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Pit Bull Classification Policy

2020

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Reviewer: GM Corporate & Regulatory

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Contents

1.   Statutory Context

The Dog Control Act 1996 ('the Act') sets out to control specified breeds and types of dogs in two ways. First, by requiring a territorial authority to classify as menacing any dog specified in Schedule 4 of the Act (Breed and type of dog subject to ban on importation and muzzling), and secondly, by prohibiting the importation of dogs of those breeds and types.[1]

Schedule 4 of the Act specifies that the following breeds and types of dogs are subject to ban on importation and muzzling:

- Brazilian Fila
- Dogo Argentino
- Japanese Tosa
- Perro de Presa Canario
- American Pit Bull Terrier (type).

There is broad consensus among experts on the breeds identified in Schedule 4; the designation is based on physical characteristics, which is a well-established methodology.

However, the description 'American Pit Bull Terrier (type)' is less clear. The Act does not define what is meant by an American Pit Bull Terrier 'type'. In the absence of a clear definition, territorial authorities have used largely subjective considerations to determine whether a dog is an American Pit Bull Terrier type or predominately American Pit Bull Terrier type.

2.   What is a Pit Bull?

The American Pit Bull Terrier (type) is not considered to be a breed, rather it is a subjective description which is commonly used to refer to mixed breed dogs with certain physical traits, such as a muscular body and broad head. Such mixed breeds usually include the American Pit Bull Terrier, the Bull Terrier, the American Staffordshire Terrier the Staffordshire Bull Terrier or a mix of these.
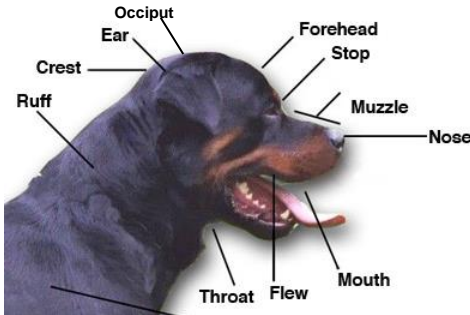
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[1] Standards New Zealand Guide to identifying Dog Breeds (NZS 8800:2006).

3. Guidance for identifying American Pit Bull Terrier 'Type'

The Manawatū District Council will use the guidance set out in this section to identify the American Pit Bull type.

Council will not accept DNA testing (e.g., the BITSA Breed Identification Test) as evidence of whether a dog is (or is not) wholly or predominately a Pit Bull. For a range of reasons, this testing is not always conclusive, especially where a dog is a mix of breeds.
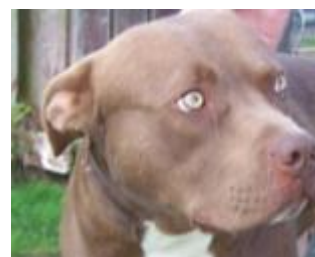
3.1. HEAD

Description	**Head** – The head is large and broad. Viewed from the front, the head is shaped like a broad, blunt wedge. Viewed from the side, the skull and muzzle are parallel and joined by a well-defined, moderately deep stop. The skull is large, flat or slightly rounded, deep, and broad between the ears. Viewed from the top, the skull tapers just slightly toward the stop. There is a deep median furrow that diminishes in depth from the stop to the occiput. Cheek muscles are prominent but free of wrinkles. When the dog is focused on something, wrinkles form on the forehead. **Muzzle**- The muzzle is broad and deep with a very slight taper from the stop to the nose, and a slight falling away under the eyes. The length of muzzle is shorter than the length of skull, with a ratio of approximately 2:3. The topline of the muzzle is straight. The lower jaw is well developed, wide and deep. Lips are clean and tight. **Teeth** - The American Pit Bull Terrier has a complete set of evenly spaced, white teeth meeting in a scissors bite (see explanation p.7). **Nose** - The nose is large with wide, open nostrils. The nose may be any colour.
	Dog Anatomy
Mesaticephalic Head Shape Medium skull with a medium muzzle. Broad at the base but short in length.	
	Outline
Standard Cheek Muscle Prominence of cheek muscle helps form overall head picture.	

Standard Flews/Jowls

Looseness and length of upper and lower lip.

