



2022 YQ550/200

Musher/Handler Information

WELCOME

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Staff, Race Vets and Officials, welcome to the 2022 YQ550/200. This package contains helpful information regarding trail procedures, rules, driving, packing tips and reminders to help you prepare for the 2022 races.

YQ550 Musher/ Handler Meeting

Saturday February 5th. 12 noon at the musher's hall in Tok Alaska.

This meeting is mandatory for all 2022 Mushers. (Handler attendance is strongly encouraged.)

Be on time for this meeting. Roll call is done at exactly at the meeting start time with closed doors.

You will be given an overview of procedures, highlights, updated info, and a chance to ask all your questions.

You will meet the Officials and Vet Team.

YQ200 Musher/Handler Meeting

Monday February 7th. 12 noon in Circle, Alaska.

This meeting is mandatory for all 2022 Mushers. (Handler attendance is strongly encouraged.)

Be on time for this meeting. Roll call is done at exactly at the meeting start time with closed doors.

You will be given an overview of procedures, highlights, updated info, and a chance to ask all your questions.

You will meet the Officials and Vet Team.

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLERS

General Procedures

The following general procedures will be adhered to throughout the entire race:

Park your dog truck ONLY in designated parking areas.

Pay attention to where your exhaust is going when parked (i.e. Keep it away from other dog trucks that might have dogs in it or from blowing into the holding area or into buildings).

Please be courteous to everyone.

If ever in doubt, ASK a Race Judge or the Race Marshal. They are the only people on the trail with authority regarding questions on rules, assistance or conduct.

Checkpoint amenities are in place for use by the mushers; food and sleeping arrangements are not guaranteed for handlers. Do not eat the food or use sleeping quarters without first talking to the checkpoint manager.

Carry this document with you in the truck at all times.

Checkpoint and Vet Check Procedures

The following procedures will be adhered to at all checkpoints and during vet checks:

Handler Arrival

When the handler arrives at a checkpoint, they are to identify themselves to the checkpoint personnel.

The handler should inquire about and familiarize themselves with the following:

Debris/trash/straw collection or disposal points.

The location and limits of the holding area.

The locations where the teams will be arriving and departing.

Location of dog holding area, food drop bags, straw, water, methyl hydrate (methanol), musher's food and musher's sleeping area – info to pass along to your musher.

Current standings and the approximate/expected arrival time of teams.

Try to arrive at a checkpoint before your musher does. They will be happy to see you and may have important information about dropped dogs. If you don't make it in time your musher may worry about you, the truck, dropped dogs....

Prepare – talk with your musher well in advance of the race.

Clarify their expectations AND yours.

Even if you have a schedule set up with your musher, keep an eye on what's happening in the race; things change and schedules can vary significantly with weather and trail conditions. Remember that bad weather will also influence your travel time.

Musher Arrival

When a dog team has entered a checkpoint and the musher has completed the official check-in procedures, the handler may then take control of the team's leader(s) or the sled and assist the musher in moving the team to the location designated as the parking spot for that team. After the team is secured, the handler must immediately

leave the holding area. The handler may return to observe the team when the musher leaves the holding area.

Give your musher information about the location of services (straw, food drop bags, sleeping quarters, food) or the location of a Race Judge or Vet.

Understand that things will happen – your approach needs to be flexible and supportive of others.

Your musher will be exhausted and may act with disrespect. Don't take it personally. Let it go and discuss any issues after the race when everybody has had a good rest. Don't bother the musher with your problems along the road and try to only have positive news for them on the trail.

Holding Area

Only one handler per team will be authorized to be in the holding area at any time.

If the musher is in the holding area, the handler must leave.

While in the holding area, the handler may stand or sit either at the front of the team or at the rear of the team behind the sled. The handler may not walk back and forth from the front of the team to the sled or chat with the dogs. "Observe Only."

Know the rules and understand your responsibilities and limitations.

If you are not sure about something ASK a Race Judge or the Race Marshal BEFORE you do it. They are the only people on the trail with authority regarding questions on rules, assistance or conduct. Do not ask checkpoint volunteers.

A handler may not enter the mushers sleeping area – if a message needs to be sent or there is an emergency situation, only a Race Judge or the Race Marshal shall enter the mushers sleeping area to communicate to the musher.

A handler is not permitted to touch any dog, gear, equipment, food or water at any time, except:

While parking a team or during immediate departure.

Unless directed to do so by a Race Judge or the Race Marshal .

Until after the musher and team have officially checked out and left a checkpoint.

In an emergency where anyone is permitted to assist any team (i.e. dog fight, loose dog, loose team etc. to prevent harm to the dogs).

Vet Checks

During mandatory Vet Checks or musher initiated vet exams at checkpoints, the handler will leave the holding area without being asked or instructed to do so – the exception is during the collection of blood/urine samples.

