



Dog Scouts of America
Merit Badge Check-Off Sheet

The Disabled Dog

Items **bolded** below are requirements that must be demonstrated to the Evaluator. Non-bolded items are training steps that may be introduced in class and are helpful for achieving the requirements. All behaviors must have been taught or re-taught to the dog (preferably using a new cue), using only positive reward-based methods.

- Handler must name 5 disabilities/diseases and explain how they present physically in dogs**
- Handler must name 5 early warning signs which might indicate a physical disability**
- Handler must name and describe the use of at least 5 types of medical aids/adaptive equipment used to improve or maintain quality of life for the disabled dog**
- Dog must demonstrate behaviors from each category below as described. Dogs currently living with a disability may not be able to demonstrate behaviors from all categories but must do so if they are able. Disabled dogs must demonstrate cued behaviors as required below in the category where their disability falls.**

Orthopedic/Neurologic

- Demonstrate at least 5.
- Orthopedic or neurologically impaired dogs must demonstrate all if their disability allows it.
 - Spins on both sides (right and left turns)**
 - 3 repeated sits and stands**
 - Remain calm and relax for massage**
 - Passive range of motion exercise with at least 2 legs**
 - Back up at least 5 steps**
 - Step over at least 5 poles laid on the ground (a ladder is also acceptable)**
 - Pull a cart/wheels**

Sight Impaired

- Demonstrate at least 3. A verbal cue that would significant for your dog in your home situation should he become visually impaired may be substituted. The evaluator must agree that the cue is significant.
- Sight impaired dogs must demonstrate all.
 - Verbal commands for left and right**
 - Verbal command to step out – move away from the handler**
 - Verbal command to step in – close to the handler**
 - Verbal command to go behind the handler**
 - Verbal command to go ahead of the handler**
- The cues below apply only to dogs with a sight impairment and must be demonstrated.
 - Verbal command to “watch” for objects in front and go around**
 - Verbal commands that assist the dog with going up and down stairs**
 - Method for defining the dog’s perimeter (such as inside a fence)**
 - Method for using an aid to help the dog to orient to location (such as inside a building)**



Hearing Impaired

- For dogs with no impairment, the number of cues that must be demonstrated can be found below. A hand signal that would be significant for your dog in your home situation should he become hearing impaired may be substituted. The evaluator must agree that the cue is significant.
- Hearing impaired dogs must demonstrate all of the obedience signs as well as 5 other or home signs.

Obedience signs (5)

- Sit
- Stay
- Down
- Come
- Heel
- Stand
- Stop

Other or "home" signs (3)

- Quiet
- Leave it
- Go to place
- Get in car
- Dinner/eat
- Go potty
- Other as commonly used at home

- Dog must demonstrate at least 3 'touch' commands, where he responds with specific behaviors when touched on different parts of his body
- Handler must name 3 additional rehabilitation methods that cannot be demonstrated and describe how they are carried out
- Handler must describe and explain 5 quality of life care activities that help to keep the disabled dog engaged
- Handler can describe specific requirements for different badges where it might be appropriate for the evaluator to allow adapted behaviors to meet badge requirements due to different disabilities; Conversely, handler can explain why particular badges might be completely unsuitable for dogs with different disabilities
- Handler can describe his/her individual thoughts on end of life decisions for the dog and can explain the reasoning behind the decisions they make

Note: For dogs currently living with disabilities, the evaluator may accept substitute behaviors to meet badge criteria based on the dog's condition. The evaluator will discuss the dog's disability with the handler to determine what the dog can and cannot do. The condition of age is not in and of itself a disability. The evaluator must verify that the dog is disabled when signing the badge form.

This badge may be awarded posthumously to a dog who was significantly disabled prior to his death if there is clear evidence that the handler appropriately managed and helped to mitigate the dog's disability and worked to maintain the dog's quality of life. Badge must be processed as usual.



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