



Dog Scouts of America
Evaluation Criteria

Puppy Paddler

PURPOSE: This badge demonstrates that the handler has taught the dog to swim.

DOG REQUIREMENTS: The dog must swim at least 10'. The dog may swim with or to the handler, but not in the direction of the shore or other water exit.

HANDLER REQUIREMENTS: The handler must demonstrate his/her ability to teach the dog to swim using appropriate methods. The safety and the physical and mental well being of the dog must be a top priority.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED: A body of water big enough for the dog to demonstrate that he can swim at least 10'. A pool can be used providing that the dog can get into the pool on his own and swim without help. A properly fitting floatation device can be worn by the dog if the handler desires.

PROCESS: All dogs know how to swim. They just don't know that they know how to swim. The handler needed to get the dog accustomed to the water in a non-threatening manner. The handler should start by going into the water him/herself since some dogs are hesitant to venture in where the handler is unwilling to go. Sometimes a favorite toy when thrown, is enough to entice the dog into the water, and sometimes a dog will succumb to 'peer pressure' and will follow other dogs as they willingly move into the water. A recall can be done at the dog's swimming depth between 2 handlers or any other way of showing that the dog will confidently swim away from or parallel to the shore.

ALLOWED:

- Using a floatation device
- Using a toy
- Having the dog swim between 2 handlers

NOT ALLOWED:

- 'Teaching' the dog by throwing him in the water
- Forcing the dog to swim by placing him in deep water
- Dog climbing on or scratching the handler