The handler may be present at all times during the collection and sealing of blood and/or urine samples from their musher's team and is authorized to sign the documents evidencing the procedure and shall do so if the musher is not there. At no time may the handler administer or provide any type of substance, including medications, food or water to any dog in any team within the checkpoint unless directed to by a Race Judge or the Race Marshal.

When a dog is dropped from a team at a checkpoint, the handler may take physical custody of the dog ONLY from a Race Vet, a Race Judge or the Race Marshal AFTER the appropriate forms have been completed.

Musher Departure

A handler is never permitted:

To notify any checkpoint personnel of a musher's intention to depart a checkpoint.
To sign any musher out of a checkpoint.

A handler is ONLY permitted to assist:

When the team is being moved from the holding area to the check-out location for immediate departure.

If instructed to do so by a Race Judge or the Race Marshal (i.e. this instruction might be issued if an entry or exit to an area is particularly tricky).

Handler Departure Responsibilities

After the musher has officially departed a checkpoint, the handler may enter the holding area and collect the supplies, debris and trash that were bagged by the musher prior to their departure from the checkpoint. The handler is to then rake, bag, and remove all straw and animal waste remaining from their team. All supplies, trash, debris, straw, and animal waste is to be disposed of properly by the handler. If you are unsure of disposal procedures/locations, ask a Race Judge or the Race Marshal. *The musher will incur monetary and/or time penalties if this collection and disposal is not done properly.*

Ensure you know the procedure for garbage removal for each checkpoint (which may include a designated area on site or may mean taking it to the dump)

It is strongly recommended that the handler have a hard tine rake and a broom style rake to improve the checkpoint holding area clean up.

Use good quality garbage bags to make your life easier (cheap ones break easily in the cold)

Clean your dog team's parking spaces (clean them well).

Do not remove food drop bags, clean-up your musher's parking area, or leave a checkpoint less than 30 minutes to one hour after your musher's departure. *If your musher has to return to the checkpoint for any reason, they will not be able to access their food drop bags if they have been handled.*

Retrieving Dropped Dogs

When retrieving a dropped dog from a Race Veterinarian, be sure to discuss that dog's condition carefully with the Vet – if you have any questions, ASK!

Be sure that you completely understand any TREATMENT or PRESCRIPTION that the Race Vet recommends for your dropped dog – it is very important to follow the Race Vet's instructions completely.

It is advised that you have the dog checked again by a Vet six hours after being dropped, and in some cases regularly for 12-15 hours. This is obviously dependent on your travel schedule. Don't hesitate to have a dog checked again by a Race Vet at the next checkpoint.

Before leaving any checkpoint, determine if your musher dropped any dogs there – don't start driving unless you KNOW that all of your musher's dogs have been accounted for.

CONDUCT

The Code of the North dictates that “all travelers be courteous, helpful, generous and honorable”.

Please remember that as a handler you are a part of the overall image of the Yukon Quest and your musher. As such, your behavior and demeanor will be judged by all the people who observe us along the trail. It is critical that we all conduct ourselves in a friendly, courteous and professional manner.

PACKING THE TRUCK

Here is a list of highly recommended items:

A hard tine rake AND a broom style/garden-leaf rake

Hand warmers

Long leash

Good quality, strong and durable garbage bags for clean-up.

Snow shovel and toboggan.

Water and food for everyone in your rig – dogs and humans.

Minimum 5 gallons of extra fuel.

Extra fluids for the truck - power steering, hydraulic, anti-freeze, oil, etc.

Extra-long extension cord, battery charger.

A warm sleeping bag and extra winter clothing for road emergencies

Maps, a copy of the YQ550 OR YQ200 Rules, and this document.

Be careful. This isn't a race for you. Stop when you get tired and convoy if possible.

GAS STATION LIST

Between Fairbanks & Circle City

FAIRBANKS				
Sourdough Fuel	Airport Rd, S. Cushman, Farmers Loop	24hour credit card pump		
Fox General Store	Mile 11.5 Steese Hwy N	24hour credit card pump	Y	groceries
PLEASANT VALLEY				
Pleasant Valley Store	Mile 23.4 Chena Hot Springs Road		Y	groceries
CENTRAL				
Central Corner		Open during restaurant hours	Y	Food, groceries
CIRCLE				
H. C. Company			Y	Groceries, tire repair

*Please note - This is a guide and winter hours are subject to change.

FINAL WORDS

Try and have some fun out there. This is an opportunity to meet new people and see some beautiful country. Read the race rules and carry a copy in your truck, you are responsible for the rules that apply to you, and by extension, your team.

The Yukon Quest is unique because you really are part of the team. Your actions can and will have a profound impact on your musher. Be supportive. Be patient. Let your musher “vent” if they need to. Everyone is going to be really tired, so try and stay focused on what your role is during the race.

There have been some impressive blow ups between mushers and handlers on this race in the past, don't let it happen to you.

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