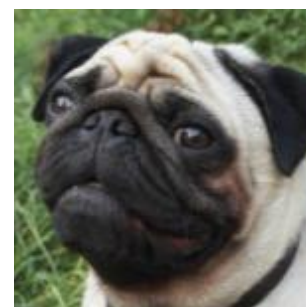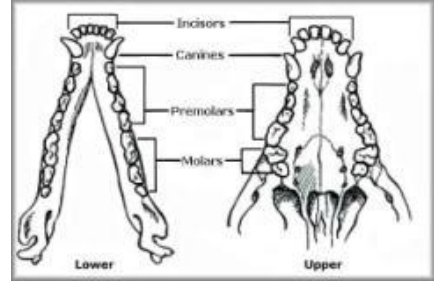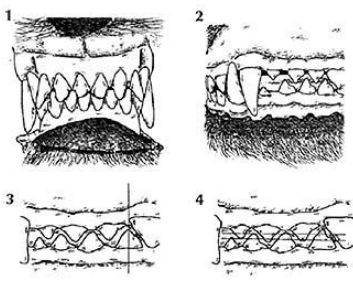## Not Examples

Dolichocephalic e.g. Greyhound   Brachycephalic e.g. Pug

	Examples
Scissor Teeth Known as the bite, where teeth meet.	
	Not Examples
	Undershot e.g. Bulldog Pincer/Level e.g. Great Dane

3.2. **EARS**	**Ears** - Set high on the head and free from wrinkles.
Pointed Ear Shape	Dog Anatomy
Semi Erect Ear	
Carriage	
Standard Ear Type	Examples

	Not Examples Button Shape e.g. Wirehaired Fox Terrier 	Bat Shape e.g. Boston Terrier 	Rounded Long Shape e.g. Basset Hound
	Rounded Short Shape and/or Dropped Carriage e.g. Labrador 	Erect Carriage e.g. German Shepherd 	Rose Carriage e.g. Greyhound

3.3. EYES

Eyes - Eyes are medium size, round to almond-shaped, and set well apart and low on the skull.

Almond Eye Shape

Examples

Not Examples

Round Shape e.g. Pug

Triangular Shape e.g. Bull

Standard Eye Type

Examples

Not Examples

Protruding Type e.g. Chihuahua
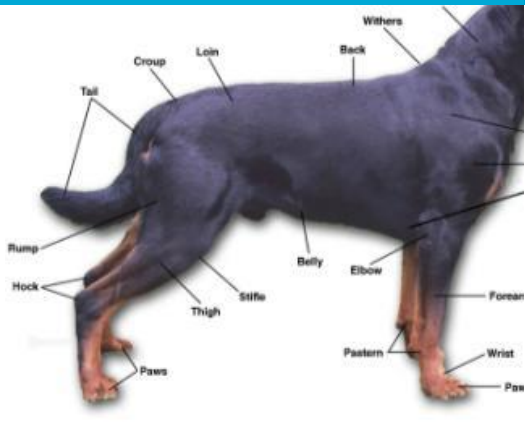
Deep Type e.g. Shar Pei
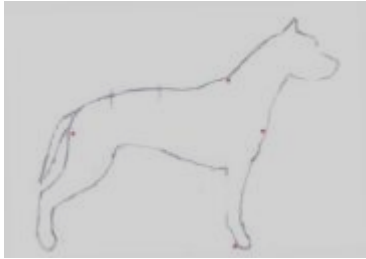
	Examples
Standard Eye Set Eye position in the skull.	
	Not Examples
	Wide Set e.g. Amstaff Oblique Set e.g. Greyhound

3.4.   BODY

Description	**Neck** - The neck is of moderate length and muscular. The neck should be narrowest just behind the ears and widen downward gradually to blend smoothly into the withers (top of the shoulders). The skin on the neck is tight and without dewlap. **Forequarters** - The shoulder blades are long, wide, muscular, and well laid back. The upper arm is roughly equal in length to the shoulder blade and joins it at an apparent right angle. The forelegs are strong and muscular. The elbows are set close to the body. Viewed from the front, the forelegs are set moderately wide apart and perpendicular to the ground. The pasterns are short, powerful, straight, and flexible. When viewed in profile, the pasterns are nearly erect. **Back** – The back should be short and strong, slightly sloping from withers to rump. The top-line should be slightly higher at the withers than at the rump, with subtle arch just over the lion area. **Chest** - The chest should be deep, but not to broad, with wide-sprung ribs. As the fore chest (also known as the brisket) goes down between the front legs to meet the chest, the fore chest should be deep enough at its lowest point to be even with the dog as elbow when viewed by the side.
Medium Height Between 30-45cm.	**Dog Anatomy**

	Examples
	Not Examples
	Small e.g. Jack Russell Terrier Large e.g. Labrador
Deep Chest Shape	Examples
	Not Examples
	Barrel: e.g. Bulldog Ovoid/Standard: e.g. Jack Russell

	Examples
Stocky Build	
	Not Examples
	Solid: e.g. Mastiff Fine: e.g. Greyhound
	Examples
Standard Body Length	
	Not Examples
	Elongated e.g. Dachshund
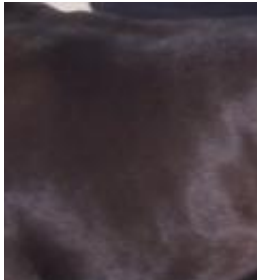
Sloping Topline	Examples
Gradient of the back from the withers to the rump.	

