

The German Shepherd Dog Standard, (as published by FCI August 2010)

Translated by Fred Lanting

FCI Standard #166; 2009 Revision of 1991 & 1997 editions adopted by SV, WUSV, FCI
(*Plus, dentition change added January 2002*)

FCI Classification: Group 1 – Guardian and driving dogs; Section 1 – Shepherds' dogs with working titles.

Versatile use: Multi-use Dog (Working, Search, and Service)

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 or 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 and M. von Stephanitz, and then revised at the 6th membership gathering on 28 July 1901, the 23rd meeting in Köln on 17 September 1909, the conference of the executive committee and 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, adopted in 1997 and updated 31 May 2008, and 6 June 2009, adds information on the long-coat dogs now allowed.]

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 stock then available. They were bred and descended from herding dogs then in existence with the objective of creating a high-performance working dog predisposed to work with sheep. To reach this goal, the breed Standard of the German Shepherd Dog was established, with reference both to the bodily construction as well as to the essential nature and character traits.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The German Shepherd Dog is medium in size, slightly longer than tall, strong, and well muscled, with the “bone” dry and firm in the over-all construction. [Not fat nor with loose skin.] **Important measurements and proportions:** The withers height for males is 60 to 65cm; that of bitches is 55 to 60cm.* The length of torso [prosternum to ischium] exceeds the height at the withers by about 10-17 %.

NATURE

The essential image of the German Shepherd Dog must show one that is well-balanced, firm in nerves, self-confident, absolutely calm and impartial, and amiable (except in situations that require otherwise). He must possess courage, willingness to fight [defend], and hardness, in order to be suitable as companion, watchdog, protector, service dog, and 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 as seen from the front

and from the side is only little arched, and without a central furrow or with only a slightly implied one.

The proportion of backskull to foreface is 50:50. The breadth of backskull 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 too-sharply defined stop. Upper and lower jaws are definitely strong. The muzzle is straight, neither a saddle shape nor an arch being desirable. The lips are tight, closing well, and of dark color.

The nose — The nose bulb must be all black [in all coat colors of the breed].

Teeth must be strong, healthy and complete (42 of them, conforming to the established anatomical rule). The German Shepherd Dog has a scissors bite; i.e., the incisors must mesh in a bite whereby the incisors of the upper jaw intersect like shears with those of the lower jaw. Misaligned bites, overbites, and underbites are faulty, as are large gaps between the teeth (interrupted arrangement). Likewise incorrect is a straight line of the incisors [called a level or pincer bite]. The jawbones must be strongly developed, so that the teeth can be deeply embedded in their places.

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 standing [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 gaiting 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 [usually] held such that the neck is at an angle of approximately 45 degrees from the torso (from the horizontal).

BODY/TORSO

The overline proceeds from the neck, continuing over the high, long withers and over the straight back through 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° from the horizontal [*sic*]) and without a break in the overline as it continues over the tail-set.

* [*Anatomically incorrect*]

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 joint, but not beyond the middle of the metatarsus. Its hair is somewhat longer on the underside. It is carried in a gently hanging curve when relaxed,

and is lifted more in 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 [from elbow joints to pasterns], and in the front view are perfectly parallel. Shoulder blade and upper arm are of equal lengths and firmly attached to the torso with medium-strong musculing. The angle between shoulder blade and upper arm approaches, in the ideal case, 90°, but as a rule is 110°.

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° from the vertical. Both a slanting pastern (more than 22°) as well as a steep pastern (less than 20°) are harmful to working suitability, particularly endurance.

Front feet: the paws are round, well closed and arched; the soles are hard, but not inflexible. The nails are sturdy and of a dark color.

HINDQUARTERS

The position of the hind legs is slightly behind the torso. Viewed from behind, the hindlegs are parallel to each other. Upper thigh and lower thigh are roughly of equal length and form an angle of approximately 120°. The thighs are powerful and well muscled.

The hock joints are sturdily built and firm; the metatarsus is vertical from the hock joint down. [*Note: in shows as well as in nature, one leg will be positioned that way while the other is slightly more under the body for support and comfort.*]

The paws are rounded, with toes closed tightly and slightly arched; the pads are tough but not brittle or inflexible. The nails are sturdy and of dark color.

MOVEMENT

The German Shepherd Dog is a trotter. The limbs must be so harmonious with each other in length and angulation, that without creating much undulation of the topline, the hindquarters can push the rest of the body forward in such a manner that the stride matches that of the forequarters.

Every tendency toward over-angulation of the hind quarters decreases the firmness and the endurance and, with that, the working ability. With correct structural proportions and angulation, a far-reaching, ground-covering, level gait results; this conveys the impression of effortless forward movement. With the head thrust forward and tail slightly lifted it presents, in a balanced and smooth trot, a single uninterrupted, gently flowing overline 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

Stockhaar



Langstockhaar



Condition of the hair

The correct types of haircoat for the German Shepherd Dog are the *Stockhaar* (straight topcoat hairs) and the *Langstockhaar* (same, but longer), both with undercoat. The topcoat should be as tight as possible, straight, harsh, and lying closely and firmly.

