

Code of Ethics For Breeders of American Pit Bull Terriers/American Staffordshire Terriers

Section I: Introduction & Mission Statement

Introduction: This Code of Ethics is being presented by the Pit Bull Owners Alliance (PBOA). The material presented herein is to serve as a guide for breeders and reference tool for potential buyers seeking out breeders. The goal in presenting this Code of Ethics is not to promote Pit Bull breeding, but rather to discourage indiscriminate breeding, poor breeding practices, and support of unethical breeders. PBOA supports and encourages rescue above and beyond breeding or purchasing Pit Bulls.

Mission Statement: The ethical breeder of American Pit Bull Terriers and/or American Staffordshire Terriers ("Pit Bulls") shall always hold paramount the future of the breed. A desire for betterment and preservation of the Pit Bull breed should be the sole driving force behind a breeder's choice to produce puppies.

1) The breed's future: because of a) anti-Pit Bull legislation, b) irresponsible ownership, c) criminal animal abuse, and d) a surplus of dogs, the future of the Pit Bull is in jeopardy. Prior to planning a litter, a breeder should ask himself/herself if the litter will jeopardize the future of the breed by contributing in any way to a, b, c, and/or d above.

2) Betterment of the breed: the goal of the ethical Pit Bull breeder should always be, first and foremost, to better the breed through the production of puppies that are as good as or superior to the previous generation. Production of Pit Bulls that ideally represent the United Kennel Club (UKC), American Dog Breeders Association (ADBA), and/or American Kennel Club (AKC) Standard(s) should be considered the pinnacle of a Pit Bull breeding program.

3) Preservation of the breed: ethical breeders should work to preserve, through legal and humane means, the Pit Bull breed as it was, is and should be. Means to achieve this goal include: protecting the integrity of the breed through adherence to the Standards; careful culling (via sterilization, and/or humane euthanasia when necessary) of sub-standard stock; meticulous record-keeping, DNA profiling, microchipping, and pedigree research; studying to achieve a scholarly knowledge of breed history, temperament, health, structure, and genetics.

Section II: Actions of the Ethical Pit Bull Breeder

Note 1) For simplicity's sake, "breeding stock" will apply to any dog or dogs that the Ethical Pit Bull breeder will breed, allow to be bred, or pay for the breeding services of. The pedigrees (previous generations) of all breeding stock should be considered as important as the breeding stock itself.

Note 2) Proper care, management and training are beyond the scope of this document. However an Ethical Pit Bull Breeder keeps their dogs well trained, in good health, in clean quarters,

provides daily exercise and mental stimulation, and does not keep more dogs than can adequately be provided for.

The Ethical Pit Bull Breeder chooses breeding stock based on several criteria:

- a) correctness of temperament (see #2 and Item 2)
- b) health and vitality of the individual dogs (see #3, Item 3, and Note 3)
- c) conformity to the applicable breed standard of the recognized Pit Bull registry (see # 5)
- d) qualities the individual dogs may offer to future generations
- e) qualities the pedigrees of the individual dogs may offer to future generations

The Ethical Pit Bull Breeder holds “A” and “B” above paramount above all other considerations when choosing breeding stock.

The Ethical Pit Bull Breeder:

1) has an extensive knowledge of Pit Bulls (their history, genetics, the Standards, care, training), as well as a strong understanding of breeding practices, canine health, and dog behavior/training

2) chooses breeding stock that is temperamentally sound and representative of the Standards. In addition, the Ethical Pit Bull Breeder does not breed any Pit Bull that is human-aggressive, fearful, exhibits behavior typically seen in breeds of the protection/guardian group, nor any Pit Bull that is not “temperament correct” (see item 3 below).

Item 2: The temperament correct Pit Bull: seeks out human interaction; is responsive, biddable and eager to please; may be genetically predisposed to aggression towards other dogs or animals; is appropriately submissive; is well balanced and optimistic; enjoys handling; presents good eye contact; is able to be calm in the presence of other dogs on leash or - if initially leash reactive - can learn how to tolerate their presence; is willing to connect with handler during high arousal; can be handled safely even in times of high arousal; accepts a reasonable amount of confinement; drops arousal levels quickly when removed from a stressful situation; is social with people of all types; is responsive and good natured; is never aggressive towards humans.

3) health tests all breeding stock prior to breeding, and certifies health of breeding stock prior to breeding where such certifications are available. Tests and certifications shall be conducted and processed prior to any dog being bred. Required health tests and certifications include: hips, elbows, thyroid, and heart (evaluated and certified by organizations such as Orthopedic Foundation for Animals [OFA] for hips, elbows, thyroid, and heart, or PennHip for hips). Additional testing may be conducted for the following health abnormalities: Spinocerebellar/Hereditary Ataxia (specifically on American Staffordshire Terriers), and Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) with subsequent registration with Canine Eye Registry Foundation (CERF) encouraged for dogs free of PRA. Results and certifications of any and all tests will be made readily available to potential buyers if tested and certified dogs will be bred. In addition, immediately prior to each breeding, all breeding stock should pass a basic veterinary health examination and be determined to be in good health.

