

The Troop Recognition Program Guidelines

The Troop Recognition Program runs from Jan 1 through Dec 31 each year and started in 2008. This optional program consists of various activities for which the troop can accumulate points. Recognition would be given for reaching a certain level of points within the year. Most of the activities focus on troop member achievements and troop growth. This focus of this program is to reward troops for being active and helping in their communities, not for competition between troops!

The areas selected are important for several reasons. The new members tally is a reward for growth and number of events with a booth/table shows that the troop is trying to reach more people. The badges earned are tangible measures of a troop's success in helping its members learn new skills. The numbers of community service hours the troop members contribute to their communities and the funds raised are a measure of the troop's community service attitude. The number of seminars attended, troop meetings, camp attendance and leadership retreat attendance helps measure the troop's commitment to education for it's members. A break down of these activities and their point earning rules is found below.

Any troop with an assigned troop number can choose to participate in this program. A troop should continually strive to bring in new troop members to make earning points easier and to combat the natural turn over in membership. New members also help bring a flow of new ideas and personalities.

The Certification Program Director (or person designated by the CPD) will keep track of the troop's standings by means of the "End of the year reporting form" and the "addendum to the end of the year report form" which are due before December 31st each year. **Reports received after Dec 31st will not be considered.** These forms can be returned to the CPD by email or postal mail before December 31st.

The blank *record keeping form* is available for your own use and can be filled in during the reporting year (to keep track of the info that is needed for the 2 forms that get turned in). Point earning is based on the information in this guide.

At year end, the CPD calculates the number of points each troop has achieved and recognizes them as a "Treasure Troop," "Torch Troop" or "Top Dog Troop" based on the number of points earned (see below.) In addition to recognition from DSA, the troop's status will be indicated publicly on the "locations of troops" web page through the use of icons next to the troop name:

🐾 The Top Dogs troop is a blue ribbon

🐾 The Torch troop, lighting the way for others, is a torch

🐾 The Treasure troop is a treasure chest full of dog cookies/bones.



For smaller troops:

As a way to make the accomplishments of the newer or smaller troops on par with the much larger troops, we have developed an addendum to the point system. When a troop has few people, getting attendance and participation with the point activities can be much harder. So for smaller troops, the total points earned by a troop can be multiplied by the following:

🐾 If a troop has 5 or less members at the end of the year, multiply the total points earned by 3.

🐾 If a troop has 6 to 15 members at the end of the year, multiply the points earned by 2.

🐾 If a troop has 16 or more members, points are at face value as listed on the points chart.

Here is a breakdown of point earning activities and their rules:

New Members:

5	For each new DSA member in the troop that has participated in at least 1 troop activity
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WHY: Getting new members and keeping existing members should always be a troop's goal. New members bring with them a new sense of excitement and wonder regarding DSA and all the possibilities the organization opens to them. They also provide a new set of hands to help and another perspective for problem solving. New members may have access to the perfect training facility or be accomplished trainers that can help everyone. You never know when that brochure or business card you hand out will result in a new member, but if you're not talking to people about DSA and your troop members are not talking to people they meet, the troop won't grow and may even fall apart because of the "same ol', same ol'" that can become routine in a group that never has new people.

EARNING THE POINTS: A new member is anyone that has not been a troop member before, that joins your troop within the reporting period and participates in at least one troop activity. DSA dues have to be paid and will be verified before the person can be counted and if your troop has troop dues, those need to be paid as well. If it is easier for your troop, you can count the number of "households" instead of individuals within those homes. You just need to be consistent in how the membership of your troop is counted throughout the year. In order to encourage troops to try and keep existing members, any members that drop out and don't renew are subtracted from the number of new members for the point system. This means only the numbers of people that increase the size of the troop are worth 5 points each.

Here's an example:

Number of members at start of year:	_____	15	_____	
The # of new members added this year:	+	_____	5	_____
Minus # of members that didn't renew:	-	_____	2	_____
Total number of new members worth 5 pts each:	_____	3	_____	
New members + start of year members:	_____	18	_____	

In this example, the troop grew by 3 members during the year. Those 3 people would be worth 5 points each. So the goal is to gain as many as possible while losing as few as possible.

