

# Guidelines for organization of Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome tests (Guidelines for organization of BOAS tests)



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*This document is a translation. In cases of doubt, the Finnish version will prevail.*

## 1 Test procedure

The procedure of tests assessing Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome (BOAS) in short-muzzled breeds is described in these guidelines. These guidelines complement BOAS guidelines.

At least one supervising veterinarian as well as a sufficient number of assistants must be present at the test.

Appropriate recordings are made on the test form as the test goes on.

## 2 Test place and conditions

The test is preferably held indoors. If the test is held outdoors, the weather must be dry (no rain). The exercise tolerance test is carried out on a 30–90-metre-long track, or on an U or L shaped right-angled track. The site must be safe for dogs.

The temperature at the site is measured and must be 15–25 °C.

The waiting and relief area for dogs waiting for their turn must be located far enough from the test site.

The dog is walked either by its owner, or by a handler appointed by the owner.

The dog is kept on leash during the test.

## 3 Test procedure

1. Checking vaccinations and identification markings right before the walk
2. Clinical examination of the dog
3. Dog starts walking and timing begins
4. Dog walks the distance required in the exercise tolerance test
5. When the distance is reached:
  - a. Timing and walking stops
  - b. Timing of recovery period starts immediately after the dog has stopped walking
6. Clinical examination of the dog after the walk
7. Clinical examination of the dog after the recovery period
8. The veterinarian fills out the result section of the form immediately or later, after having considered the dog's results and general condition more thoroughly

### **3.1 Clinical examination before the exercise tolerance test**

The supervising veterinarian examines the dog's general condition and assesses its breathing. Heart rate and rectal temperature are measured.

If the dog shows trouble breathing, its mucous membrane is bluish, its body temperature is higher than normal (over 39,3 °C), or its general condition is abnormal in some other way, the dog fails the exercise tolerance test and it may not start walking.

Grade of nostril stenosis is assessed in accordance with [appendix 1](#).

Craniofacial ratio (*CFR*) is measured.

### **3.2 Exercise tolerance test**

During the exercise tolerance test, the dog walks or trots at its own pace (the dog must not gallop), back and forth a track. The handler may run if the dog's pace calls for it.

If the veterinarian notices severe signs of breathing difficulties or other immediate threat to the dog's health (for instance, possible heat stroke), the test is stopped, the dog is given necessary first aid, and failed is recorded as the test result.

If the interruption is caused by something else than airway syndrome/heat stroke (for instance limping), discontinued is recorded as the result. The reason for interruption of the test is recorded on the form.

### **3.3 Clinical examination after the exercise tolerance test**

The dog's body temperature is measured immediately after the walk. If the temperature exceeds 39,5 °C, the test is interrupted, and the dog is given necessary first aid.

Clinical grade of BOAS is assessed in accordance with [appendix 2](#).

### **3.4 Recovery time and clinical examination following it**

The recovery time is 15 minutes. The dog spends this time with its owner/handler in the same space as where the walk was carried out. The dog must not be cooled down in other ways than by offering it water to drink (with the exception of animal welfare grounds).

Once the recovery time is up, heart rate and rectal temperature are re-measured and the dog's general condition is assessed (the general appearance of the dog must be normal). Based on these, the veterinarian decides whether the dog has recovered to its original state or not.

## **4 Test result**

Supervising veterinarian records the results to the Finnish Kennel Club's database, test forms are also sent to the Finnish Kennel Club.

Test results are determined according to the criteria provided in BOAS Guidelines.

### **Some notes for test organizers**

- A thermometer to measure the temperature of the test room/site must be taken to the test.
- Dog owners should be instructed to make their dogs familiar with walking on a leash as well as having their rectal temperature taken.

- Make sure that necessary equipment to cool down dogs as first aid is available.
- Several dogs can take the test at the same time on tracks that are side by side (dogs may not be walked in single file), if there is enough space and other resources allow it.
- It is good to have a separate form for monitoring laps in which the length of the track has been considered. This can be used by the timekeeper to monitor the distance walked.
- Water must be available at the recovery location.