

# Leonberger Club of America

## Working Pack Dog Program

Established 2022

### **Introduction:**

The LCA recognizes three levels of Working Pack Dog titles: Working Pack Dog Novice, Working Pack Dog Advanced, and Working Pack Dog Excellent. The Leonberger is particularly well suited as a member of a hiking team. The quintessential, companion dog: with good physical conditioning and a moderate degree of obedience training, the Leonberger excels at day hiking, as well as overnight and extended backpacking trips.

### **Purpose:**

A favorite event during National Leonberger Specialties has been the “Leo Walk”. Club members love socializing outdoors. This was clearly evidenced by the well-attended hike with 35+ Leonbergers and their owners and friends at the 2019 Estes Park Specialty. Shortly after that, the idea for a Leonberger Pack Dog Title was born. Unfortunately, the next two years saw many Leonberger Affiliated Club activities cancelled due to Covid 19. With the timing just right, in 2022, the Leonberger Club of America Working Dog Program approved this working title and now rewards Leonbergers for their hiking abilities. Titles are for the Leonberger to demonstrate the ability and fitness to work as a pack dog.

### **Policy:**

It is the Policy of the LCA to invite and encourage purebred Leonberger dogs to earn Working Pack Dog Titles. The LCA Working Pack Dog titles are open to Leonberger dogs and bitches only who are registered with the American Kennel Club. The LCA Working Dog Committee will accept Pack Dog Titles on Leonbergers from other AKC Parent Clubs.

### **General Guidelines for Hikers:**

Hikers are required to comply with federal, state, and local regulations. Dogs and handlers must be appropriately conditioned for distance, pack weight, weather, and terrain. Dogs who become sick, injured, or strained should not continue hiking. Leonbergers must carry properly fitted and correctly positioned canine packs for the duration of the pack hike.

Packs should consist of gear appropriate and useful for each hike/overnight trip. “Dead” weights (i.e., lead, rocks, etc.) of any kind are not permitted (unlike water weight which may be useful to both human and animal). Weights referred to for each title level (ie, 10%, 15%) *is also the maximum suggested weight*. The pack may be lightened during the pack hike through consumption of food, water, and supplies. Any gear or supplies removed from the pack for temporary use must be replaced.

## **Hike Definitions:**

### ***Trail requirements***

Pack hikes must be completed on trails, which may be pre-existing routes (human or game trails), or non-existing routes (cross-country travel), that occur on natural unpaved terrain - dirt, sand, snow, clay, rocks, etc. Roads that are regularly maintained or improved for motorized traffic do not qualify as trails. Roads that are not maintained as a primary mode of travel for non-specialized motorized traffic (abandoned dirt roads, Forest Service roads, 4x4/offroad routes, etc) are allowed.

- Trails may be continuous, or out-and-back. An out-and-back hike traverses trail length to a designated outbound point and follows the reverse *one time* as an inbound direction.
- Lapping (retracing distance *more than once* or unnecessarily crisscrossing terrain) is not permitted on any hike.
- No more than one repeat pack hike on the same trail is allowed per title
- All sections of the pack hike must be traveled on foot, unless requiring the use of watercraft to traverse a waterway otherwise not possible. Only distances traveled by foot will qualify for the pack hike.
- Elevation may be substituted for distance at the rate of one mile per 1000' gain (loss does not qualify) (see documentation section)
- A “backcountry trail” as required for Advanced and Excellent titles, is a trail which, in addition to above definitions, at least 50% of its mileage traverses remote terrain that is inaccessible to vehicles, with no provisions or other support along the route.

### ***Overnight stay***

The location for an “overnight stay” can be any location that is accessed by foot. This includes but not limited to, cabin, hut, yurt, treehouse, primitive campsites, and campgrounds. This does not include locations requiring access by other transportation means (ie vehicle or bicycle), such as hotels and motels. Use of transportation other than foot to either access the location, or acquire provisions for the overnight stay, will invalidate the entire hike.

A “primitive overnight” as required for the Excellent title is a location accessed only by foot, along the hiking route being taken by the handler and dog (“trailside”), with the only provisions/gear being that carried in by the handler and dog, with no utilities such as heating or electricity. This typically refers to tent camping but may also include primitive trailside shelters with no utilities.

## **Titles:**

### **Working Pack Dog Title Novice (WPDN) (3 pts)**

- Leonberger dogs and bitches must be 24 months of age or older on day of hike
- The Leonberger must carry a daily initial weight equal to a minimum of 10% of the dog's weight
- Total minimum mileage for title is 40 miles total, OR 30 miles including one overnight stay  
No hike less than 5 miles

### **Working Pack Dog Title Advanced (WPDA) (5 pts)**

- Miles submitted for WPDN do not qualify for WPDA submission
- Leonberger dogs and bitches must be 36 months of age or older on day of hike
- The Leonberger must carry a daily initial weight equal to a minimum of 15% of the dog's weight
- Total minimum mileage for title is 80 miles total, to be comprised of the following:  
At least two hikes totaling 15 miles, on backcountry trails, over two days  
(requiring an overnight stay)  
No hike less than 5 miles