Existing Dog Scouts:

1	Certified Dog Scouts in the troop on Dec. 31 st (Includes all- those that earned the title in previous years and new scouts) (1 pt. each)
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WHY: Helping dogs and their parents become certified for their DSA title can be rewarding in this system. The basic behavior and responsible parent information this badge represents are important. So we want to reward the troops who are practicing and maintaining the basic behaviors and knowledge. Dogs and parents that pass the

Dog Scout certification during the reporting period can be counted here as well as dogs and parents that earned the title in previous years (only those dogs belonging to current troop members can be counted).

EARNING THE POINTS: Every dog in the troop who has gotten the Dog Scout title in some way (in-person, during a camp, by video, etc.) can be counted for this section provided the dog can still pass the test! This helps ensure that the behaviors are being maintained. If the dog cannot pass his portion of the test due to being elderly and no longer physically able, he/she can still be counted. But if the dog is physically able bodied, then he/she should still be expected to be able to pass the dog's part of the DSA test. If the dog's parent or the dog are not active with the troop and you or a troop member have not seen the dog's behavior during the year and are unable to vouch for the dog's continued good manners, then he/she cannot be counted. Formal testing does not need to be done, but the dog needs to show good self control and good leash manners and be a welcome member of society. The handler also needs to be maintaining their part of the test by continuing to clean up after their dog, keep them safe and well cared for, etc.

New Badges:

3	For each new Dog Scout or specialty badge (or pack dog title) earned by a troop member this year (including badges earned at camp/mini-camp) This is a measure of the person's continued interest in teaching their dog new skills.
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WHY: The behaviors and skills needed for the badges and titles provide a great way to form training plans and determine what troop members are interested in learning. These also provide a way to measure the effectiveness of the instruction and the motivation of the troop members to learn new things and to teach their dogs new things.

EARNING THE POINTS: These points are for each new specialty badge earned by troop members/dogs within the reporting period by passing the test for the badge and submitting the proper forms to DSA. Badges earned at the camps do count because it still indicates a desire from the troop member to learn new things and teach their dog new skills. The testing has to be evaluated by a DSA certified Scoutmaster or Evaluator. Only certified Scoutmasters can sign the DSA badge form for the Dog Scout title and only certified Evaluators can sign the form for the specialty badges they have gotten certified to administer. The testing can either be done in person with the help of a Scoutmaster or Evaluator in your area (or at camp), or by videotaping the training and testing and sending the video to a certified Scoutmaster or Evaluator for review. If the videotape method is chosen, the handlers part of the test needs to be submitted using the written test (if available) or by verbally demonstrating that the handler understands their role for the badge on the video. We need to be able to verify the badges earned through the DSA database.

Helping dogs with issues:

3	For each person in the troop with a dog that has/had issues, that the troop designates as having made great progress with the dog's issues during the reporting year. Help, moral support and training advice for people that have dogs with issues may be what keeps that dog from being put down or turned into a shelter if all it needs is a parent that understands how to communicate humanely.
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WHY: If you have or had a dog that you never thought would pass the Dog Scout test or that would never be quiet or self-controlled around other dogs, or that hid in the corner

afraid to come out, then you understand the work that goes into changing the dog's behavior! Troop's that offer to help the people with dogs that aren't already well behaved stand to learn about training and problem solving in the process. If it's a dog that is barking at other dogs, it gives the troop members a chance to practice keeping their own dog focused on them instead of meeting the challenge offered by the barking dog. If it's a shy dog, troop members get to practice proper greetings that allow the dog to approach them. It's not the easy dogs that teach us, it's the ones that bring "issues" to the table that teach us the most about canine behavior and training.

Sometimes it's the human that has the "issues." Perhaps they love their dog, but are clueless about responsible dog ownership. Or they have a difficult dog and don't know how to manage them. But sometimes the dog is easy going, it's the owner who needs the education. If the owner has made significant progress, odds are good the dog has too. Just as educating the dogs teaches others so does educating people- the cornerstone of DSA's missions.

