

# S.V. German Shepherd Dog Standard

June 1997 Revisions .....Translated by Fred Lanting, SV Conformation Judge  
Reprinted from Schutzhund USA

FCI Standard #166; replaces 23 March, 1991 Edition

FCI Classification: Group 1- Guardian and Driving dogs; Section 1- Shepherd' dogs with working titles.

Versatile use: Guardian and Service (Working) Dog

Short historic overview: Since the official establishment in Augsburg, within the German Canine Association known as the VDH (German "Kennel Club"), the parent club of the breed, the Club for German Shepherd Dogs (SV), is responsible for the breed Standard of the German Shepherd Dog. The Standard was set up in the first membership meeting in Frankfurt on 20 September 1899, upon the suggestions of A. Meyer von Stephanitz. At the 6th membership gathering on 28 July 1901, the 23rd meeting in Koln on 17 September 1909, the conference of the executive committee and the board in Wiesbaden on 5 September 1930, and the breed committee and board of directors meeting on 25 March 1961. As part of that one, the World Union of German Shepherd Dog Clubs (WUSV) was involved with the work. At the WUSV conference on 30 August 1976 they agreed on another revision, and on 23/24 March 1991 assumed full powers by way of resolution of the executive and advisory committees. The current version was adopted in 1997. The German Shepherd Dog, whose systematic breeding was begun in the year 1899 with the founding of the club, is from the former Central and Southern German stocks then available. They were bred and descended from guardian dogs with the objection of creating a working dog predisposed to high performance. To reach this goal, the breed Standard of the German Shepherd Dog was determined, with reference both to the bodily construction as well as to the essential nature and character traits.

## General Appearance

The German Shepherd Dog is a medium -size, slightly stretched, strong, and well-muscled, with the "bone" dry and firm in the over-all construction. Important measurements and proportions: The withers height for males is 60 to 65 cm; that of bitches is 55 to 60 cm. \* The length of torso exceeds the measure of the withers, height by about 10-17%. The German Shepherd Dog

must be, in its essential image, well-balanced, firm in nerves, self-confident, absolutely calm and impartial, and (except in tempting situations) amiable. He must possess courage, willingness to fight, and hardness, in order to be suitable as companion, watchdog, protector, service dog, guardian

## HEAD

The head is to be wedge-shaped, large but in proportion to the body, with length about 40% of the dog's height at the withers, without being clumsy or overly long. It is dry in its general appearance, and moderately broad between the ears. The forehead is seen from in front and from the side to be only little arched, and without central furrow or with only a slightly implied one. The proportion of back-skull to fore-face is 50:50. The breadth of back-skull corresponds approximately to its length. The top of the head (seen from above) from the ears to the nose is a fairly continuous wedge-shaped taper, with a slanting but not to sharply defined stop. Upper and lower jaws are definitely strong. The muzzle is straight, neither a saddle shape nor an arc being desired. The lips are tight, closing well, and of dark color. The nose must be black. The teeth must be strong, healthy and complete (42, conforming to the established rule). The German Shepherd Dog has a scissors bite; i.e., the incisors must mesh in a scissors bite whereby the incisors of the upper jaw intersect like scissors with those of the lower jaw. Level (pincer), over- and under-bites are faulty, as are large gaps between the teeth (interrupted arrangement). Likewise, incorrect is a straight line of incisors. The jawbones must be strongly developed, so that the teeth can be deeply embedded in their places. The eyes are medium in size, almond-shaped, somewhat slanted, and not protruding. The color of the eyes should be as dark as possible; light, piercing eyes are not desired, as this detracts from the dog's expression.

## EARS

The German Shepherd Dog has pricked ears of medium size, which are carried upright and neither pointing outward nor inward; they taper to a point and are held with the opening of the shell facing forward. Tipped over and hanging ears are faulty. Ears laid back during gating and/ or relaxation are not faulted.

## NECK

The neck should be strong, well-muscled, and without loose skin at the throat (dewlap). The head is held such that the neck is at an angle of approximately 45 degrees from the (horizontal) torso.

## BODY

The over-line proceeds from the neck, continuing over the high, long withers and over the straight back though the slightly sloping croup without abrupt change. The back is moderately long, firm strong, and well-muscled. The loin is broad, short, powerfully fashioned, and well-muscled. The croup should be long and slightly sloping (approx. 23 degrees from the horizontal) and without a break in the over-line as it continues over the tail-set. The chest should be moderately broad, its underline as long as possible, and pronounced. The depth of chest should be about 45% to 48% of the dog's height at the withers. The ribs should widen out and curve moderately, Barrel-shaped chests or slab-sided appearance are equally faulty. The tail extends at least up to the hock, but not beyond the middle of the metatarsus. Its hair is somewhat busy on the underside. It is carried in a gentle hanging curve when relaxed, and is lifted more on excitement and in movement, though not over the horizontal. Surgical corrections are forbidden.

