dog taking a positive stance, indicated by strong eye contact, arched neck, and leaning forward over front legs is an acceptable reaction. **For all parts of this exercise, the handler must not allow the dog to advance beyond leash length of the handler's stopping point.** Pressure on the leather collar should not be in the form of a sudden jerk.

Part 5D; At the conclusion of the evaluation, the dog must be brought under control within 15 seconds after the decoy retreats behind the van. Protective behavior must stop; carriage and bearing return to normal, or the dog will fail the exercise. The handler may verbally command the dog at this point. At no time should the decoy reappear or make intentional noises behind the van once Part C is completed.

NOTE: Encouragement – some dogs are so keyed to a handler's voice that encouragement will actually cause the dog to focus on them and not on the stimulus. This is particularly true of some dogs that have been extensively trained. If you have such a dog, it is best to keep words to a minimum. Formal commands are not allowed.

CHAPTER III GENERAL RULES

1. The handler should exude confidence to the dog during the evaluation, as hesitation, startle, concern etc. "goes down the lead" to the dog and may cause the dog to appear less positive than he or she may otherwise be.
2. If a dog exhibits extreme distress or displays inappropriate aggression, the Evaluator may discontinue the exercise. In some instances, a dog may become so distressed or aggressive that the Evaluator should discontinue the entire evaluation process.
3. The dog is allowed to be encouraged and to show either investigative or protective behavior in accordance with the particulars of the exercise. However, while encouraging the dog, the handler must concentrate his/her focus on the stimulus, not the dog, and let the dog lead the way. Physically assisting the dog will result in a minus score.
4. The dog must not be under command. Should the Evaluator note obedience commands before any exercise, a notation to that effect should be made on the scoresheet. The Evaluator should caution the handler and if the behavior continues, a minus score will be given.
5. Videotaping or photography on the evaluation field is at the discretion of the Evaluator.
6. Only dogs that are eligible to earn the Working Aptitude Certificate can be evaluated.
7. The Evaluator's score sheet and evaluation are final.

CHAPTER IV INSTRUCTIONS FOR DOG HANDLERS

1. The dog must be on a loose lead during the exercises to allow for freedom of movement. On each of the exercises, the amount of loose lead will be specific.
2. The dog is not to be under command at any time during the exercises.
3. The dog may be encouraged by the handler to approach the exercise stimulus, unless otherwise noted in the individual sections. Encouragement must be focused toward the stimulus, not the dog. The handler may not pull the dog on a tight lead. The handler should give the dog every opportunity to lead out and approach on his/her own before resorting to encouragement.
4. The loop of the leash shall be on either the right or left wrist of the handler at all times.