EARNING THE POINTS: For this reason, these points represent each dog and/or parent that has overcome obstacles and has proceeded exceptionally well during the year, even if their dog is not yet ready for the Dog Scout certification. How you determine who to list, based on the criteria above, is up to the troop. This can be determined by the Troop leader or by committee within the troop or by a vote of the troop members.

Training days:

1	For each organized and attended training day – a time set-up just for troop members to specifically work on training. This could be a time to work on badge skills, basic obedience or even cute tricks. It can also include an educational dog training video night or "guest speaker" presentation.
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WHY: Setting up training days is a great way to help people focus on their dog's training. Life is busy, and for some, dog training tends to get pushed to the bottom of the "to do" list unless it's scheduled. Training together is more fun and allows everyone to get help and feedback from the others in attendance.

EARNING THE POINTS: To count for the points, it needs to be a "troop activity," meaning the troop is invited for a specific time/day. There also needs to be attendance of troop members at the session that work on a new skill or practice a known skill. What gets practiced or learned on the training day is up to the troop members that attend unless they prefer to decide that in advance. Such as; "a training day for the _____ badge on such and such a date/time at xyz location."

Troop Meetings/activity days:

1	For each organized and attended troop meeting and for organized activities (like hikes, swim days, etc.) that allow members to work on socializing their dogs and be active with their dogs.
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WHY: Troop meetings are a good time for socialization, planning activities, playing games, learning something new, guest speakers and giving the dogs an opportunity to interact with other dogs and/or practice skills or learn new things in the presence of other dogs.

Activity days allow the members to get together in an informal way to practice good leash skills, dog management and responsible dog parenting in public. When dogs and people get together in groups, they get noticed. Be aware that you are setting an example for all other people regarding how dogs should act and how dog parents should act in public. Take the opportunity to tell the smiling on-lookers about your well behaved dogs and about DSA and your troop. You might get new members from the encounters!

EARNING THE POINTS: These points are for each scheduled troop meeting that takes place and has the attendance of troop members and for activity days attended by troop members. An activity day would be things like hikes, swim days, kayak trips, biking trips, letterboxing outings, or any other activity where the troop members get together with their dogs and are active.

Sharing knowledge:

3	Troop member attends a positive dog training seminar or camp and shares knowledge gained with the troop members. Or the troop has a “movie night” to watch and discuss a dog training DVD or DVD of a dog training seminar. A troop member presents a free seminar or TV spot (or gets an educational news article published).
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WHY: Not everyone has the time and money to attend training seminars or camps, but that doesn’t mean everyone has to miss out on the information! If one troop member attends, they can then share what they learned with the others in the troop. If the troop collects troop dues, perhaps some of the dues could be spent on a video or audio tape of a seminar.

EARNING THE POINTS:

- 1) Each time a troop member attends a seminar and brings back knowledge they share at a troop meeting or by email with the other troop members.
- 2) For each troop “movie night” where troop members gather to watch and discuss a presentation that helps them better understand training and/or dog behavior.
- 3) Guest speaker presentations that allow audience questions or interaction that help the troop attendees better understand training and/or dog behavior.
- 4) When a troop member gives a training seminar to members of the general public in which they are taught skills used to teach their own dogs or taught about how to be a more responsible dog parent. These seminars need to be non-profit or as a fundraiser for a non-profit group.
- 5) Each time a troop member gets published any educational article about DSA, positive training, responsible dog parenting, published letters to the editor (that are educational, dog related and fit with the DSA missions) and radio or TV spots that provide education to the community regarding responsible dog parenting, local troops, DSA, etc. If possible, provide links to these if they can be viewed on-line. This is counted by the article (new info), not by how many times/places the same info gets published.

Camp attendance:

1	Troop member attends a Dog Scout camp (incl. mini-camps).
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WHY: Dog Scout camps offer people a great way to learn many new things in a short amount of time while experiencing the Dog Scout Way. DSA encourages people to learn more and to strive to teach their dogs to be all they can be with positive training.

