



Chinook Owners Association Working Dog Program Draft Group: Packing



Requirements for Novice Level Certification

The Draft Group of the WDP is designed to recognize Chinooks that demonstrate ability in common working and pulling disciplines. The Packing section rewards achievement in working ability and versatility for the Chinook.

The Novice level is designed for the less experienced dog and/or handler as an easy introduction and should not be beyond the means of any sound Chinook. While specific conditioning is not required, the WDP encourages owners to introduce their Chinooks to packing in a gradual and responsible manner. It is important that backpacks be fit properly for dogs participating in the sport- owners are encouraged to ensure the right pack size is selected. There are a number of resources available online to guide pack size decisions, as well as experienced packers that can provide input via the COA-L. In addition, it is important that any loads are balanced so that a dog does not strain itself compensating for an off-center or poorly balanced load. Handlers are encouraged to review the load balance throughout a trip, particularly as food and water is consumed, to ensure the dog remains comfortable with what it is being asked to do.

Training sessions to familiarize the dog with the pack and light weight are the most effective way to begin. Chinooks should be happy and excited in anticipation of an outing- owners are responsible for ensuring their dogs have positive experiences on the trails. Brief, positive training sessions will allow a Chinook to understand what it is being asked to do. Once a dog is familiar with the components of packing, it is ready to earn a Novice Pack Dog certification.

The WDP supports working with Chinooks to responsibly introduce them to packing – physical and mental abuse are expressly prohibited. No action or inaction that causes preventable pain or suffering to a dog is allowed. If a dog is tentative or nervous when fitted with its pack or weight, yelling at it or forcing it to be dragged along is not only abusive it is counterproductive and will lead to an insecure dog. Please contact the WDP Committee for more information on gradually introducing a Chinook to packing.

A dog must meet the following requirements to be awarded the Novice Pack Dog certificate:

1. Backpack: Allow itself to be fitted with a backpack.
2. Weight: Allow the backpack to be loaded and balanced. At the beginning of the trip, the load must be between 10% and 20% of the dog's weight. Weight in the pack may decrease throughout the trip due to consumption of food and water.



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3. Travel: Walk on a loose lead or off-leash with the handler, yielding to others on the trail. Handlers are responsible for complying with local leash laws.
4. Pace: Keep pace with the handler while negotiating any obstacles and passing by distractions.
5. Stop: Wait calmly for the hike to resume while the handler rests. The dog must be offered water at any stops.
6. Distance: Travel a distance of 20 miles in trips a minimum of 3 miles long. At least two trips are required unless a single trip includes an overnight stop.

Notes:

- The dog's weight will be verified at a veterinary service by a member of the staff within a month of the first hike. All subsequent hikes must be completed within three months of the weight certification or the weight must be re-confirmed at a veterinary service. Puppies under 1 year old must have weight confirmed at a veterinarian service within a week of each hike to ensure they are not overburdened.
- Owners and dogs must "leave no sign" from hikes – all trash and stool must be packed out and disposed of properly.
- Pack trips must occur on natural terrain such as hiking trails or cross-country.
- Elevation may be substituted for mileage in the following manner: 1,000 feet of elevation gain is equivalent to 1 mile of flat terrain. Elevation gain will be figured as the difference between the highest and lowest points of the trip.
- The handler must include narratives and maps of each trip. Photos/videos of dogs during trips are encouraged.
- New technologies frequently become available to document distances and locations (e.g., mapping tools, ipod apps, etc.). Please consult with the Committee prior to using any of these tools on qualifying runs to ensure their eligibility.
- Photos must be used to document the trips

Novice Pack Dog Application Checklist:

To apply for the certification, the following documentation should be sent to the WDP Committee:

- Novice Pack Dog Form, signed by handler.
- Weight Certification Form for dog from a veterinary service.
- Map of locations and distances traveled.
- List of items included in dog's backpack.
- 3 Photos for each packing trip showing:
 1. Start



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2. Estimated farthest point of trip from start
 3. Finish
- \$5 application fee (check or paypal).
 - Extra documentation can expedite review, such as:
 1. Additional photos / videos of the dog packing
 2. Detailed narratives of the trips from the musher
 3. Maps with attached geotagged photos