



2012 YQ300

Handlers Info

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WELCOME

On behalf of the Board of Directors in Alaska and the Yukon, Officials, Race Vets, and Staff, welcome to the 2012 Yukon Quest 300 (YQ300). This package contains trail rules, procedures, packing tips, driving tips and reminders to help you prepare for the 2012 race.

About the Pre-Race Handlers Meeting

- Fri, Feb 3rd 3-5pm in Fairbanks – Alpine Lodge
- This meeting is mandatory for all 2012 YQ300 Musher and their Handlers (ie. bring the whole team if applicable).
- **BE ON TIME** or early for this meeting. Roll call is done at exactly 3pm and penalties may be issued if handlers or mushers are late or absent.
- You will be given an overview of procedures, highlights, updated info, and a chance to ask all your questions.
- You will meet the YQ300 Race Marshal, Head Veterinarian and possibly some of the Judges and Vets.

Key things to remember

- 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 other volunteers.
- Have fun, you will learn a lot.
- Know the rules and understand the Handlers' responsibilities and limitations.
- Clean the dog team parking spaces - **Clean them well.**
- Do not remove food drop bags, clean-up or leave a Checkpoint for 30 – 60 minutes following 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.*
- Keep the truck out of the ditch.
- Try to be there to welcome your musher into each Checkpoint.
- **Prepare** – talk with your musher well in advance of the race - clarify their expectations AND yours.
- Understand that things will happen – your approach needs to be flexible and supportive of others.
- **Carry this document with you in the truck.**

THE RULES

Official YQ300 Rules Relevant to Handlers

Here are a few important rules that are especially important to Handlers. Please note: A full copy of the Official 2012 YQ300 Rules can be found on our website at <http://www.yukonquest.com/site/yq300-sign-up-info/> or from the Yukon Quest office.

Reminder: The time differential will be adjusted during the Circle City 6 hour mandatory layover.

RULE Trail Procedure # 13. Outside Assistance:

“No planned help is allowed throughout the race. No musher may receive outside assistance between or at checkpoints unless an emergency has been declared by the Race Marshal, or is subsequently so ruled. The intended spirit of this race dictates that the musher be self-sufficient and therefore able to help other mushers in case of real need. No assistance which would result in competitive advantage may be accepted or solicited. Handlers are not allowed on the YQ300 Trail between checkpoints.”

RULE Trail Procedure #26. Drugs:

“YQI Veterinarians or Veterinary Assistants may randomly collect blood and/or urine samples beginning at the Vet Check and continuing until following the Finish. It is the responsibility of the musher to [ensure that they or their handler] assist the Race Veterinarian or Veterinary Assistant in the collection of the samples. The musher or the musher’s handler **must** be present at all times during the taking and sealing of such samples. Documents evidencing the procedure **shall** be signed by the musher or their handler. No person may interfere in any way with the collection of samples or procedures conducted under this rule.”

RULE Trail Procedure # 33. Sportmanship:

The Code of the North dictates that all travelers be courteous, helpful, generous and honorable. **Rude behavior or inappropriate actions by a musher or handler may result in a penalty, withdrawal, or disqualification.**

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLERS

General Procedures

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

1. Park your dog truck ONLY in designated parking areas
2. 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)
3. Wear your Official Handler Armband or ID when you are “working” at any checkpoints
4. Please be courteous to everyone

What is Considered Assistance

A handler is not permitted to touch any dog, gear, equipment, food or water at anytime, 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 departed the Checkpoint
- In an emergency, anyone is permitted to assist any team (i.e. dog fight, loose dog, loose team, etc. to prevent harm to the dogs)

A handler is not permitted:

- To administer or provide any type of substance, including medications, food or water to any dog in any team or to chat with the dogs
- To enter the Mushers Sleeping Area for any reason – if a message needs to be sent or there is an emergency situation, only a Race Judge or the Race Marshal shall enter to communicate that to the musher
- To pre-order, pick-up or pay for food for mushers at the Checkpoints
- To access any services for mushers (straw, food drop bags etc.)
- To notify any checkpoint personnel of a musher’s intention to depart the Checkpoint
- To sign the musher out of a Checkpoint

A handler is ONLY permitted to assist:

- After the dog team has arrived at 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 that the Checkpoint personnel have designated as the parking spot for that team.
- When the dog team is departing from a Checkpoint after the musher has completed the official check-out procedures, the handler may then take control of the team’s leader(s) or the sled and assist the musher in moving the team from the parking spot to the official check-out location.
- **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).
- By giving the musher information about the location of services (straw, food drop bags, sleeping quarters, food) or the location of a Race Judge or Vet.

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

Checkpoint, Dog Drop and Vet Check Procedures

The following procedures will be adhered to at all Checkpoints, Dog Drops 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
- location where it is acceptable for handlers to sleep (if applicable) and find food
- the approx/ expected arrival time of your team
- ask Race Judge or Race Marshal what is allowed/required in terms of team parking and taxi to check-out

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. A handler may assist when the team is being moved from the holding area to the check-out location for immediate departure. **These are the only times when a handler may touch the sled, leader(s), any dog, any equipment or any substance that is associated with the musher/team while the team is still officially entered in the race.**

Holding Area

The holding area (where the dog teams are parked) of all Checkpoints and Dog Drops are considered to be part of the YQ300 Trail.

1. Only one handler per team will be authorized to be in the holding area at anytime.
2. When the handler is in the holding area of any Checkpoint the handler shall wear the YQI Handler Armband in a manner that is highly visible. This armband will be given to each musher at the Pre-Race Musher's Meeting.
3. While in the holding area, the handler may stand 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"
4. The handler is not permitted to touch any dog, gear, equipment, food or water at anytime, except as discussed in "What is Considered Assistance" on pg.5 or unless directed to by a Race Judge or the Race Marshal or until after that handler's team has officially checked out and departed the Checkpoint.

