

AKC Leonberger Standard  
Approved by LCA Membership August 22, 2009  
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**GENERAL APPEARANCE**

The Leonberger is a calm, non-aggressive, large, muscular, working dog with a proud head carriage. He is distinguished by his balanced build, black mask, and double coat. Adult males, in particular, are powerful and strong and carry a lion-like mane on the neck and chest. A dog or bitch is easily discernable as such. For its size, the Leonberger is light on its feet and graceful in motion. Because natural appearance is essential to breed type, the Leonberger is to be shown with no trimming, sculpting or other alterations of the coat.

True to his original purpose as a family, farm and draft dog, today's Leonberger excels as a multi-purpose working dog; the most important task being a reliable family companion. The Leonberger is vigilant, obedient and quietly confident in all situations. He exudes good-natured watchfulness, depicting intelligence and vigor.

**SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE**

**Size:** A mature (18 months) male, when measured at the withers, is 28 to 31.5 inches in height at the highest point of the shoulder blades (30 inches preferred). The mature (18 months) female is 25.5 inches to 29.5 inches (27.5 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 is measured at the withers; body length is measured from point of shoulder to point of buttocks. Desired proportion of height at withers to length of body is 9 to 10. The depth of chest is ideally 50 percent of the height at withers; brisket reaches to elbow. The angulation of front and rear quarters is in balance. Overall balance and proportion are equally as important as size. **Substance:** Bone is medium to heavy and in proportion to size of body with sufficient muscle to support frame.

**HEAD**

The head, in its entirety, is deeper than it is broad, rectangular shaped. The length of muzzle to length of back skull is approximately equal, with no wrinkles, and cheeks are only slightly developed. Males have a strong masculine head while female heads express femininity. **Expression/Mask:** A good-natured, soft, and intelligent expression is required. 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. **Eyes:** Dark brown is preferred over light brown. Eyes are medium size, oval to almond shaped, neither deep-set nor protruding, neither too close together nor too wide apart. Eyelids are close fitting, not showing any haw. **Ears:** When alert, ears are level with top of skull and set slightly forward. Ears are of medium size, triangular, fleshy, hanging flat and close to the head. Tip of ears 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 back skull is only slightly broader than it is at the eyes. **Stop:** Clearly recognizable and moderately defined. **Muzzle:** Rather long, never running to a point, nasal bridge of even breadth, can be slightly arched (Roman nose) or level; never dipped. The jaw remains broad and strong between the canines. **Planes:** As seen from the side, the planes of muzzle and skull are parallel; planes rather close as defined by the moderate stop. **Nose:** Large with clearly outlined nostrils, always black. **Lips:** Tight, outer lips are black in color, with corners of lips closed and dry. Some de-pigmentation due to aging is acceptable. **Teeth/Bite:** Complete dentition of 42 teeth (20 upper, 22 lower), strong, correctly placed, meeting in a correct scissors bite, lower

incisors touching inside of upper incisors. Missing M3s are permissible. A level bite is accepted. Dropped lower incisors, in an otherwise normal bite, are not indicative of a skeletal malocclusion and are considered only a minor deviation. **Serious Fault** - Lips - Drooling or wet mouth. **Disqualification** - Expression/mask: Complete lack of mask. Teeth/Bite: Any missing teeth other than M3s.

### **NECK, TOPLINE, BODY**

**Neck:** Muscular, well set on shoulders, of sufficient length to allow for proud head carriage; blends smoothly into withers. No dewlap. **Topline:** Withers set above a firm level back that flows smoothly 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. Fore and rear quarters well muscled. **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 ideally 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 carried over back due to short, level croup.

### **FOREQUARTERS**

**Shoulder Angulation:** Well laid-back and well muscled; the shoulder meets the upper arm at approximately a right angle allowing for excellent reach. Shoulder and upper arm rather long and about equal in length. **Elbows:** Close to body, neither in nor out when standing or gaiting. **Forelegs:** Well-boned, 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), pads always black.

### **HINDQUARTERS**

**Angulation:** In balance with forequarters. The rear assembly is powerful, muscular and well-boned. **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:** Strong of bone, distinctly angled between lower thigh and rear pastern; well let down. **Dewclaws:** Rear dewclaws may be present. **Feet:** Turned neither in nor out, but may be slightly elongated compared to forefeet. Toes arched; pads always black.

### **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 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 distinct feathering on backside of forelegs and ample feathering on breeches and some ear feathering. Tail is very well furnished. Females are less likely to carry a coat as long as males and this disparity must not be a consideration when judged against the male.

Natural appearance of the coat is essential to breed type. Therefore, except for neatening of the feet, Leonbergers are to be presented naturally, with no alteration of the coat, to include sculpting,

trimming of whiskers, or any other alterations whatsoever. NO RIBBON SHALL BE AWARDED TO A DOG WHOSE COAT APPEARS TO BE ALTERED, AND JUDGES ARE TO ERR ON THE SIDE OF WITHOLDING OF RIBBONS IF THERE IS ANY DOUBT.

**Fault:** Parted or curly coat.

### **COLOR**

Coat colors are lion-yellow, golden to red and red-brown, also 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. All coat colors are accompanied by a lighter colored undercoat and feathering which blends well with the dominant body color. 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, easy, free and elastic, 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. Essential to sound movement is the balance of correct front and rear assemblies and anatomically correct overall structure.

### **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 self-assured and calm, with a steady, playful demeanor. He is willing to please and possesses a good capacity for learning. The Leonberger exhibits a marked friendliness towards children and is at ease in all situations, never showing fear, shyness or aggression.

Quarrelsomeness or hostility towards people or dogs in normal situations, or an unwarranted show of timidity or nervousness, is not in keeping with Leonberger character and shall be penalized to the extent that it is effectively eliminated from competition.

### **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 ability to fulfill its role as a family companion, working ability or phenotype.

### **DISQUALIFICATIONS**

Mask - Complete lack of mask

Teeth - Any missing teeth other than M3s.

Color - Any coat color other than those listed. White hair on chest exceeding 5 inches in width, white extending beyond toes.