EARNING THE POINTS: A point can be earned by each person in the troop who attends a DSA camp. If they attend more than one camp, they can earn one point for

each camp that they attend. If the person returns and shares the knowledge they gained, additional points in the “sharing info” category above can be earned.

Leadership Retreat:

1	Troop Leader (or designated representative) attends the Leadership retreat
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WHY: The leadership retreat offers troop leaders (or a person designated by them), a chance to polish their speaking and teaching skills and provides many sessions that offer education about things related to dogs and dog training. It is an opportunity to work on badge instruction and get helpful feedback as well. Because it is only Troop Leaders, their representative, Scoutmasters and Evaluators it provides a unique opportunity to network and learn from each other. While not all troops are able to send someone, those that put forth the effort needed can get rewarded for it. If your troop leader is not able to get to the retreat, there are lots of other ways to build points.

EARNING THE POINTS: This section offers 1 point for the troop leader (or designee), 1 point for each Scoutmaster and 1 point for each Evaluator. Individuals with multiple roles count as 1 point.

Event booths:

1	For each event where the troop has a booth or info table to tell people about DSA
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WHY: Dog events, fundraisers, walk-a-thons and dog fairs are great places to reach other people that love dogs. Often booth space is free for not-for-profit groups. Time spent, as a representative of DSA or the troop, talking with people, handing out brochures or business cards, talking about training options and explaining what DSA is about can help grow your membership. It also helps people recognize DSA and thus your troop when you start to raise funds people are more likely to know it’s a real organization and not a scam. Wearing DSA logo wear, especially the easy to read “proud parent of a Dog Scout” T-shirt, helps people notice and remember your troop and DSA.

EARNING THE POINTS: A point for each public event like those listed in the paragraph above where attendance was for the purpose of the distribution of information about DSA or your troop to the attendees.

Community Service with the dogs:

1	For each block of 10 hours of dog related Community Service/public education by troop members <i>and their dogs</i> acting as representatives of DSA or the troop. Includes any activity that helps dogs/people in the community from which the troop doesn’t profit monetarily- fundraising for a dog related cause (local shelter, K-9 vests, pet oxygen masks, etc.), demonstration of training for the public, free dog training session(s) or sessions that only benefit a local non-profit dog organization, cleaning up a dog park, therapy dog visits, walk-a-thons, etc.
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WHY: Just as with other scouting organizations, Dog Scouts of America has a mission to help others, especially those that can impact the lives of dogs in good ways. Teaching dogs to do things that help toward that goal can make raising funds even more effective. Demonstrating a well mannered pet at a walk-a-thon or demonstrating to others how they can teach their dogs to do great things can help inspire others to teach their own dogs new skills. Even if it’s just enough manners that the dog can live inside, instead of chained in the backyard, that greatly impacts a life, possibly more than one. Troops and troop members are encouraged to participate in and support the events of dog related non-profits in their area as representatives of DSA or the troop.

Troops are also encouraged to hold their own fundraisers that help dogs or other pets in their community. The more troop members that *help* at an event, the more hours that can be accumulated. Hopefully this will encourage member participation.

EARNING THE POINTS: One point for every 10 hours spent doing community service with the dogs of the troop helping in some way. This can include taking donations, either in their mouth, in a basket they hold or in a vest they wear, participating in a walk-a-thon demonstrating good manners and temperament, demonstrating a skill for the public to learn and teach their own dog, or doing therapy dog visits and touching the life of residents in nursing homes or patients in hospitals as a representative of DSA. Each person participating with at least one dog can accumulate hours for the troop. They don't need to have the Dog Scout title, but it should be a visit from the dogs of DSA troop ### or they can wear matching bandannas with the troop logo or troop number on them or the people can be wearing DSA logo shirts. Some sort of connection to DSA. A two hour event that 3 people help with would be counted as 6 hours.

