

## Member Application Process

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#### ORIENTATION AND PHILOSOPHY

The South Michigan Schutzhund and Police Club (SMSPC) welcomes new members. The strength and future of Schutzhund / VPG rests in our ability to attract and integrate new enthusiasts into the sport. However, the manner in which Schutzhund clubs operate varies. As a result, SMSPC requires anyone interested in joining, whether veteran dog trainer or a novice, to make a reasonable investment of time to get to know SMSPC and its members, and make sure that SMSPC is the right fit.

SMSPC is not a dog training service. The philosophy of SMSPC is that it is the handler's responsibility to train their dog and the Club's responsibility to assist and support them in the process. SMSPC expects Club members to train with the goal of working towards a Schutzhund / VPG, DPO or other USA approved degree or title.

#### APPLICATION PROCESS

The membership application process takes about three (3) months. Schutzhund / VPG training requires considerable time and energy. Through experience, SMSPC has found that time invested up front to frankly assess the Club and participation in the sport saves time and effort for both SMSPC and for the applicant in the long run. Accordingly, anyone interested in joining SMSPC is first asked to attend several training sessions to observe training, ask questions and get to know the Club members prior to submitting an application for membership.

If the applicant already has a dog, the Club will conduct a temperament test and ability evaluation to determine if the dog is a suitable candidate for Schutzhund / VPG training. The dog must have a sound temperament in order to train at SMSPC. Any dog of sound temperament, regardless of ability, is welcome to train at the Club. Dangerous dogs will not be permitted.

Once a membership application is submitted, Club officers review the application and within four weeks will either deny the application or grant provisional approval. During this time, the applicant must make every effort to attend regular weekly training sessions.

If provisional approval is given and the dog passes the temperament test, SMSPC will begin working with the handler and dog on the fifth week after submission of the application.

Final approval of the application will be granted after an affirmative vote by the voting membership of the Club. This will take place within eight weeks after the application is submitted.

All fees, including membership dues and one-time equipment fee, must be paid within two weeks after the membership vote and final approval is granted.

The Executive/Finance Committee of SMSPC reserves the right to change the application process at their discretion with no notification to pending or prospective applicants.