



Dog Scouts of America
Evaluation Criteria

Scent Discrimination
Advance Scent Discrimination
Expert Sniffer - Interiors
Expert Sniffer - Exteriors

PURPOSE: Scent work can increase the quality of life for both the dog and handler as they work together as a team utilizing the dog's keen sense of smell. Expert Sniffer Interiors and Exteriors provide activities to build upon skills that the dog has learned when earning the Scent Discrimination and Advance Scent Discrimination badges.

DOG REQUIREMENTS: The dog must demonstrate a good indication behavior of having found the "scent(s)" used in the test and must be able to demonstrate a "leave it" to the standard of the Dog Scout Test. The "leave it" must be something the dog really wants when placed around the "scent" odors and chooses to "leave it" by not indicating on it or retrieving it to find the "scent." The dog is required to locate the appropriate scent with no direction from the handler when placed "blind" for both dog and handler. Dog must provide a strong indication at the location of the "scent(s)" source.

HANDLER REQUIREMENTS: The human member of the team is responsible for applying the knowledge gained when working with the dog to earn the Scent and Advance Scent Discrimination badges. The handler needs to know and be able to fully explain how the environmental attributes affect their dog's ability to find the odor source to help their dog be successful. The needed information is found in the General Scent and Environmental Affects pages.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED: It is preferred that the scent used for this badge be something useful that can be hidden from view in the ways required for the badge. This can include: Mercaptan (the harmless scent added to natural gas that you can get on "scratch and sniff" cards from the gas company), gun powder, fireworks, your keys/cell phone/TV remote (yes, they each have distinctive scents), bedbugs, termites (if you really want to even have these in your house!), scent used for cadaver dog training or simulated drugs (keep it legal!), those scents used in competition; birch, anise, clove, cypress, vetiver. If you have a different scent you want to use, verify with your Evaluator before the test that it will work. Typically, once the dog learns the basics, you can add additional scents that the dog is trained to find (if you need to use a new scent).

PROCESS: The dog and handler must find the number of hides based on each badge. The evaluator must observe the dog finding, alerting, indicating by their known indication behavior, and a leave it during the test where appropriate. This can be done in person or by video. If by video, the handler must face the camera and explain any required knowledge as per the check off sheet.

ALLOWED:

- ON or off leash
- Flat collar or harness
- Variation in indications

NOT ALLOWED:

- Pinch, choke, or electronic collars
- Rough handling of the dog
- Failing to keep the dog's physical and mental health a top priority
- Putting the dog in danger

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:



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Leash: The dog can be on or off leash or long line for this badge test. A harness may also be used. As a handler must be able to choose what is best for their own dog.

Indication: The dog needs to alert to the scent and do the indication behavior (that was specified by the handler before the test started) in response to finding the target scent. The dog should clearly indicate exactly where the scent is hidden. If the dog is randomly offering the indication behavior, the test will need to be re-tried after additional training. The handler needs to be able to easily locate the hidden target based on the dog's obvious indication.

Leave-it (Scent Discrimination badge): The leave it must show a test of the dog's ability to choose to leave it when told. Three successive, correct, straight line, passes on a loose leash past or over an object the dog really wants with the dog close enough to get the object and instead choosing to leave it. This item should NOT be the scent you want the dog to find/indicate, but instead be food or a toy or something the dog really wants to go investigate or get. See the Dog Scout test guidelines for more details and training info.

Leave-it (Expert Sniffer - Interiors Badge): The leave it must show a test of the dog's ability to choose to leave-the object or food that the dog really wants that is hidden from view by both the dog and handler within the search area of the "scent(s)." These items should NOT be the scent you want the dog to find/indicate, but instead be food and a toy or something the dog really wants to go investigate or get. See the Dog Scout test guidelines for more details and training info.

Video submissions: If the test is done by video, the handler's part of the test needs to be shared with the Evaluator either in written form or verbally on the video. Be sure all components in bold text on the check-off sheet are covered, in detail, and that it is in your own words (not copy/paste from the training materials!)

Hiding place is secret: For the test, the handler cannot know where the item is hidden, only the general area of the search (such as the room or vehicles in which the target scent may be hiding). So you will need a helper to hide the item(s) for you.

Handler Assistance: The handler may use a directed search and should utilize a complete search pattern.

Rewards: Handler may have food or a toy hidden on their body in a pocket (no treat pouch), but the dog should be focused on his work, not the reward. The reward can be delivered after the find and indication and after the handler confirms the location of the item.

Safety: It is the handler's job to be sure their dog is safe at all times. Do not let the dog jump onto, go under/over or open anything that might harm the dog.

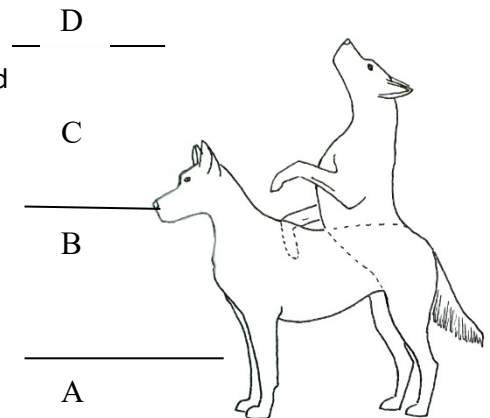
No Retrieve: The target scent should be hidden in a non-airtight container (cloth bags work well for most scents but not required) and/or in a way that the dog cannot see or retrieve the item. Exception is the owner's article. This could be a retrieve.



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Height of hide: Review the chart to the right based on information for each badge for the height of "scent" is placed. Interior hides should all be placed at different heights based on the diagram, using (A) Item placed between ground level and the dog's hock, (B) Item placed between the level the dog's hock and the dog's nose when standing on all four feet, (C) Item placed between the dog's nose when the dog is standing on all four feet and when dog is standing on hind legs, (D) Item placed Above where the dog stands on his hind legs. If there is something for the dog to climb onto near the scent location, take that new level into account when determining the dog's height/reach.



Areas/Distractions: The test area should be different for each test. The areas should have distractions to show that the dog can work in different areas with different distractions. Distractions are the normal things, activities and scents found in those areas. The test should take place in areas you have not used for training any scent work skills. For Expert Sniffer – Exteriors, the ground hide area is for dogs only. Handlers need to stay out of the 72" & 72" area. Keeping the dog leashed could be helpful here.

Hiding time: The amount of time the item is hidden should allow for the scent to escape the hiding place. A minimum of 10 minutes should be used. For example, if it's hidden inside a cabinet, you might want to give some time between placement and search so the scent can percolate out of the hiding spot.

Time for the Finds: The evaluator will determine the time for each session but not going over 5 minutes for single hides and 10 minutes for multiple hides.

Keep it safe: The scented item should not be harmful to the dog in case the dog gets the item in his mouth or attempts a retrieve. The scent of toxic items (such as drugs, explosives, or accelerants) can be transferred to a piece of cloth or roll of scotch tape simply by storing the items together in a sealed container. Smaller targets like the tip of a Q-tip with the target odor should only be used when you are certain the dog will not do a retrieve and that the dog can't access an item that is small enough to swallow.