

Race Etiquette for Mushers



North Star Sled Dog Club is excited to have your entry into the race. The sponsors and race committee have gone to many efforts to make this a successful event. Remember that what you do and how you behave reflects not only on you but on the sport as a whole. Remember that the public is watching! Please show your appreciation by following these tips:

At the Race Site

1. Conduct yourself and your crew at drivers' meetings, race sites and host towns in a professional and friendly manner.
2. Clean up everything around your vehicle, including straw. You want to leave your parking place as clean as it was when you came there.
3. Clean up the dog poop and take it home or put it, bagged, in the trash bins if they are provided by the race personnel.
4. Do not leave your vehicle unattended if your dogs are out.
5. Park all days at the race in the same place. This is to protect your dogs from spreading or getting germs to or from another kennel. Granted, it is impossible to be fully protected from the likes of the usual "doggie flu," but same parking can help.
6. Respect your fellow mushers' space needs - ask if in doubt.
7. Introduce yourself to mushers around you. Seek out and assist the new mushers. Not only is this a friendly gesture, but it also serves to see if they will need any assistance. This is a good time to seek help from them if you need it, too.
8. Make yourself available for help during race either in assisting teams to the start chutes or as trail help when you have down time.
9. Thank the sponsors and race personnel. You want them to know that they are appreciated so that they will welcome you and the race back another year.
10. If you have a disagreement or complaint, take it out of view of the public.
11. Appearances: Although wearing apparel and vehicle appearances are largely up to individual preferences, please be aware that an overall neat and tidy outfit, including your dog vehicle, can make a very positive impression. One does not need to spend a lot of money on the most expensive clothing or dog vehicle, but being neat and tidy in appearance and occupied areas can go miles to having a constructive impact.

At the Hotel/Motel/Lodging/Camp Site

1. If you are staying in a motel or hotel, please respect the premises. Do the same if you are staying with friends. Clean up after yourself both inside the hotel and outside at your vehicle. Yes, clean up the straw, too! Leave the place as clean and neat as it was when you arrived.
2. Please be careful of the dog food you bring inside. Not only can it stink (cover it!), but spills can be very difficult to clean up. Be careful and considerate!
3. Thank your hotel hosts for their hospitality. Write a thank-you note to your friends that you lodged with.
4. If you wish to bring your dog(s) inside the lodging, make sure you have permission of the owners. Disrespecting owners' wishes is one sure way to be unwelcome in subsequent years. Not only does it leave a negative impression of you, but it also reflects poorly on other mushers and the sport as a whole.
5. When you drop your dogs, be considerate of other hotel patrons. Do not do so in the middle of night unless absolutely necessary. Most mushers have quiet dogs, but sometimes dogs will let out a little whimper or bark when being dropped. Even their drop chains can make enough noise to awaken some people. Obviously, this cannot be helped. Although mushers are accustomed to the usual (and pleasant) sounds of a canine "sing," non-mushers might not be as enthralled.
6. Do not leave your dogs unattended when you drop them. This is a safety issue to keep in mind, for a dog can break its collar or snap and run away or cause havoc. Also, you never know when the odd little kid might come over to see the dogs and tease them with a Hershey bar or something, putting their little fingers in harm's way. Besides, chocolate can be deadly for dogs!
7. Tip: A final day's drop at around 10:00 PM will usually keep the dogs good until 6:30 or so the next morning.