Official Standard of the West Highland White Terrier

**General Appearance:** The West Highland White Terrier, originally bred to hunt in packs for badger and eradicate vermin in the rough terrain of the Scottish Highlands, is a small, well-boned, hardy-looking terrier, exhibiting confidence and possessed with no small amount of self-esteem. The Westie presents a compact appearance with good balance and substance, and is distinguished by its hard, white, double coat. The breed requires moderation both in structure and presentation, and any exaggerations are discouraged.

**Size, Proportion, Substance:** The ideal *size* is eleven inches at the withers for dogs and ten inches for bitches. A *slight* deviation is acceptable. The Westie is a compact dog, with good balance and *substance*. The body between the withers and the root of the tail is slightly shorter than the height at the withers. Short-coupled and well boned.

**Head:** Shaped to present a roundish appearance from the front and in proportion to and balanced with the body. *Expression* - Inquisitive, intense, keen, intelligent and alert. *Eyes* - Widely set apart, medium in size, almond shaped, dark brown in color, and deep set. Looking from under heavy brows, they give a piercing look. Eye rims are black. *Ears* - Small, prick, set wide apart, on the top outer edge of the skull, and carried tightly erect. They terminate in a sharp point; must never be cropped. The hair on the ears is trimmed short and is smooth and velvety, free of fringe at the tips. Black pigmentation is preferred. *Skull* - Broad, slightly longer than the muzzle, slightly domed between the ears. It gradually tapers to the eyes. There is a defined stop and heavy brows. *Muzzle* - Blunt, slightly shorter than the skull, powerful and gradually tapering to the nose, which is large and black. The muzzle is well filled below the eyes. The jaws are level and powerful. Lip pigment is black. *Bite* - The teeth are large for the size of the dog. There must be six incisor teeth between the canines of both lower and upper jaws. A tight scissors or level bite is equally correct.

**Neck, Topline, Body, Tail:** *Neck* - Muscular and well set on sloping shoulders. Length in proportion to the rest of the dog. *Topline* - Flat and level, both standing and moving. *Body* - Compact and of good substance with defined forechest and buttocks. Ribs extend at least to elbows. The ribs are well arched in the upper half and taper to present a flattish side appearance. Chest is deep and extends at least to the elbows. Width is in proportion to the size of the dog. Back ribs are of considerable depth, and distance from last rib to upper thigh is as short as compatible with free movement of the body. Loin is short, broad and strong. *Faults* - Barrel ribs, ribs above elbows, lack of definite body overhang. *Tail* - Relatively short, with good substance, and shaped like a carrot. When erect it is never extended above the top of the skull. It is covered with hard hair without feather, as straight as possible, carried upright or slightly forward but not curled over the back. The tail is set on high enough so that the spine does not slope down to it. The tail is never docked.

**Forequarters:** Angulation, Shoulders - Shoulder blades are well laid back and well-knit at the withers. The shoulder blade attaches to an upper arm which is equal or nearly equal to the length of the shoulder blade. *Faults* - Steep or loaded shoulders. Upper arm too short or upright. *Legs* - Forelegs are muscular and well boned, relatively short, but with sufficient length to set the dog up so as not to be too close to the ground. The front legs are reasonably straight, and thickly covered with short hard hair. They are set in under the shoulder blades with definite body overhang before them. Height from elbow to withers and elbow to ground is approximately the
same. Faults - Out at elbows, light bone, fiddle-front. Feet - Forefeet are larger than the hind ones, round, proportionate in size, strong, thickly padded; they may be turned out slightly. Dewclaws may be removed. Black pigmentation is most desirable on pads of all feet and nails, although nails may lose coloration in older dogs.

**Hindquarters:** Angulation - Thighs are very muscular, stifles well bent, and hocks well let down. Not set wide apart and parallel when viewed from the rear. Legs - Rear legs are muscular and relatively short. Faults - Weak hocks, long hocks, over or lack of angulation, cow hocks. Feet - Hind feet are smaller than front feet, and are thickly padded. Dewclaws may be removed.

**Coat:** The white double coat is hard and weather-resistant, consisting of straight, hard hair and a short, soft undercoat. The longer jacket hair is approximately 1 ½ to 2 inches of hard hair, plucked and trimmed to blend into the shorter coated side neck, chest, shoulder, and rear. The jacket is smoothly blended into the longer furnishings. Hair is left around the head, plucked and shaped to provide a roundish frame for the face, with the tips of the ears and piercing eyes partially exposed yielding a typical West Highland White Terrier expression. Coat color, texture, and presentation should reflect the breed’s purpose and terrain in which they work.

**Color:** The color is white, as defined by the breed's name. A hard straight coat which has some wheaten tipping is preferable to a soft white coat.

**Gait:** Movement is free and easy all around; it is a distinctive gait, not stilted. When viewed from the side, the gait is powerful with equally ample reach and drive. The topline remains level. In the front the leg is freely extended by the shoulder. When viewed from the front, the legs do not move parallel but tend to move toward the center of gravity. The hind movement is free, strong, and fairly close, but does not single track. The hocks are freely flexed and drawn close under the body, so that when moving off on the foot the body is thrown or pushed forward with some force. Faults- Lack of reach in front, and/or drive behind. Stiff, stilted movement.

**Temperament:** Alert, confident, courageous, self-reliant, and Friendly-Possessing no small amount of self-esteem. Faults - Excess timidity or excess pugnacity

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