Not Examples

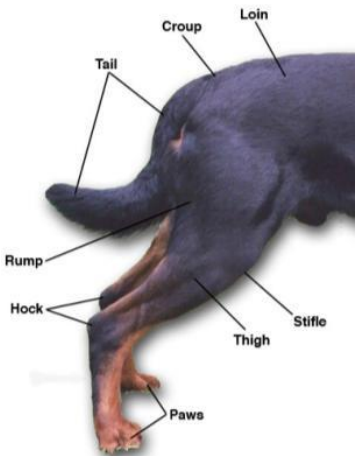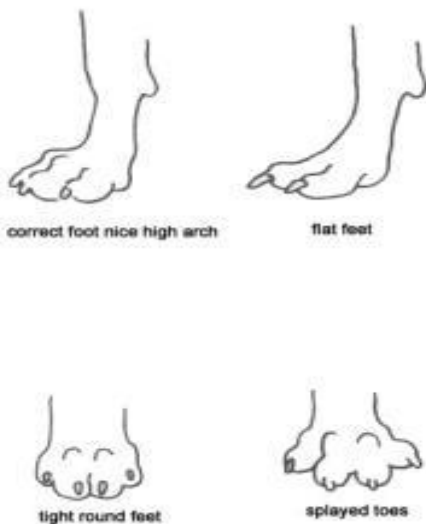| Level Topline e.g. Rottweiler	Rising Topline e.g. Greyhound

3.5. **SKIN & COAT**	**Coat** - The coat is glossy and smooth, close, and moderately stiff to the touch. The hair should be rather course in texture.

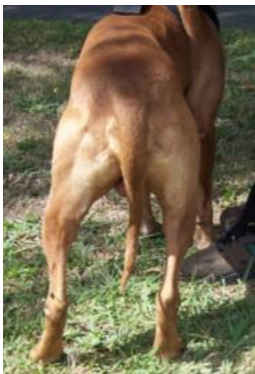|	Examples
Standard Skin Refers to the tautness of the skin.	
Short Coat Length	

Smooth Coat Type

Not Examples

Excess Skin e.g. Shar Pei	Wire Haired Type e.g. Wire Haired Pointer	Curly Haired Type e.g. Poodle
Hairless Type e.g. Chinese Crested	Long Coat Length e.g. Afghan Hound	Medium Coat Length e.g. Border Collie

3.6. COAT COLOUR

Examples of Colours	Examples		
	Black	Black & White	Tan
	Tan & White	Chocolate	Chocolate & White
	Brindle		
	Cream	White	Black and White

3.7. LEGS

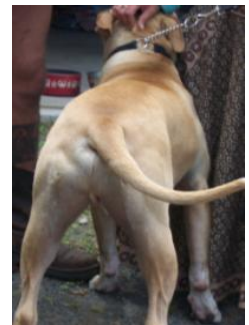|	
Description	**Hindquarters** - The hindquarters are strong, muscular, and moderately broad. The rump is well filled in on each side of the tail and deep from the pelvis to the crotch. The bone, angulation, and musculature of the hindquarters are in balance with the forequarters. The thighs are well developed with thick, easily discerned muscles. Viewed from the side, the hock joint is well bent and the rear pasterns are well let down and perpendicular to the ground. Viewed from the rear, the rear pasterns are straight and parallel to one another. **Legs and Feet** – The front legs should be strong and sturdy. The feet should point directly to the front, not towards each other or away from each other. The pasterns (which are the lower part of the front leg, from the joint just above the foot down to the foot) should stand erect and strong.
Medium Leg Length	**Dog Anatomy**
Bowed Leg Shape	**Dog Anatomy**

Well Developed Thigh Muscles	Examples		

Not Examples

Long Legged e.g. Great Dane

Short Legged e.g. Maltese Terrier

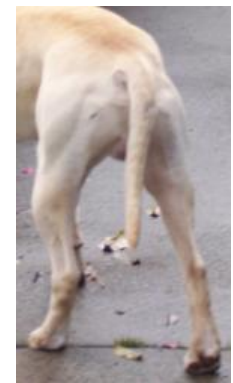|	Straight Leg Shape e.g. Wirehaired Fox Terrier	Crooked Leg Shape e.g. Lhasa Apso

## 3.8. TAIL	**Tail** - The tail is set on as a natural extension of the top-line, and tapers to a point. When the dog is relaxed, the tail is carried low and extends approximately to the hock. When the dog is moving, the tail is carried level with the backline.
Medium Tail Length	
Low Tail Carriage The way the tail is commonly presented and carried.	
Bee Sting Tail Type Medium and tapered.	

	Not Examples	
	Long Tail e.g. Irish Wolfhound	Short Tail e.g. Boston Terrier
	High Carriage e.g. Scottish Terrier	Screw Type e.g. Bulldog
	Curl Type e.g. Basenji	Whip Type e.g. Pointer
	Plume e.g. English Setter	Crank Type e.g. Staffordshire Terrier
	Spitz Type e.g. Samoyed	Straight Type e.g. Airdale Terrier