

# The Dalmatian

*~ the newest member of your family!*



## **C**ongratulations on making a Dalmatian a part of your family!

The "Dal," as he is known worldwide, is an intelligent and affectionate breed, which means constant companionship, love and attention – often expressed by following you from room to room.



With this pamphlet, the Dalmatian Club of America would like to provide you with some basic information about our breed's physical characteristics, and his personality as well. We hope it will help you to better enjoy this new member of your home.

The Dalmatian's most unique physical feature is, of course, his spots. He is medium in size, usually between nineteen to twenty-four inches when measured at the shoulder. Males and females vary in weight, but the most common range is forty to sixty pounds.

## **Activities**

Of both sporting and working heritage, he is ideally suited to be a family pet. He can also be an eager participant in a wide variety of different performance events: agility, rally, barn hunt, lure coursing, dock diving, road trials with horses, and obedience. Some are certified therapy dogs. And every single one of them is dependable and sensible enough to let you know when your guests or the mailman arrives – even before the doorbell rings. The Dal does it all!

## **Grooming**

Clean by nature, he is one of the few breeds that grooms himself, and has none of the odor common

to other dogs. Even when you stroke his extremely soft coat, your hand will still smell fresh. He does shed year round, but a little bit of regular brushing helps to minimize this. A bath three to four times a year is usually enough, and breeders discourage frequent bathing, as soap removes the natural oil that keeps his coat in good condition; in addition, a dry coat means an itchy coat. He needs his toenails trimmed weekly, but removing the hooked tip is all that is necessary. The condition of his teeth should be part of his annual checkup with the vet.

## **Health**

All responsible breeders work toward genetic health for the breed, investigating potential sires and dams for sound temperaments, as well as testing hips, eyes, ears, and thyroid. Congenital deafness in one or both ears at birth is one of the things every Dalmatian breeder must address, and all responsible breeders conduct a BAER hearing test on all their litters. You should have received the results of this test when you bought your puppy. If you did not, please consider having him evaluated by a canine hearing specialist as soon as you can.

Regular veterinary care and appropriate vaccinations – about which your breeder should advise you – are essential to make sure your new dog is both healthy and happy. The Dalmatian



is an easy keeper, but does have the genetic predisposition to develop bladder stones. Because "blockage" with a stone is life threatening, it must be treated as an emergency. A few simple steps will limit the possibility:

- 1) a "low purine" diet – most commonly found in kibble with a protein percentage in the low twenties;
- 2) plentiful clean water; and
- 3) frequent opportunities to empty his bladder.

Should a problem develop, a prescription diet and/or medication from your vet can help alleviate the condition.

We now know that reaching physical maturity before neutering is an important component in helping to prevent blockages, and The Dalmatian Club of America strongly urges you to wait until your Dal celebrates his first birthday to do so.

However, neutering your new Dal is an important consideration. Many breeders have "spay and neuter agreements" in their contracts and sometimes sell their companion puppies on "limited" AKC registrations. Altering your Dal will not change his personality, or even – contrary to popular conception – make him lazy or fat. Just as in people, an obese dog is the result of too many calories and too little exercise. Giving him "people food" or too many treats, can quickly transform a handsome, lean animal into a pudgy one.

## Training

Taking the time to teach your dog basic obedience for his – and your own – mental health is also extremely important. This sort of training is most effective when dog and owner learn together in a professional class. Common commands like "sit," "down," "come," "stay," "off," "leave it" and



"heel" provide him with the skills needed to be a happy and well-behaved member of your household, which will matter to you greatly during your many years together. Often new owners begin training their puppy for good citizenship, and end up happily involved in competition sports that the agile and intelligent Dalmatian enjoys so much.

Puppy classes for beginners are widely available. Ask your vet or breeder for recommendations.



Last, but not least, don't forget to take your new pal along with you whenever you are able, whether to work, to play or just to run errands. By exposing him to new places, new faces and a variety of different experiences, you will make him more settled and sociable. A social Dal is a *happy Dal* – one who will be a true ambassador for the breed.

## Resources

For more information about your new Dalmatian, or about the Dalmatian Club of America, and to explore joining our national club, visit

[www.thedca.org](http://www.thedca.org)

Also, please visit



[www.DCAF.org](http://www.DCAF.org)

to learn how you can support the Dalmatian Club of America Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to the health of dogs and of Dalmatians in particular.

# Dalmatian Breed Standard

Approved by the American Kennel Club  
Effective September 6, 1989

## General Appearance

The Dalmatian is a distinctively spotted dog; poised and alert; strong, muscular and active; free of shyness; intelligent in expression; symmetrical in outline; and without exaggeration or coarseness. The Dalmatian is capable of great endurance, combined with a fair amount of speed. Deviations from the described ideal should be penalized in direct proportion to the degree of the deviation.

## Size, Proportion and Substance

Desirable height at the withers is between 19 and 23 inches. Undersize or oversize is a fault. Any dog or bitch over 24 inches at the withers is disqualified. The overall length of the body from the forechest to the buttocks is approximately equal to the height at the withers. The Dalmatian has good substance and is strong and sturdy in bone, but never coarse.