## LIMBS FOREHAND

The front limbs are seen from all sides to be straight, and from the front view are perfectly parallel. Shoulder blade and upper arm are of equal lengths accumulated and firmly attached to the torso with medium-strong muscling. The angle between shoulder blade and upper arm amounts to, in the ideal case 90 degrees, but as a rule is 110 degrees. The elbows, either when standing or moving, may not be turned out; likewise, not pinched together. The forearms in the standing dog are seen in all views to be straight and perfectly parallel to each other, dry, and firmly muscled. The pastern has a length of approximately 1/3 that of the forearm and has an angle of approx. 20 to 22 degrees to this. Both a slanting pastern (more than 22 degrees) as well as a steep pastern (less than 20 degrees) are harmful to working suitability, particularly endurance. The paws are round, well closed and arched, the soles hard, but not inflexible. The nails are sturdy and of a dark color.

## HIND QUARTERS

The position of the hind legs is slightly toward the rear, and viewed from behind the hind-legs are parallel to each other. Upper thigh and lower thigh are roughly of equal length and form an angle of approximately 120 degrees.

The thighs are powerful and well-muscled. The hock joints are sturdily built and firm; the metatarsus is vertical from the hock joint. The paws are closed, slightly arched, the pads hard and dark color, the nails sturdy and arched, and also dark.

## Movement

The German Shepherd Dog is a trotter. The limbs must be so harmonious with each other in length and angulations, that without creating much undulation of the top-line, the hindquarters can push the torso forward in such a manner that the stride matches that of the forequarters. Every tendency toward over-angulation of the hindquarters decreases the firmness and the endurance, and with that the working ability. With correct structural proportions and angulations, a far-reaching, ground-covering, level gait results, which conveys the impression of effortless forward movement. With the head thrust forward and tail slightly lifted it presents, in a fairly level, balanced, and smooth trot, one uninterrupted, gently flowing over-line from the tips of the ears over the nape and back, through to the end of the tail.

## SKIN

The skin is (loosely) contiguous without, however, forming folds.

## COAT

Condition of the hair...The correct type of hair-coat for the German Shepherd Dog is the Stock-hair (straight, harsh topcoat) with undercoat. The topcoat should be as tight as possible, straight, harsh, and lying closely and firmly. On the head between the ears, on the front side of the legs, and on paws and toes it is short. At the neck somewhat longer and more abundant. On the backs of the legs the hair grows longer as far down as the wrist, and correspondingly down to the hock. At the backside of the thighs it forms moderate trousers.

## COLORS

Black with reddish-brown, brown, tan, and/ or light grey markings. Solid-black. Sable with dark overcast. Black saddle and mask. Inconspicuous, small white chest markings, likewise light color on the insides, are allowed but not desirable. The nose bulb must be black in all colors of the breed. Missing mask, light (piercing) eye color, as well as light to whitish markings at chest and under/inner sides, light claws, and red-tipped tail are to be considered as

deficient pigment. The undercoat has a light gray color. The color white is not permitted.

## SIZE/WEIGHT

Males: Withers height 60cm to 65cm, (23.6 to 25.6 inches) weight 30 kg to 40 kg,(66 to 88 lbs.) Females: Withers height 55cm to 60cm, (21.6 to 23.6 lbs.); weight 22kg to 32kg, (48 1/2 to 70 1/2 lbs.) Testicles: Dogs should display two evidently normal developed testicles, situated in the scrotum. Faults: All deviations from the above-mentioned, points should be considered as errors, the severity of fault appraisal being strictly in proportion to the degree of deviation. Major Faults: Anything that departs from the Standard and known characteristics of the breed in relation to the suitability for work; Ear faults: held out to the side; low-set; tipped over; over-set (tipped toward each other); weak; Considerably lacking in pigment; Considerable deficiency in overall firmness.

## DENTITION FAULTS:

All deviations from the scissors bite and the formation of the teeth that are not dealt with in the following list of specific faults. Disqualifying Faults (also ineligible for breed survey): a) Weak character, biting, nervous; b) Demonstrated severe hip dysplasia; c) Cryptorchidism ( unilateral or bilateral), clearly unequal or stunted, atrophies testicles; d) Deformed ears or tail; e) Dogs with deformities; f) Dentition faults involving the absence of : one P-3 and another tooth, or one fang (canine), or one P-4, or one Molar-1 or Molar-2, or any total of three or more teeth; g) Incisor (bite) irregularities: overshot by 2mm or more, undershot, or pincer bite (even or level in entire incisor area; h) Oversize by more than one centimeter; i) Albinism; j) White hair coat even if the dog has dark eyes and nails; k) Langstockhaar (topcoat, straight, soft not lying flat; with undercoat present; flags (feathering) on ears and legs, bushy trousers, bushy tail with formation of flags on the underside; i) Langhaar (topcoat long, soft; without undercoat, generally parting in the middle of the back; flags at ears, legs, and tail).