

Code of Ethics for Owners of American Pit Bull Terriers/American Staffordshire Terriers

Section I: Introduction

Introduction: This Code of Ethics presented by the Pit Bull Owners Alliance sets up guidelines for owners of American Pit Bull Terriers/American Staffordshire Terriers (Pit Bulls). These guidelines are designed to encourage responsible ownership. Pit Bull owners today face extraordinary challenges as this breed copes with the devastation of overpopulation, cruelty, irresponsible ownership, and breed specific legislation. Pit Bulls require dedicated, responsible and knowledgeable owners always, but especially so today given the current circumstances surrounding the breed.

Section II: Guidelines for Responsible Ownership of the American Pit Bull Terrier/American Staffordshire Terrier (Pit Bull).

Item 1: The Pit Bull owner should always be aware that, just as their Pit Bull represents the breed to the public, they themselves represent Pit Bull owners to the public. A Pit Bull owner should always be a polite source of accurate information on the breed and publicly conduct themselves in a respectful, responsible fashion.

The ethical Pit Bull Owner:

- 1) researches the breed extensively, and follows recommendations for the care and management of the Pit Bull set forth by reputable Pit Bull resources.
- 2) is aware of the Pit Bull's propensity for dog- and small-animal aggression, and takes the necessary steps to ensure the safety of other animals in the home as well as in public.
- 3) keeps his/her dog in control at all times while in public so as to always present a positive image of the breed.

Item 2: It is strongly advised that the Pit Bull be taken, at a minimum, through a basic-level obedience course. The Pit Bull should know and respond to basic obedience commands.

- 4) does not allow the Pit Bull to roam loose or run off leash in public places, and avoids off-leash dog parks.
- 5) never encourages in his/her Pit Bull aggressive behavior towards other animals or humans. (# 4 does not apply to owners who train and compete in recognized, organized working dog sports such as Schutzhund, French Ring, etc.)
- 6) upon discovering that his/her Pit Bull is displaying abnormal behavior such as human aggression (a serious temperament fault), immediately seeks out help from an experienced, reputable Pit Bull resource or trainer, and:
 - a) follows recommended behavior modification and/or veterinary protocols
 - b) takes steps to ensure that the Pit Bull can be kept from situations in which harm may be caused to a human

or if the Pit Bull's human aggression cannot be satisfactorily resolved and/or contained

- c) humanely euthanizes the Pit Bull

Item 3: It is not recommended that a human-aggressive Pit bull be kept by owners with children, and under no circumstances shall the human-aggressive Pit Bull be bred, or given away, sold, or adopted into another home unless the adoptive home is a Pit Bull-experienced home that fully

recognizes and can manage the human-aggressive Pit Bull.

7) recognizes that most Pit Bulls in most situations should not be bred, and if the Pit Bull Owner decides to breed, he/she shall abide by the Code of Ethics for American Pit Bull Terrier/Staffordshire Terrier Breeders. Otherwise, see # 8 below.

8) spays/neuters his/her Pit Bull. Owners of dogs that are being shown in breed/conformation events would be exempt from # 8 until such time as the Pit Bull is retired from competition.

9) does not buy Pit Bulls from backyard or unethical breeders, or petshops/pupymills

10) upon finding he/she can no longer care for a Pit Bull shall:

a) contact reputable Pit Bull rescues or private shelters which have experience in placing Pit Bulls
or, in the event that no such organization is available

b) seek to place the Pit Bull on his/her own (please refer to the Code of Ethics for Pit Bull Rescue)

or,

c) have the Pit Bull humanely euthanized by a veterinarian.

Item 4: Turning a Pit Bull over to public animal shelters should be avoided whenever possible as many do not offer Pit Bulls for adoption or do not have the knowledge and/or resources to properly house, evaluate and place Pit Bulls.