## Head

The head is in balance with the overall dog. It is of fair length and is free of loose skin. The Dalmatian's expression is alert and intelligent, indicating a stable and outgoing temperament. The eyes are set moderately well apart, are medium sized and somewhat rounded in appearance, and are set well into the skull. Eye color is brown or blue, or any combination thereof; the darker the better and usually darker in black-spotted than in liver-spotted dogs. Abnormal position of the eyelids or eyelashes (ectropion, entropion, trichiasis) is a major fault. Incomplete pigmentation of the eye rims is a major fault.

The ears are of moderate size, proportionately wide at the base and gradually tapering to a rounded tip. They are set rather high, and are carried close to the head, and are thin and fine in texture. When the Dalmatian is alert, the top of the ear is level with the top of the skull and the tip of the ear reaches to the bottom line of the cheek. The top of the skull is flat with a slight vertical furrow and is approximately as wide as it is long. The stop is moderately well defined. The cheeks blend smoothly into a powerful muzzle, the top of which is level and parallel to the top of the skull. The muzzle and the top of the skull are about equal in length. The nose is completely pigmented on the leather, black in black-spotted dogs and brown in liver-spotted dogs. Incomplete nose pigmentation is a major fault. The lips are clean and close fitting. The teeth meet in a scissors bite. Overshot or undershot bites are disqualifications.

## Neck, Topline, and Body

The neck is nicely arched, fairly long, free from throatiness, and blends smoothly into the shoulders. The topline is smooth. The chest is deep, capacious and of moderate width, having good spring of rib without being barrel shaped. The brisket reaches to the elbow. The underline of the rib cage curves gradually to a moderate tuck-up. The back is level and strong. The loin is short, muscular and slightly arched. The flanks narrow through the loin. The croup is nearly level with the back. The tail is a natural extension of the topline. It is not inserted too low down. It is strong at the inserting and tapers to the tip, which reaches to the hock. It is never docked. The tail is carried with a slight upward curve but should never curl over the back. Ring tails and low-set tails are faults.

## Forequarters

The shoulders are smoothly muscled and well laid back. The upper arm is approximately equal in length to the shoulder blade and joins it at an angle sufficient to insure that the foot falls under the shoulder. The elbows are close to the body. The legs are straight, strong and sturdy in bone. There is a slight angle at the pastern denoting flexibility.

## Hindquarters

The hindquarters are powerful, having smooth, yet well defined muscles. The stifle is well bent. The hocks are well let down. When the Dalmatian is standing, the hind legs, viewed from the rear, are parallel to each other from the point of the hock to the heel of the pad. Cowhocks are a major fault.

## Feet

Feet are very important. Both front and rear feet are round and compact with thick elastic pads and well arched toes. Flat feet are a major fault. Toenails are black and/or white in black-spotted dogs and brown and/or white in liver-spotted dogs. Dewclaws may be removed.

## Coat

The coat is short, dense, fine and close fitting, it is neither woolly nor silky, it is sleek, glossy and healthy in appearance.

## Color and Markings

Color and markings and their overall appearance are very important points to be evaluated. The ground color is pure white. In black-spotted dogs the spots are dense black, in liver-spotted dogs the spots are liver brown. Any color markings other than black or liver are disqualified. Spots are round and well-defined, the more distinct the better. They vary from the size of a dime to the size of a half-dollar. They are pleasingly and evenly distributed. The less the spots intermingle the better. Spots are usually smaller on the head, legs and tail than on the body. Ears are preferably spotted.

Tricolor (which occurs rarely in this breed) is a disqualification. It consists of tan markings found on the head, neck, chest, leg or tail of a black or liver-spotted dog. Bronzing of black spots, and fading and/or darkening of liver spots due to environmental conditions or normal processes of coat change are not tri-coloration. Patches are a disqualification. A patch is a solid mass of black or liver hair containing no white hair. It is appreciably larger than a normal sized spot. Patches are a dense, brilliant color with sharply defined, smooth edges. Patches are present at birth. Large color masses formed by intermingled or over-lapping spots are not patches. Such masses should indicate individual spots by uneven edges and/or white hairs scattered throughout the mass.

## Gait

In keeping with the Dalmatian's historical use as a coach dog, gait and endurance are of great importance. Movement is steady and effortless. Balance, angulation fore and aft combined with powerful muscles and good condition produce smooth, efficient action. There is a powerful drive from the rear coordinated with extended reach in the front. The topline remains level. Elbows, hock and feet turn neither in nor out. As the speed of the trot increases, there is a tendency to single track.

## Temperament

Temperament is stable and outgoing, yet dignified. Shyness is a major fault.

## Disqualifications

- Any dog or bitch over 24 inches at the withers.
- Overshot or undershot bites.
- Any color markings other than black or liver.
- Tricolor.
- Patches.

## Scale of points

Scale of points	TOTAL
General Appearance . . . . .	5
Size, Proportion, Substance . . . . .	10
Head . . . . .	10
Neck, Topline, and Body . . . . .	10
Forequarters . . . . .	5
Hindquarters . . . . .	5
Feet . . . . .	5
Coat . . . . .	5
Color and Markings . . . . .	25
Gait . . . . .	10
Temperament . . . . .	10
TOTAL	100