

EARNING BADGES:

Part of what DSA offers is a merit badge system for dogs and their parents. Earning badge can be fun and rewarding for you and your dog. With over 70 badges to choose from, you are sure to find activities you want to learn more about and can work toward mastery of the foundational skills of those activities.



Chris and her dogs Coyote and Bear

Earning the badges is optional. You are encouraged to learn as much as possible and to teach your dog how to be a welcome member of society. You can use the badge activities as a guide for your training, even if you never intend to get the patch. But if you would like to earn the patches, there are a few things you need to know.

Just because you join DSA that does not mean your dog is automatically a Dog Scout. That is a title that has to be earned. It is also the first step to getting the other badges. The guidelines for the Dog Scout title/badge are found under the "Dog Scout Badges" tab at: www.DogScouts.org. All the other specialty badges and their guidelines are also found there.

Each badge has a set of criteria the dog and parent need to accomplish. This is known as the "check-off sheet." You will also find the criteria for passing listing what is allowed and not allowed for most of the badges and the training steps for many of them. These are the guidelines for the training and testing.

If you are lucky enough to have a certified Scoutmaster or Evaluator in your area, you can arrange to have that person meet with you to go through the testing steps in person. They may also be available to help you with the training, but this is arranged on their own time and there may be a fee involved.

If you don't have someone close to you to do the testing, you can do it yourself through the use of a video camera. The "Worldwide Dog Scout" section found under "DSA activities-- Certification Program" on the Dog Scout website outlines the steps of this process for the Dog Scout badge. These steps also apply to the specialty badges as well.

If you need help with any of the steps involved, the DSA leadership and staff is always available to answer your questions. You may also want to join the DSA discussion list. There is a link to the sign up page on the Dog Scout website under "membership--discussion list." There are very friendly and helpful people available there (both DSA members and non-members) to discuss anything dog related.

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Dog Scouts of America



CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



Starting a troop, becoming a Scoutmaster or Evaluator and how to earn badges

Certification Program Director:
Mrs. Chris Puls

Email: DogScouts@hotmail.com
Phone: (513) 505-5071

START A TROOP:

Starting a troop is easy and will put you in contact with other people who have similar interests in learning new things with their dog.

Start by checking to see if there is a troop in your area by visiting the troop listing page under the “troop locations list” link.

If there IS a troop or future troop, contact the leader and see if it’s an active group. Just because there is already a troop or interest in getting a troop going, doesn’t mean another can’t be started in the area. Especially for troops that cover a large geographical area, but growing or joining the existing troop may be the easiest route.

To start your own troop, visit the “Start A Troop” section of the DSA website. Advise the Certification Program Director of your intent so you can be added to the troop list as a “future troop” and to get more info on HOW to get a troop going. To get a troop number, you need three or more members of Dog Scouts of America in your area that want to participate in troop activities.

Once you get some folks together, you can then decide how active your troop wants to be. Possible activities include:

- 🐾 Meetings that have an educational topic, socialization and/or games.
- 🐾 Hikes or walks in local parks or in scenic areas within a few hours drive as a day trip.
- 🐾 Get-togethers for dog related activities like biking, skijoring, swimming, kayaking, etc.

- 🐾 Campouts in tents, RV’s or cabins that allow dogs.
- 🐾 Fundraisers for DSA, your troop or local dog organizations
- 🐾 Craft sessions, scrap booking or agility equipment making sessions.
- 🐾 Anything the troop desires that promotes the goals of Dog Scouts of America.



Troop 107 party

BECOME A SCOUTMASTER OR EVALUATOR:

If your troop members are interested in earning badges, you’ll need a way to get them certified. You can use the steps in the “earning badges” portion of this pamphlet, or you (or a troop member) may want to get certified to do the badge evaluations in person.

A Scoutmaster is a person who has been certified by Dog Scouts of America to evaluate and certify dog/parent teams for their Dog Scout badge and title.

A Dog Scout Evaluator is a person who has been certified by Dog Scouts of America to evaluate and certify the dog/parent teams who have gotten the Dog Scout title and

want to earn one or more of the specialty badges.

This can be done through the use of a video camera. Certification as a Scoutmaster and as an Evaluator for each of the specialty badges is done separately.

The video will need to show the same things a trainer would need to see in order to evaluate the abilities of the person that desires certification. This includes teaching the training steps to another person and his/her dog as well as the testing criteria found on the “check-off” sheet. This video then gets sent in to be evaluated. If the training and testing fall within DSA’s high standards, then you can get your certification and future filming of the testing you do for that badge is not needed.

DSA standards are high because we want the badges to be a declaration of accomplishment and proof of the training level reached by the dog and parent. In your role as the Scoutmaster or Evaluator, you are responsible for maintaining those standards and ensuring that the testing is done in a manner consistent with the other Scoutmasters/Evaluators around the world.

You are not alone in your efforts. The other DSA leaders and staff are available for your questions and to offer help. We offer hands-on training through the Leadership Retreats held in St Helen MI on Memorial Day weekend each year. There is also help just a phone call or email away.

