



## **Official Standard of the Leonberger**

**General Appearance:** The Leonberger is a large, sociable working dog, muscular yet elegant, with a proud head carriage. The breed is distinguished by its black mask, substantial bone, balanced build, and double coat. Adult males are particularly powerful and strong and carry a lion-like mane on the neck and chest. Bitches are unmistakably feminine. The Leonberger is a dimorphic breed; a dog or a bitch easily discernible as such. Although imposing in size, the Leonberger is graceful in motion.

Natural appearance is essential to Leonberger type. The breed is to be shown with no trimming, sculpting or other alterations. True to the breed's origins as a multipurpose family, farm and draft dog, today's Leonberger excels as a versatile working dog and devoted family companion. Intelligent and lively, friendly yet vigilant, the Leonberger is attentive and self-assured in all situations.

**Size, Proportion, Substance:** *Size:* An adult male is 28 to 31½ inches in height (30 inches preferred). An adult female is 25½ inches to 29½ inches, (27½ inches preferred). Weight is in proportion to the overall size and structure. When proportion, substance, and balance are present, a slight deviation above standard is tolerated. *Proportion:* Height to length of body is 9:10. Height is measured at the withers; body length is measured from point of shoulder to point of buttock. The depth of chest is 50 percent of the height; brisket reaches to elbow. The angulation of front and rear quarters is in balance. Overall balance and proportion are as important as height. *Substance:* Strong bone in proportion to size of the body, well-muscled.

**Head:** The *head*, in its entirety, is deeper than it is broad, rectangular shaped, with no wrinkles. The length of muzzle to length of backskull is equal. Cheeks are only slightly developed. The male head is strong and masculine, while the female head always expresses femininity. *Mask:* Face is covered with a full black mask that extends from the nose up to and over the eyes. A lesser mask is acceptable, but not desirable. *Expression:* Good-natured, soft, and intelligent expression. *Eyes:* Dark brown is preferred over light brown. Eyes are medium size, oval to almond shaped, neither deep-set nor protruding. Eyelids are close fitting, not showing any haw or sclera. *Ears:* When alert, ears are level with top of skull and set slightly forward. They are of medium size, triangular, fleshy, hanging flat and close to the head. Tips are level with corners of the mouth. *Skull:* As seen from the front and in profile, backskull is slightly arched. Skull is slightly longer than wide and the width of backskull is only slightly broader than it is at the eyes. *Stop:* Clearly recognizable and moderately defined. *Muzzle:* Nasal bridge of even breadth, never running to a point, level or slightly arched (Roman nose); never dipped. The jaw remains broad and strong between the canines. *Planes:* As seen from the side, the planes of muzzle and backskull are parallel. *Nose:* Large with clearly outlined nostrils, always black. *Lips:* Tight, corners closed and dry, outer lips black in color. Some de-pigmentation due to aging is acceptable. *Teeth/Bite:* Complete dentition of 42 teeth (20 upper, 22 lower), strong, meeting in a correct scissors bite, lower incisors touching inside of upper incisors. A level bite is accepted. Serious Fault - Lips - Drooling or wet mouth. Disqualification – Expression/Mask: Complete lack of mask. Teeth/Bite: More than one missing tooth other than M3s.



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**Neck, Topline, Body:** *Neck:* Muscular, well set on shoulders, blends smoothly into withers, of sufficient length to allow for proud head carriage. No dewlap. *Topline:* Withers set above a firm level back that flows into a gently sloping croup. Rump not higher than withers. *Body:* Chest is broad, roomy, and deep, reaching at least to the level of the elbows, pronounced pro-sternum. *Ribs:* Well-sprung, oval. Underline: Only slightly tucked up. *Loin:* Broad, compact, strong, well-muscled. *Croup:* Broad, relatively long, gently sloped, flowing smoothly into root of tail. *Tail:* While standing relaxed, tail hangs straight down with the last vertebrae reaching to or below the hock. In movement, tail is carried no higher than the level of the back, with a curve up at the end permitted. An exuberant tail carriage, though higher than ideal, should not be confused with a high, incorrectly placed tail. Serious Fault - High tail carriage with tail curled over back at all times, whether standing or in motion.