In the *Stockhaar*, the hair on the head between the ears, on the front side of the legs, and on paws and toes is relatively short; at the neck slightly longer and more abundant. On the backs of the front legs the hair is also slightly longer as far down as the wrist, and correspondingly down to the hocks of the rear legs—at the back of the thighs, it forms moderate “trousers.”

[2010 note: the long-coated dog was accepted by the SV and WUSV, and subsequently the FCI (Belgium), but relegated to separate shows and classes in almost all competitions.]

In the *Langstockhaar* [long-coated variety], the topcoat (guard hair) is longer [typically somewhat softer, and not as tightly fitting.] It shows more length (tufts or “feathers”) around the ears and on the back side of the legs down to the carpal and tarsal joints (clearly “bushy trousers” on the rear legs), and the tail is also quite bushy on the underside. Hair is shorter on the head including the inside of the ears, on the front side of the legs, on the paws and toes. It is somewhat longer and fuller on the neck, almost forming a mane.

Colors

1. “Black-&-Tan” and “bi-color” varieties: black [mostly on dorsal parts] with markings of red-brown, tan-yellow, and/or light gray. Typically, black saddle and mask [partial or

extended];

2. Solid (monochromatic) black;

3. Sable [“*grau*” or “gray” with darker overcast on much or most of the dorsal coat]

Missing mask, light “piercing” eye color, and light to whitish marks at chest and [belly and insides of legs] are faulty. Such markings, even though inconspicuously small, are allowed but not desirable. Light claws and red-tipped tail are to be considered as [marks of] deficient pigment. The woolly undercoat shows a somewhat grey color. The white coat color [white or piebald dogs] is not permitted.

The nose bulb must be all black [in all colors of the breed].

***WITHERS HEIGHT & WEIGHT**

Males: 60-65 cm (23.6 to 25.6 inches) and 30-40 kg (66-88 lbs.);

Females: 55-60 cm (21.6 to 23.6 inches) and 22-32 kg (48½ to 70½ lbs).

TESTICLES

Dogs should display two evidently normally developed testicles, situated in the scrotum.

FAULTS

Every deviation from the above breed description should be considered as a fault, the appraisal of severity being in proportion to the degree of the deviation that hurts the dog’s working quality.

Severe/Major Faults (Anything that departs from the Standard and known characteristics of the breed in relation to the suitability for work):

- Ear carriage faults: Held too far to the side, too low-set, tipped over, overset, bonnet-set, weak (floppy) ears;
- Pigment considerably faulty;
- Greatly lacking in general firmness;
- All deviations from normal scissors bite and dentition*, besides the disqualifications and specific faults that are not dealt with in the list below.

Disqualifying Faults (also ineligible for breed survey):

- Aggressive or anxious character; poor/weak character; biting and nervous dogs;
- Demonstrated [obvious or radiographically] severe hip dysplasia;
- Unilateral or bilateral cryptorchidism, as well as dogs with clearly unequal and/or atrophied testicles;
- Deformed or mutilated ears and/or tails [i.e., cropped/docked, etc.];
- Structural deformities;
- Dentition faults involving the absence of:
 - one P-3 and another tooth, *or*
 - one fang (canine), *or*
 - one P-4, *or*
 - one 1st or 2nd Molar, *or*
 - any total of three or more teeth;
- Overshot of 2 mm and more; Undershot; Pincer (level) bite in the entire line of incisors;
- Oversize/undersize by more than 1 cm beyond 60-65 cm males, 55-60 cm females;
- Albinos [even though no longer in the breed];
- Dogs with white hair color even if they have dark eyes and nails;

- Dogs without woolly undercoats [whether topcoat is harsh or not, whether parting on the center of the back or not]; Longcoated dogs without undercoat on the middle line of the back where the hair parts, even if they have flags on ears and limbs and at the tail;

[As of the 2010-2011 show season, long-coated dogs are allowed, but shown in their own classes and have restrictions against breeding to normal-coated dogs.]

