



Dog Scouts of America
Merit Badge Check-Off Sheet

Scent Discrimination

Items **bolded** below are requirements that must be demonstrated to the Evaluator. Non-bolded items are training steps that may be introduced in class and are helpful for achieving the requirements. All behaviors must have been taught or re-taught to the dog (preferably using a new cue), using only positive reward-based methods.

- Handler understands the canine olfactory system (what scent is to the dog)
- Handler understands that he cannot teach a dog to scent, but only to identify different scents; handler knows that scent can be anything that they want the dog to find for future work (leather, human hair or nails, essential oils, invasive plants, etc.)
- Handler knows how to use a clicker as a conditioned reinforcer and knows how to identify when a behavior is ready to progress to the next step
- Handler can get dog to target on a scented object
- Handler understands and can describe the difference between an indication and an alert**
- Handler establishes a solid primary alert signal and withholds reinforcement until the proper alert is given in response to the dog locating the scent
- Handler knows when and how to add a verbal cue that tells the dog to find the scent and do the alert; the smell becomes the cue for the alert
- Handler trusts the dog's ability to "find it" and can read the dog's alert to identify the location of the target object when it has been hidden from view by another person and the handler does not know its location**
- Dog can find one target scent in a room with multiple hiding spots where the dog has not previously practiced scent work**
- Dog demonstrates finding the target scent in two different rooms not previously used for practice where the handler does not know the location of the scent article; the scent should be hidden in a location that is at or below the dog's nose level**
- Dog performs a "leave it" with food to the same standard as used for the Dog Scout test