



### Official Standard of the Belgian Malinois

**General Appearance:** The Belgian Malinois is a well-balanced square dog, elegant in appearance with an exceedingly proud carriage of head and neck. The dog is strong, agile, well-muscled, alert and full of life. He is hardy and built to withstand the rugged Belgian climate. He stands squarely on all fours. The whole conformation gives the impression of depth and solidity without bulkiness. His elegance and expression denote great strength of character, reflecting his heritage as a herding breed. The male should appear unquestionably masculine; the female should have a distinctly feminine look and be judged equally with the male.

**Size, Proportion, Substance:** Males are 24 to 26 inches in height; females are 22 to 24 inches; measurement to be taken at the withers. Males under 23 inches or over 27 inches and females under 21 inches or over 25 inches are to be disqualified. The length, measured from the point of the breastbone to the point of the rump, should equal the height. Bone structure is moderate in proportion to height so that the dog is well balanced throughout and neither spindly or leggy, nor cumbersome and bulky. When viewing the silhouette, the topline, front legs and back legs should closely approximate a square.

**Head:** The *head* is carried high. It is long without exaggeration, rectilinear, well-chiseled and dry. The *eyes* radiate attentiveness and readiness for action. The eyes are of medium size, neither protruding nor sunken, slightly almond shaped, and obliquely set. They are brown, preferably dark brown, with black rimmed upper and lower eyelids. Light eyes are a fault. The *ears* are rather small, set high and distinctly triangular with a well-cupped outer ear and pointed tips. They should be stiff and carried upright and vertical when the dog is alert. Ears hanging as on a hound, or semi-prick ears are disqualifications. *Skull* and muzzle are roughly equal in length, with at the most a very slight bias in favor of the muzzle. The top skull is of medium width, in proportion with the length of the head, with a forehead flat rather than round, frontal groove not very pronounced; in profile, the head planes are parallel; occipital crest, brow ridges and zygomatic arches not prominent. The stop is moderate. The nose is black. The *muzzle* is of medium length and well chiseled under the eyes, narrowing gradually toward the nose like an elongated wedge. The mouth is well split, which means that when the mouth is open the commissures of the lips are pulled right back, the jaws being well apart. The lips are thin, tight and strongly pigmented black. The Belgian Malinois has a full complement of strong white teeth that are evenly set and meet in a scissors or level *bite*. Overshot and undershot bites are a fault. An undershot bite in which two or more of the upper incisors lose contact with two or more of the lower incisors is a disqualification. Complete dentition is preferred. Missing teeth should be faulted.

**Neck, Topline, Body:** The *neck* is slightly elongated, well-muscled, broadening gradually towards the shoulders, without dewlap, slightly arched, permitting the proud carriage of the head. The withers are pronounced, and the back is firm. The loin is solid, short and sufficiently well-muscled. The croup is very slightly sloped. The underline rises gently in a harmonious curve toward the abdomen, which is neither tucked-up nor paunchy. The chest is neither broad nor narrow, but well let down, with the lowest part reaching the elbow. The body should give the impression of power without bulkiness in proportion to the overall dog. The *tail* is strong at the base, reaching to the hock, and carried down at rest. It is curved, raised when moving, but not passing the horizontal or forming a hook or deviation. A cropped or stumped tail is a disqualification.



**Forequarters:** The forequarters are muscular without excessive bulkiness. The shoulder blades are long and sloping, laid flat against the body, forming a sufficient angle with the upper arm to ensure free and efficient movement. The legs are straight, strong, and parallel to each other. The bone is solid but not heavy; it is more oval than round. Muscle is dry and strong. The pastern is short, strong and very slightly sloped. Dewclaws may be removed. The feet are cat-like, well padded with the toes curved close together. The nails are strong and black except that they may be white to match the white toe tips.

**Hindquarters:** The hindquarters are powerful without heaviness. Angulation of the hindquarters is in balance with the forequarters. The upper and lower thigh bones should approximately parallel the shoulder blade and upper arm, respectively. Legs are parallel to each other. The thighs should be well muscled. The hocks are short, strong, parallel and moderately angulated. Metatarsi are strong and short. Dewclaws, if any, may be removed. The hind feet are slightly oval, toes are arched and compact. Pads are thick and well-padded. Nails are dark and strong, although they may be white to match white toes.

**Coat:** The coat should be comparatively short, straight, hard enough to be weather resistant, with dense undercoat. It should be very short on the head, ears, and lower legs. The hair is somewhat longer around the neck where it forms a collarette, and on the tail and backs of the thighs. The coat should conform to the body without standing out or hanging down. Lack of sufficient undercoat to form a double coat is a fault. Hair that is too long, silky or wiry is a fault. The Belgian Malinois is a natural breed and there is no need for excessive grooming.

**Color:** The ideal coloring is a rich fawn to mahogany, with black tips on the hairs giving an overlay appearance. The blackening must not appear as patched or brindled. The underparts of the body, tail and breeches are lighter fawn. Washed-out fawn color on the body is a fault. The mask must be pronounced and tends to encompass the top and bottom lip, the corners of the lips and the eyelids in one single black zone. The mask and ears appear black. The tips of toes may be white, and a small white spot on the breastbone is permitted, not to extend to the neck. White markings, except as noted, are faulted. Any color or color combination not described in the standard should be disqualified.

**Gait:** The movement is smooth, free and easy, seemingly never tiring, exhibiting facility of movement rather than a hard driving action. The Belgian Malinois single tracks at a fast gait, the legs, both front and rear, converging toward the center line of gravity, while the topline remains firm and level, parallel to the line of motion with no crabbing. The breed shows a marked tendency to move in a circle rather than a straight line.

**Temperament:** Correct temperament is essential to the working character of the Belgian Malinois. He is alert, intelligent, inquisitive and confident, showing neither fear nor aggression. He is energetic, ready for action, yet highly responsive to his owner's direction. His lively character should be evident in his proud carriage and sparkling attentive eyes. The Belgian Malinois is an exceptional watchdog. Vigilant yet responsive, he balances all the qualities needed in a stock dog, protector and sensible working partner. He is firmly loyal to those he loves but may be indifferent with strangers. Displays of fear or aggression are to be severely penalized.

**Disqualifications:**

*Males under 23 inches or over 27 inches and females under 21 inches or over 25 inches.  
Ears hanging as on a hound, or semi-prick ears.*



*An undershot bite in which two or more of the upper incisors lose contact with two or more of the lower incisors.*

*A cropped or stumped tail.*

*Any color or color combination not described in the standard.*

**Approved July 13, 2021**  
**Effective October 6, 2021**