

Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance

The Hunting Dog Owner's Code of Ethics

1. I will provide proper care for my dogs including food, water, medical care and shelter and will firmly insist other hunting dog owners do the same.
2. I will provide proper identification and contact information on all of my dogs.
3. I will diligently work to retrieve my dogs by the end of the hunt recognizing it is my moral and ethical responsibility to retrieve every dog as quickly as possible. If I cannot locate a dog by the end of the hunt, I will do my best to retrieve it as quickly thereafter as reasonably achievable.
4. I will only release my dogs on property on which I have permission to hunt and will not tolerate others releasing dogs on property where they do not have permission to hunt.
5. I will find a proper home or shelter for any dog that I determine I cannot or will not keep. I will not abandon any dog and will not tolerate any one who does.
6. I will consider myself a guest of the landowner, whether private, state or federal, always seeking permission upfront, and will conduct myself so I will be welcome in the future.
7. I will do my best to tread lightly while afield, to carefully use only established roads and trails, to leave any gates as I find them (open or closed), and foremost to leave no litter.
8. I will promote fair chase of game animals and ethical treatment of hunting dogs.
9. I will strictly follow the rules of safe gun handling, obey all game laws and regulations and will report those who violate game laws and regulations.
10. I will actively encourage young and new hunters to participate in and enjoy the thrill and camaraderie of hunting with dogs.
11. While Virginia's "Right to Retrieve" law gives me legal standing to retrieve my dogs from any property, I will practice the "Right of Respect" toward landowners with whom I come into contact and their property. I will admonish my fellow hunters to do the same.
12. I will always be mindful that I am the public face of all dog hunters when afield or in the community. I will strive to hold myself and others to the highest standards of behavior when hunting with my dogs so we all reflect well on the ancient and honorable tradition of hunting with dogs.