

## The Longcoat German Shepherd Dog

"The correct GSD coat is relatively short with an obvious undercoat. As such it is quite waterproof. Some dogs are born with long coats which usually, though not always, are devoid of undercoat. Such coats are less useful and more difficult to groom, but many pet owners seem to like the long-coated version. Thus there is not strong selection against it, though very few breeders would deliberately breed from long-coated stock. The normal coat is dominant to the long version, so there are three kinds of dog: normal, normal but carrying the long coat gene, and long. About 10% of the pups are born long-coated." - Dr. Malcom B. Willis

Though not "correct" by the German Shepherd Standard(s), the long coated German Shepherd is a beautiful dog to behold. Because they cannot be shown in conformation at SV regulated shows (as well as ANKC etc.), many make wonderful working dogs in SAR, assistance work, and police work. Some owners say that the Long Haired German Shepherd's personality is also different than the normal coated dog: sweeter or more comical! (Sometimes, I wonder if that is due to all of the hugging the irresistible fluff balls must receive during puppyhood!)

Owners of this variety of German Shepherd Dog are usually staunch supporters of their long hair German Shepherds and are very proud of these beautiful companions. A Long Haired German Shepherd is sometimes called a "coat" or "coated German Shepherd". There are only the three coat types: normal stock hair, long stock hair, long hair. There is a range of coat lengths and fullness in the normal stock hair category.

\* **The normal stock hair German Shepherd Dog** has an outer coat that should be as thick as possible. The individual hairs are straight, coarse and lying flat against the body. The coat is short on the head inclusive of the ears, the front of the legs, the feet and the toes but longer and thicker on the neck. The hair grows longer on the back of the fore and hind legs as far down as the pastern and the hock joint, forming moderate breeching on the thighs. The length of the hair varies, and due to these differences in length, there are many intermediate forms. However, a too short or molelike coat is faulty. Some call a normal stock hair GSD with a longer, fuller coat of accepted length to be a "plush" coat. One may see many dogs of this type in the German show rings presently.

\* **The long stock hair coated German Shepherd Dog's** individual hairs are longer, not always straight and above all not lying close to the body. The coat is considerably longer inside and behind the ears, on the back of the forearm and usually in the loin area. now and then there will be tufts in the ears and feathering from elbow to pastern. The breeching along the thigh is long and thick. The tail is bushy with slight feathering underneath. This coat type is not as weatherproof as the normal stock hair and is therefore undesirable. However, provided there is sufficient undercoat, it may be passed for breeding, as long as the breed regulations of the country allow it.

\* **The long haired German Shepherd Dog's** coat is considerably longer than that of the long stock hair. It is generally very soft and forms a parting along the back. The undercoat will be found in the region of the loins or will not be present at all. A long coat is greatly diminished in weatherproofing and utility and therefore is undesirable (per the breed standard). The important distinction between the correct and incorrect coats (per the German Shepherd standard) is not just hair length, but the pattern of hair growth. The incorrect coats (long hair, long stock hair) have the bushy tufts behind the ears, the big fluffy pantaloons and big bushy round tail, and long fringes along the backs of the legs, and longer hair between the toes. A puppy can often be identified as a Longhaired German Shepherd Dog if it possesses ear fringe or tufts. Often, owners wonder why the coated German Shepherd is considered a fault. It has been thought that this was due to the fact that long hair German Shepherds sometimes lack the undercoat of a normal coated GSD. The undercoat was beneficial in helping the GSD withstand the elements during sheep herding in Germany's climate. A dog that is a long stock hair DOES have an undercoat. However, a true long coat (soft and silky like a Flat Coated Retriever) does not have an undercoat and has always been a disqualification. Whereas, the long stock coat was not a disqualification until recent years. They would be graded with a Koerklasse 2 but were still showable and breedable. Now, they are also disqualified by the SV from being breed surveyed. Also, it is a fable that Long Haired GSDs "smell" more than normal coated GSDs, or even shed more. A normal, healthy long haired German Shepherd will smell just as wonderful as a standard coated GSD. Usually, a dog that smells has skin problems or is unhealthy. It has nothing to do with the length of coat. Of course, both types can smell if they are allowed to roll in "certain" things or to become too dirty! Also, many owners of both long haired German Shepherds and normal coated German Shepherds (including me) say that their shorter coated dog sheds

MORE. If the dog has undercoat, chances are it will shed quite a bit no matter what the outer coat length is. There is one note to consider. If you plan to use your coated GSD for work (or play) in fields, forests etc., be aware that they will take longer to groom afterwards. Burrs, dirt, and foxtails are picked up more easily by the longer coat than the normal stock hair.



**Stock Coat**



**Normal Coat**



**Long Coat**