

Instructions for Tracklayers

1. Be aware of where you have been when laying tracks. Try to lay a “clean” track that does not loop over areas you have been previously. An exception would be an advanced team that wants loops and back tracks. A clean start and end are particularly important, unless the team is training on contamination.
2. Always make provisions for a start article, put it in a bag with your name on it. Give it to the handler at the start so they don’t forget. Otherwise they may never start the track.
3. Have a radio or cell phone if doing long tracks away from transportation. Then, if the team cannot track for some reason, you won’t be out there forever.
4. Mark the start well or have it start at a definite place the handler can identify.
5. When leaving articles on the track, leave them right on the foot steps. Don’t hide them and don’t put them within 50 feet of a corner. We want the dogs to find them as a reward for tracking. Dogs will sometimes skip over or miss corners. If you can, put the articles on a trail or travel path in thick cover to encourage the dog to find them.
6. Don’t put articles on the track that you have to have back unless you plan to retrieve them yourself. Not all dogs or teams will find them and bring them back. Paper towels can be used as articles, or items you don’t care about, or items provided by the handler. To plan ahead, you can keep a bag of old socks, small leather items, whatever you were going to throw away anyway and don’t care about. Keep the bag in your training vehicle.
7. Leave an end article if not staying at the end yourself. The end article should be large and well scented, like a towel or article of clothing. Leave the article in plain view, easy to find, not more than 2 feet off the ground if left hanging, and right on the track. Walk away from the end article by going straight away, DO NOT curve away, take a right turn or back track after leaving the end article. Some handlers may want you to leave a toy at the end.
8. Try not to loop back to your start if you left transportation there. Arrange for a ride to be taken back.
9. Don’t loop or back track on the track unless instructed to do so by the handler. If you have to back track, make note of the location and let the handler know.
10. Record your track with a GPS, or have a definite route or plan. Record it on paper if needed, noting landmarks along the way. If possible, the handler will need to know where you went within 10 feet of your path. You can do this by sighting on trees or other landmarks if working in open areas, flagging lines in the woods, or noting specific markers or paths along the way. In general woods, you may not be able to record a specific path, but you may be able to make some generalizations (like followed brook on the right side 20 to 40 feet from the brook, etc.).
11. Discuss with the handler what the objectives of the track are to be and try to fulfill those objectives.