### **Working Pack Dog Title Excellent (WPDE) (7 pts)**

- Miles submitted for WPDA do not qualify for WPDE submission
- Leonberger dogs and bitches must be 36 months of age or older on day of hike
- The Leonberger must carry a daily initial weight equal to a minimum of 20% of the dog's weight
- Total minimum mileage for title is 120 miles total, to be comprised of the following:  
At least two hikes totaling 40 miles, on backcountry trails, over two days  
(requiring a primitive overnight stay)  
No hike less than 5 miles

## **Documentation**

Each pack hike must be numbered, and corresponding documents numbered to match, as a complete package with Title Application Form upon submission. Each hike must include a summary page with the following format including Leo(s) name(s), state, area, starting point (designated by name, latitude/longitude, or degrees/minutes), date range, and mileage. If there are multiple Leos belonging to the same co/owner completing the same hike, you may submit one hike package for all participating dogs. For example:

Hike #: 1

Dog: Caprock's Cherokee Rose ("Yona")

State: Colorado

Area: Troublesome River Basin/Arapahoe-Roosevelt National Forest

Starting point: 40°16'46.7"N 106°05'09.3"W

Date Range: 7/4/21 day-hike

Mileage: 6.3

Hike #: 2

Dog: Caprock's Cherokee Rose ("Yona"), and Blacksod Bay Underneath the Irish Skies Mayo ("Laika")

State: Wyoming

Area: Cloud Peak Wilderness

Starting Point: Cross Creek Reservoir

Date Range: 8/4-8/9/21

Mileage: 57.7

The critical elements of each pack hike submission are: (1) dog's weight; (2) pack weight and contents; (3) trail route verification; and (4) trail mileage verification.

### ***Dog's weight***

Weight must be recorded prior to each pack hike, by any available scale with reasonable accuracy. A vet verified weight must be obtained once annually and can be used for any pack hike that occurs within a month of the weight date.

### ***Pack weight***

The full pack and all contents must be weighed prior to the hike. This weight can be taken at home. A total pack weight is required with a written list of the items included in the pack (note: weights of individual items not required, only the total). An easy method to weigh at home is use of a hanging travel luggage digital scale with hooks – they can be found online for \$10 and under.

### ***Trail route verification***

A paper map must be submitted for each hike route. The route taken must be clearly marked, with directional arrows indicating travel (distinguishing out-and-back directions if applicable). A wide variety of maps is accepted (photocopies reproduced from trail maps, USGS quad maps, topo, satellite, or other digital mapping printouts), as long as the route and identifying features such as trail numbers and junctions are easily and clearly read. All maps must include a scale and compass rose.

A minimum of two photos must be submitted of easily identifiable signs, markers, or features that appear on the mapped route. These can be man-made or natural. Examples are: signs of trail junctions, signs of crossing Wilderness or Forest boundaries, historical structures, waterfalls, lakes, rivers, notable rock formations and arches, mountain pass summit markers, etc.

***Trail mileage verification (one or both options may be utilized)***

Trail mileage calculations must be clearly shown on a separate paper. Calculations may be done manually or through GPS.

***Option 1:*** Manual calculations are those made using the map scale, mileage segment markers on the map itself, compass on topo map, or other acceptable methods.

***Option 2:*** It is increasingly common for hikers to track their routes using apps on GPS-enabled devices. Calculations from GPS devices must be printed as screenshots for either the total length hike, or numbered to correspond to each segment on the paper map if there are multiple screenshots (such as one for each day over a multi-day trip). GPS mileage should be taken as raw distance, with no additional application-specific fitness conversions.

GPS mileage calculations will be verified against map scale submitted for the trail route. The Regional Hike Reviewer may require email submission of the GPS track (in .gpx or .kml format) in the case of discrepancies greater than 5%. *Mileage calculations taken by map scale are always recommended as a backup to GPS mileage, particularly over extended distances.*

***Trail mileage verification: Elevation (optional)***

Elevation gain may be used as substitution for mileage or used as additional mileage. A topographic map **must** be submitted as proof of elevation gain.

Elevation gain is defined as the difference between the overall lowest elevation and the overall highest elevation of the trail as ascended. Each 1,000 feet of elevation gain may be counted as equivalent to one mile of flat terrain calculated to the nearest tenth of a mile (e.g., 1300 feet elevation gain equals an additional 1.3 miles). Calculations must be clearly shown.

- During multi-day pack hikes the elevation gain may be calculated separately for each day's hike, with the beginning and ending of each day's hike clearly marked on the topo map.
- The topographic map scale should be as detailed as possible (i.e. 1:24,000 is preferable to 1:25,000) and of good quality with clear contour lines and legible printing and should include a mileage scale.

Appendix 1.

**Title Application Form**

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Leo name (registered + call)

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Co/owner

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Title applied for (provide photocopy of previous title if applicable)

Total # hikes: \_\_\_\_\_

Total miles: \_\_\_\_\_

Attach for submission:

\_\_ summary page for each hike (see “Documentation” section)

\_\_ dog’s weight

\_\_ pack weight with item list

\_\_ trail route verification

    Paper map

    photo(s)

\_\_ trail mileage verification (manual or GPS calculations)

\_\_ trail mileage – topo map and elevation calculations (*optional*)

**Completed title application forms, maps, and documentation should be submitted to the Regional Reviewer by the dog’s owner or co-owner. Applications, photos, and verification documents will not be returned.**