Community Service- no dogs:

1	For each block of 10 hours of general community service by troop members <i>without their dogs</i> but as representatives of DSA or the troop. Includes any activity that helps dogs/people in the community from which the troop doesn't profit monetarily- volunteering at an animal shelter, dog or car washes to benefit a shelter, training shelter dogs to increase adoption rates, helping provide food/items to pets of meals-on-wheel recipients, raising funds for DSA, etc
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WHY: Not all community service can include the dogs of the troop, but that doesn't make it any less worthy. There are many ways to help the people and pets of a community as a troop or as an individual representing the troop or DSA. Some of those ways are listed in the box above.

EARNING THE POINTS: One point for every 10 hours of community service spent without the dogs helping the dogs or people of the community. A two hour event that 3 people help with would be counted as 6 hours.

Raising funds:

1	For every \$50 raised by troop members (representing DSA or the troop) for dog related non-profit organizations or for equipment, like bullet proof vests for police K-9's or pet oxygen masks. Can also include fundraising by the troop for the Salvation Army, raising funds for DSA or other non-profit group that helps people and/or animals.
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WHY: Raising funds can make a big impact on what a person or organization is able to do with or for dogs. There are a lot of great organizations as well as local groups to support. Your troop could choose a product that is needed in the community and raise funds to provide it, such as a bullet proof vest for a police K-9 or an oxygen mask set that can help save the life of a pet overcome by smoke in a fire.

EARNING THE POINTS: One point for each \$50 raised for a local non-profit charity, needed product or local animal welfare organization such as a spay/neuter clinic or animal shelter. The money needs to be raised by troop members who are representing the efforts of the troop as a community service project. Money raised by troop members is combined as a "total amount raised by the troop." But individuals can still keep track of what they raised if they are working on their Community Service badge.

BONUS: You can get 5 points for each \$50 raised for Dog Scouts of America! This is money that is sent directly to DSA national's treasurer to help support the programs offered by DSA.

Cleaning up:

1	For every 10 "piles" left behind by an irresponsible dog owner that a troop member cleans up and disposes of properly. To count, it would need to be a pile that has the same criteria as the ones that "count" toward the clean-up America badge. (No wild animal poop, no piles in areas like dog shows where someone is "hired" to clean-up, your own dog's pile doesn't count, has to be an abandoned pile, etc.) Common locations these are found: trails, dog friendly hotels, and rest stops/dog parks that don't have a designated clean-up person.
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WHY: Dog waste is a major complaint from people regarding dogs in public places. It can also be a reason dogs get banned from accompanying people to places such as parks, trails and hotels. If people see you with your dog and then find a pile in an area you just passed, they are likely to assume your dog left it. It can be a health hazard when it is left where kids play and where people walk. It's also unsightly and smelly. As a responsible dog parent, you don't leave your dog's waste behind. You also carry extra bags to clean-up after those less responsible (or to hand to them if you catch them in the act.) This is such an important thing that DSA even created a badge for cleaning up after others that are more ignorant of the impact leaving the piles can cause.

EARNING THE POINTS: One point for every 10 piles collected by members of your troop. See the guidelines for the "Clean up America" badge for what counts and what doesn't. Some of that information is provided in the box above.

Recognition:

Troops that reach the following number of points are eligible for recognition at the beginning of the following year plus other benefits:

- Achieve 300+ points = Top Dogs Troop (most active)
- Achieve 200-299 points = Treasure Troop (more active)
- Achieve 100-199 points = Torch Troop (basic level)

Troops that earn any of these levels will be recognized and listed in the March/April DSA newsletter, will have an icon placed next to their troop name on the website (on the list of troop locations page) and may receive a tangible item or items from DSA.

Within the troop:

To participate in the program, troops would need to keep track of what the troop members are doing that relates to point earning. Troops might also want to keep track of who is helping to contribute toward the points for the troop and then decide who gets the rewards when the troop reaches the goals (if a tangible item or items is given.) Should everyone in the troop get rewarded? Or just those that helped in some way? Using sign-in sheets for troop events can also help keep track of who was at which event. It may help to designate a "secretary" to keep track of the relevant information that is needed for the reporting form that is sent to the Certification Program Director at the end of the year.

Questions?

If you have any questions, contact the CPD: DogScouts@hotmail.com