



## Dog Scouts of America Evaluation Criteria

## Hiking

**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 is hiking off leash. The dog and handler will hike a total of 6 miles, including one 3-mile hike

**DOG REQUIREMENTS:** The dog must demonstrate proper trail manners while completing at least 6 miles of off leash hiking. The dog must have a reliable and instant recall and must not dart after wildlife, or other dogs, humans or horses encountered on the trail.

**HANDLER REQUIREMENTS:** The handler must keep safety and the physical and mental well-being of his/her dog as a top priority. Handler should carry water and a minimum of outdoor safety/survival gear, such as what is carried in the dog's pack when backpacking. The handler is required to log the miles hiked. 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. The handler must always practice the 'leave no trace' principles.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Other than the supplies the handler should carry little is needed to earn this badge other than a collar on the dog and a leash that may be attached when needed. This badge may not be obtainable in all areas because the hiking required for the badge must be done legally. The trails chosen for hikes must allow off leash dogs. Because of the danger from passing cars, mileage logged for the badge may not be done in urban areas or near roads.

**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. Handler will be asked to identify poison ivy and other dangers that may be encountered in the area. Dog will be tested on other required behaviors on the check sheet.

### ALLOWED:

- Logging miles for Trail Dog concurrently
- Handler may have treats
- Allowances for disabled handlers
  - Alternative handler
  - Bike, power chair, etc.

### NOT ALLOWED:

- Using treats as a lure
- Dog off leash on or near a roadway
- Dog getting out of site of the handler
- Dog causing a disturbance or harassing wildlife
- Any rough handling of the dog