 Translated by Fred Lanting, retired SV Zuchrichter (judge): Mr.GSD @netscape.com or "Google" my name

addendum:

The Judging of Tooth Faults in Conformation Shows and Breed Surveys

VA (Vorzüglich-Select):	Flawless bite, complete dentures, no defective teeth or large gaps, no extra (double) teeth.
V (Vorzüglich, excellent):	Flawless bite, complete dentures, no large gaps; double P-1s are allowed.
SG (Sehr-Gut, very good):	missing one P-1 premolar or an incisor;
G (Gut, good):	missing: two P-1s, or one P-1 <i>and</i> an incisor, or one P-2
Penalized more, but still may get a "G" ("Gut") in the show ring:	an absence of: one P-3, or two incisors. or one P-2 <i>plus</i> one incisor, or one P-2 <i>plus</i> one P-1, or two P-2s;
"U" Ungenügend ("insufficient") -- ineligible for show and breed survey and blocked from the registry:	absence of: one P-3 <i>and</i> any other tooth, or one fang (canine), or one P-4, or one M-1 (1 st molar), or one M-2, or a total of any three teeth.

(Rule change in 1998 allows, with documentation, missing or broken teeth due to non-genetic causes)

Other tooth and jaw defects:

Over- and Under- bites: Obviously undershot or overshot (the latter being the separation of top incisors standing in front of the bottom ones by approximately the thickness of a matchstick or greater): the dog is not allowed to be listed in the registry. (See note on 2002 change, below.)

Caries (tooth decay) disqualifies from the breed survey.

Worn down and discolored: If due to age, it is considered in the judgment, but with no major downgrading. If teeth have turned slightly yellow or brown, but if the tooth substance is OK, placing is still possible.

=====

Comments on Change in SV Breed Show Dentition Rules, effective 2002:

Here is my translation of the Dentition Rules the SV announced in August 1998. My understanding is that the "dental notation" can be done anywhere, any time, by authorized people. For those who complain about dental notation fees, you aren't being forced to get the notation; you can take your chances on broken or lost teeth before you go for the Körschein (breed survey). Fred

The SV concluded this year's (1998) conference on changing the breed show rules concerning the *Ahnentafel* ("official pedigree"/registration paper) and regarding damaged (broken) or missing teeth. This is the new wording of section 4.3. of the breed show rules:

Environmental influences that lead to damage to a portion of the teeth, or to their entire absence, have no consequence for breed evaluation awards (such as show placings or *Körung*).

However, it is required that the former presence of healthy, strong teeth and/or a flawless scissors bite be confirmed and noted on the *Ahnentafel*.

The proof to be given the studbook office (check-list for establishing dentition registrations):

1. Submission of a dog show judgment (critique and results) and the scorebook, in which a conformation judge has described and confirmed the totality and (former) presence & sufficiency of healthy, robust teeth and a flawless scissors bite after personal examination. This is done after the dog has reached the age of 12 months. (or):
2. Submission of the breed survey certificate (*Körschein*), in which were recorded the dentition and bite status at the time of the survey. (or):
3. The submission of a radiograph accompanies a certificate by a SV-certified HD veterinarian, or a veterinarian-for-dentistry approved by the SV. On the radiograph, parts of the root or at least the tooth socket must be shown.

Veterinarian's certification for tooth faults, X-ray requirement for the entry in the *Ahnentafel*:

Unfortunately it frequently occurs that veterinary certifications of damaged or missing teeth are inadequate in description. Until the necessary statements about the *Ahnentafel* registration exist, taking much time, this can be very vexing to the owners, who are not allowed to exhibit their dogs! We therefore had to put together the most important points for you to certify, in the form of a checklist:

- * Complete name of the dog on the pedigree: obvious and legible!
- * SZ - number (SV Zuchtbuch, studbook) number, on the pedigree!
- * Microchip identification!
- * Give the status of the dentition problem:
 - Tooth is broken off, chipped, etc.
 - Tooth with root is missing completely (due to environmental, non-genetic) influence)
 - Tooth had to be extracted (give reason)
- * Cause of the tooth fault!
- * Position reference (right/left, top/bottom) please imagine yourself behind the dog, to determine which is right or left side!
- * Description of teeth: Please pay attention to the correct designation (for example, P1, P2, etc.)!
- * X-rays: Requirement for the entry in the *Ahnentafel*:

Tooth faults in the GSD occur often, even though it may be that dogs are completely free of tooth faults for many generations. Inheritance plays a role in the congenital tooth fault, but loss or damage acquired later in life through environmental influences plays no role in determining the breeding value of the GSD or for its descendants. Before the extraction of a tooth, a radiograph must be made in each case. It is a requirement for recording the missing tooth in the *Ahnentafel* of the dog. The breed (stud-) book office of the SV acknowledges radiographs only by certified HD veterinarians or from approved veterinarians specializing in dentistry.

Please note the following: Do the X-ray before the extraction! Clearly mark: "right" or "left"!

Still another note: Teeth that do not emerge completely from the gum (or are not normally developed) generally have no designation in the *Ahnentafel*. Veterinary certifications and radiographs therefore are necessary only for damaged or extracted teeth, whose absence is a result of non-hereditary, outside influences. *translated by Fred Lanting. See other articles on websites via search for my name. These include translations of Schutzhund-IP rules and other SV documents. <www.FredLanting.org>*

=====