Vet Checks

1. 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 – exceptions are during the collection of blood/urine samples (see details in next paragraph)
2. 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.** See *Rule Trail Procedure #26 Drugs.*
3. 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.
4. 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

1. The handler is not authorized to notify any checkpoint personnel of a musher's intention to depart the Checkpoint nor is the handler authorized to sign the musher out of a Checkpoint; these two duties are the responsibility of every musher.
2. **It is highly recommended that the handler wait approximately 30-60 min.** after their team has officially departed the checkpoint OR as directed by the musher **before beginning the collection/disposal process** and departure from the Checkpoint. **DO NOT TOUCH THE BAGS.** Musher's are allowed to return to a Checkpoint 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 or moved.

Clean Up

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 wastes are 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. Rule Trail Procedure # 9.

1. 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 far easier in the cold)

Retrieving Dropped Dogs

Make sure you fully understand the responsibilities of each party involved in retrieving a dropped dog:

- **Mushers** - any musher dropping a dog from the race MUST fill out a Dropped Dog Form and submit that form to the Race Veterinarian when they hand over the dog.
- **Race Veterinarians** - every dropped dog MUST be examined by a Race Vet who will also sign the Dropped Dog form.
- **Handlers** - when retrieving a dropped dog from the 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 6 hours after being dropped, and in some cases regularly for 12-15 hours. This is obviously dependant on your travel schedule. Don't hesitate to have a dog checked again by a Race Vet at the next Checkpoint or Dog Drop.
 - Before leaving any Checkpoint or Dog Drop, determine if your musher dropped any dogs there – Don't start driving unless you KNOW that all of your musher's dogs are with them on the trail.

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 all of us conduct ourselves in a friendly, courteous and professional manner.

The musher may incur fine, withdrawal or disqualification for rude behavior or inappropriate actions by a musher or handler. Rule Trail Procedure #33.

PACKING THE TRUCK

Here is a list of highly recommended items:

- A hard tine rake AND a broom style/garden-leaf rake
- Good quality, strong and durable black garbage bags for clean-up
- Snow shovel
- 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, windshield wiper fluids
- Spare tire, jack, wrench, extra-long extension cord, battery charger
- Maps
- **A copy of the YQ300 rules AND this package**

DRIVING THE YUKON QUEST

Fairbanks to Two Rivers (Mile 53 on Chena Hot Springs Road)

Going North on Steese Highway, take a right at Chena Hot Springs Road Exit, go to milepost 53 (53 miles). Turn left into the checkpoint area.

Handlers must park in the first parking area (it will be well marked). Handlers' trucks will not be allowed past this first area as the Checkpoint has very limited parking. When leaving Two Rivers, turn Right on Chena Hot Springs Road, going back the way you came, all the way to the Steese Highway. Turn right on the Steese, which takes you to Mile 101.

Gas is available at Pleasant Valley Store for 24h from Sat 4th to Sun 5th late at night.

Two Rivers to Mile 101 (101 mi/ 162 km)

Completely fuel up your vehicle in Fairbanks or at the Pleasant Valley Store in Two Rivers, and bring extra gas cans - there is no gas between Fairbanks and Central. After that, the road is narrow, with lots of curves, overflow across the road and tiny to non-existent shoulders.

Be **extremely** careful at 13 Mile Summit and Eagle Summit going in and COMING OUT! When stopping at mile 101 be very aware of the traffic on the road, snowplows will be out and about.

Mile 101 to Central (26 mi/ 42 km)

You will be going over Eagle Summit and then begin a long descent into Central. If you miss the Checkpoint you are asleep at the wheel. **Don't do this drive in the dark.** Watch for possible overflow, white-outs and snow plows. Fuel is available in Central, and not guaranteed in Circle.

Central to Circle (a very, very long 34 mi/ 55 km)

When you drive this section, during the day or night: [Have it Together!](#)

The road is mostly gravel, no shoulders, lots of curves and numerous places to run way off the road. If you do go off the road the recovery vehicle will have to come from Fairbanks. It is also one of the more mind numbing sections you will drive during this race.

Gas Station List

	Location	Hours	Diesel	Other Services
FAIRBANKS TO CIRCLE				
FAIRBANKS				
Sourdough Fuel	Airport Rd, S. Cushman, Farmers Loop	24hour credit card pump	Y	Groceries
Fox General Store	Mile 11.5 Steese Hwy N	24hour credit card pump	Y	Groceries
TWO RIVERS (Mile 53)				
Pleasant Valley Store	Mile 23.4 Chena Hot Springs Road	24hour from Sat am to Sun pm	Y	Groceries
CENTRAL				
Central Corner	Central	24 hour during race	Y	Groceries, Restaurant
CIRCLE				
H. C. Company			N	Groceries, tire repair

FINAL WORDS

Try and have some fun out there. This is an opportunity to meet new people and see some new 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. Don't hit them with every little problem you have encountered on your drive as soon as they get into a Checkpoint. 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. Some input from Joe May below, used with his permission:

A note for first time handlers:

Since the inception of the Yukon Quest, the **handlers convoy** has, for some, proven to be as grueling as the dog race. Frozen engines, flat tires, and blown transmissions aren't unknown. Cooperation with other crews long ago has become the norm. Please help each other if needed. It's a long cold road. The up side is that it's an opportunity to meet some great new people.

That pretty much sums it up. Be safe out there, help each other out, be patient with your musher and if you have questions don't be afraid to ask myself or a Race Judge. Thanks for participating and have a great race.