Item 3: No dog with unsatisfactory health tests and/or certification results shall ever be bred. Unsatisfactory results would be (among others):

- a) OFA hip ratings below fair
- b) OFA elbow ratings that indicated elbow dysplasia
- c) PennHip ratings that show abnormal joint laxity
- d) thyroids that do not test normal; thyroids that test TgAA positive
- e) hearts that are not found to be clear of murmurs or other abnormalities upon examination with a Doppler (ultrasound) exam by a Board Certified Cardiologist
- f) positive tests for Spincerebellar/Hereditary Ataxia
- g) positive tests for PRA
- h) positive tests for any other hereditary/congenital/genetic disease

Note 3) No dog with a hereditary/congenital skin disease shall ever be bred. A dog with chronic health problems (such as skin allergies) and/or weaknesses, and/or immune weakness shall never be bred. A dog that has torn anterior cruxiate cigaments (ACL) shall never be bred unless the torn ligaments were damaged because of conceivable stress and/or injury which indicate normal environmental causes and not hereditary/congenital/genetic weakness.

5) chooses breeding stock that conforms to the Standard(s) of the applicable recognized Pit Bull registry.

6) registers breeding stock and produced litters with a recognized Pit Bull registry.

Item 1: For the sake of this Code of Ethics, recognized Pit Bull registries will be considered the United Kennel Club and the American Dog Breeders Association (for American Pit Bull Terriers and American Staffordshire Terriers being registered as American Pit Bull Terriers), and the American Kennel Club (for American Staffordshire Terriers). These organizations are the oldest and hold breed standards that are most sought after and followed.

7) only breeds mature (over 2 years of age) dogs. Does not breed elderly bitches, nor does the Ethical Pit Bull breeder breed any one bitch more than once every 24 months.

8) seeks validation of quality of breeding stock through competition in organized dog sports and subsequent achievement of titles and certifications such as:

- a) UKC, ADBA, and AKC conformation, obedience, agility, and performance titles
- b) certifications such as the AKC's Canine Good Citizen (CGC), American Temperament Test Society's Temperament Tested (TT), Therapy Dogs International's Therapy Dog International (TDI), and other similar, valid certifications.
- c) events, titles, and certifications offered by other valid organizations.

9) breeds less than 3 litters every year. Should ideally breed no more than 1 litter a year.

10) breeds when there is a specific demand for the puppies, and owners for puppies have been predetermined before birth.

Section III: Puppies, Placement, and Care

Section III also applies to adolescent dogs and/or adult dogs any breeder may have in their care and potentially place.

1) chooses homes based on ability to properly care for and handle a Pit Bull, and acts as match maker between puppy/dog and potential owner to ensure compatibility.

Item 4: The quality of the home any puppy or dog is placed into should be of great importance. The Ethical Pit Bull Breeder only considers a potential owner that:

- a) has already done good breed research. Asks good questions. Shows willingness to learn more
- b) is realistic about breed challenges (dog-aggression, high energy levels, strong and pushy, breed specific legislation, rental and home owners insurance issues, bad reputation of breed, etc.)
- c) shows a stable, mature, open-minded personality
- d) is happy to be interviewed and receive a home inspection
- e) is physically capable of handling a strong dog
- f) wants an indoor pet as a companion animal/family member
- g) has had some dog experience and knowledge of basic training.
- h) has a reasonably active lifestyle and is prepared to satisfy dog's daily exercise needs
- i) owns a home or has a secure rental that will allow a Pit Bull (should provide proof in lease)
- j) can provide safe containment: tall, secure fences if yard is present and working latches on gates.
- k) lives in a household (includes roommates, children, seniors) that is involved in the decision to bring a Pit Bull into the family and is able to help manage a dog
- l) has other pets in the home that are a good match and understands that Pit Bull must be separated from other pets when not supervised

12) socializes and conducts basic training with all puppies before sending them to their new homes.

13) microchips all puppies prior to sending them to their new homes.

14) does not place puppies under 8 weeks of age.

15) does not place puppies in areas where breed specific legislation that would endanger the puppy's life or quality of life exists.

16) provides legally-binding, non-expiring contracts upon purchase that protect buyer as well as puppy. Contract certifies health (congenital, genetic, hereditary) and temperamental soundness of puppy. Assures puppy is disease-free prior to placement through records detailing proper veterinary and health care. Contract includes clause that requires new owner to relocate with the

dog, or return the dog to the Ethical Pit Bull Breeder in the event that breed specific legislation that would endanger the puppy's life or quality of life is enacted in the new owner's city/state.

17) takes responsibility for any puppy produced, during any point in the lifetime of that puppy, should the original home become unable to care for the puppy or grown adult dog.

18) sends puppies home with papers from the recognized Pit Bull registry to allow the new owner to register the puppy in his/her name; unless the puppy is pet stock and is not spayed or neutered prior to going to new home, in which case, the Ethical Pit Bull Breeder will withhold papers until the new owner can provide proof of spay/neuter. It is strongly advised, however, that the Ethical Pit Bull Breeder spays/neuters all pet stock prior to placement in new homes.

Item 5: "Pet stock" is any puppy that is not or would not potentially be bred by an Ethical Pit Bull Breeder, and/or any puppy that will not potentially be shown in conformation events.

19) after sending puppy home, offers support indefinitely to new owner by way of breed counseling, training/behavior advice, health care information, referrals, etc.

20) recognizes that breeding is not a money making venture, a business, nor a means to bring in extra money. Stud fees and sale prices of puppies should reflect the costs of ethical breeding. The ethical breeder does not see a profit at the end of the year, but may actually see a loss.