**Forequarters:** *Shoulder:* Well laid-back and well-muscled. *Angulation:* The shoulder meets the upper arm at slightly greater than a right angle. Shoulder and upper arm about equal in length. *Elbows:* Close to body, neither in nor out. *Forelegs:* Substantial bone, muscular, straight and parallel to each other. *Pasterns:* Strong, firm and straight when viewed from front, slightly sloping when viewed from side. *Dewclaws:* Usually present. Feet: Turn neither in nor out, rounded, tight, toes well arched (cat foot).

**Hindquarters:** *Rear Assembly:* Powerful, muscular with substantial bone. *Angulation:* In balance with forequarters. *Legs:* Viewed from the rear, the legs are straight and parallel, with stifles and paws turned neither in nor out, placed widely enough apart to match a properly built body. *Thighs:* Upper and lower of equal length, slanting and strongly muscled. *Stifles:* Angle clearly defined. *Hocks:* Substantial bone with a distinct angle between lower thigh and rear pastern; well let down. *Dewclaws:* Rear dewclaws may be present. Feet: Turned neither in nor out, and may be slightly elongated. Toes arched.

**Coat:** Leonbergers have a medium to long, water resistant, double coat on the body and short fine hair on the muzzle and front of limbs. Outer coat is medium-soft to coarse and lies flat. It is straight, with some generalized wave permitted. Mature males carry a mane, which extends over neck and chest. The male coat is typically longer than the female coat. The undercoat is soft and dense, although it may be less so in summer months or warmer climates. In spite of the double coat, the outline of the body is always recognizable. Leonbergers have some ear feathering and ample feathering on fore and rear legs. Tail is very well furnished. Leonbergers are to be presented with no sculpting, scissoring, trimming of whiskers, or any other alterations whatsoever, except for neatening of the feet. Fault: Parted or curly coat.



**Color:** Coat colors are lion-yellow, golden to red and red-brown, sand colored (cream, pale yellow) and all combinations thereof, always with a black mask. All colors may have black tips (some with long black tips) on the outer coat, but black must not be the basic color. Dark coat colors are accompanied by a lighter colored undercoat and feathering of front and hind legs, that blend harmoniously with the basic body coloring. A small, unobtrusive stripe or white patch on the chest and some white hairs on toes is tolerated. Disqualification: Any coat color other than those listed. White hair on chest that exceeds 5 inches in width; white extending beyond toes.

**Gait:** The Leonberger has a ground-covering, even and balanced gait. The stride is powerful, free and fluid, with good reach and strong drive, giving the impression of effortless power. In motion, the Leonberger maintains a level topline. Viewed from the front and from behind, forelegs and hind legs travel straight. As the dog's speed increases, the legs tend to converge toward the centerline.

**Temperament:** The gentle character and even temperament of the Leonberger is of utmost importance for fulfilling their role as a family companion. The Leonberger is confident, with a steady, playful demeanor. The breed is willing to please and possesses a good capacity for learning. Serious fault - Quarrelsomeness or hostility towards people or dogs in normal situations; unwarranted show of timidity or nervousness.

**Faults:** Any deviation from these specifications is a fault. In determining whether a fault is minor, serious, or major, these two factors should be used as a guide: Deviation - The extent to which it deviates from the standard; and Impact - The extent to which such deviation would actually affect the Leonberger's phenotype or ability to fulfill its role as a family companion, and working dog.

**Disqualifications:** *Mask - Complete lack of mask. Teeth - More than one missing tooth other than M3s. Color - Any coat color other than those listed. White hair on chest exceeding 5 inches in width, white extending beyond toes.*

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**Effective August 31, 2016**