



Dog Scouts of America Evaluation Criteria

Backpacking

PURPOSE: This badge demonstrates that the owner and dog can be model citizens on the trail, respecting the environment and ‘leaving no trace’ while the dog carries a properly designed, fitted and loaded canine backpack. The dog and handler will hike a total of 6 miles, including one 3-mile hike with the dog under pack.

DOG REQUIREMENTS: The dog must wear a properly designed, fitted backpack loaded with the required items. The dog must hike under control, with minimal tightening of the leash and no darting after wildlife, or other dogs, humans or horses encountered on the trail. The dog logs a minimum of 6 miles for this badge.

HANDLER REQUIREMENTS: The handler must demonstrate that he/she knows how to select, fit and adjust a pack suitable for the dog. The handler must demonstrate the ability to load and balance the pack for the dog. In order to ensure that he/she never forgets the items in the pack, the handler must learn the required items and be able to recite them without looking at a list or in the pack. The handler can choose to use the FFMICKS acronym or use some other means to remember the required items. The handler must be able to identify poison ivy and/or other poisonous plants and can describe other dangers he/she may encounter while hiking in the area. Handler always practices the ‘leave no trace’ principles.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED: The dog needs a backpack that is properly fitted and adjusted. The required items must be loaded into the pack. Items are water, bowl, spare collar and leash, clean up bags, flashlight, first aid kit, matches, identification (the handler’s), compass, knife and a signaling device like a mirror, whistle or cell phone. If a cell phone is carried it is recommended that a backup device be carried as well since the cell phone may run out of charge or the dog and handler may hike out of range of a cell phone signal.

PROCESS: The evaluator must have some way to verify the mileage hiked. The evaluator may hike with the dog/handler team or the team may provide a screenshot of an exact map of the hike with mileage from a hiking app. The evaluator will have the dog demonstrate a reliable ‘leave it’ using DSA methods and done to the same standards as testing for the Dog Scout badge including 3 successful passes. The evaluator will verify all other items on the check sheet including having the handler recite the required items included in the dog’s pack. The evaluator determines whether or not the pack is appropriate for the dog and can make a recommendation for a different pack if needed.

ALLOWED:

- Allowances for disabled handlers
 - Alternative handler
 - Bike, power chair, etc.
- Logging miles for the Pack Dog title at the same time

NOT ALLOWED:

- Rough handling of the dog
- Dog doing anything disruptive while hiking
- Logging miles for the hiking badge at the same time
- Logging miles for badges where the dog is not required to and should not wear a pack (Cani-cross, K9 Fitness, etc.) at the same time