



Golden Retriever Club of America

GRCA CODE OF ETHICS

Below you will find the Code of Ethics originally adopted by the GRCA Board of Directors on April 20, 1997, with revisions in 2001, 2008, and 2011, as noted. The original text was adopted after many drafts, long discussions, review of other national breed clubs' Codes, and consideration of input from the membership. The Code's nature is not punitive, but rather a guideline that is informational and states the accepted norm in Golden Retrievers. This Code will appear in the GRCA booklet "Acquiring a Golden Retriever" and in new member packets. New members, by their application, agree to abide by and follow the guidelines outlined in the Code of Ethics. The reaffirmation statement on the annual dues renewal also will note members' agreement to follow the guidelines of this Code.

The Golden Retriever Club of America (GRCA) endorses the following Code of Ethics for its members. It is the purpose of GRCA to encourage its members to perfect, through selection, breeding and training, the type of dog most suitable in all respects for work as a companionable gun dog, and to do all in its power to protect and advance the interests of Golden Retrievers in every endeavor.

RESPONSIBILITIES AS A DOG OWNER:

Members must ensure that their dogs are kept safe and under control at all times. Members should properly train their dogs so that they are an asset to their community and not a nuisance. Dogs must be maintained with their safety and good health in mind at all times, including adequate and appropriate attention and socialization, grooming, feeding, veterinary attention, housing, routine care, exercise and training.

RESPONSIBILITIES AS A MEMBER OF GRCA:

Members' responsibilities include educating the public about the breed, keeping in mind that they and their dogs represent the breed, the GRCA and the sport of purebred dogs in general.

Members are urged to accept the written breed standard as approved by the American Kennel Club (or the applicable governing body of the country in which they reside or exhibit) as the standard description of physical and temperamental qualities by which the Golden Retriever is to be judged.

Members are required to maintain good sportsmanship at all events and competitions, abiding by the applicable rules and regulations set forth by the governing bodies for such events and competitions. Members' conduct should always be in accord with the purposes and intent of the GRCA Constitution and By-Laws.

RESPONSIBILITIES AS A BREEDER:

GRCA members who breed Golden Retrievers are encouraged to maintain the purpose of the breed, and are expected to demonstrate honesty and fairness in dealing with other owners and breeders, purchasers of dogs and the general public.

Owners of breeding animals shall provide appropriate documentation to all concerned regarding the health of dogs involved in a breeding or sale, including reports of examinations, such as those applying to hips, eyes, hearts and elbows. If any such examinations have not been performed on a dog, this should be stated.

Breeders should understand and acknowledge that they may need to take back, or assist in finding a new home for, any dog they produce at any time in its life, if requested to do so. Members who breed should sell puppies, permit stud service, and/or lease any stud dogs or brood bitches only to individuals who give satisfactory evidence that they will give proper care and attention to the animals concerned, and who may be expected generally to act within the intent of the statements of this Code of Ethics. Members are encouraged to use clear, concise written contracts to document the sale of animals, use of stud dogs, and lease arrangements, including the use, when appropriate, of non-breeding agreements and/or Limited Registration. Members should not sell dogs at auction, or to brokers or commercial dealers.

ADVISORY GUIDELINES:

Breeding stock should be selected with the objectives of GRCA in mind; that is:

Recognizing that the Golden Retriever breed was developed as a useful gun dog, to encourage the perfection by careful and selective breeding of Golden Retrievers that possess the appearance, structure, soundness, temperament, natural ability and personality that are characterized in the standard of the breed, and to do all possible to advance and promote the perfection of these qualities. (Paraphrased from Article I, Section 2, of the GRCA By-Laws, as amended in 1995.)

GRCA members are expected to follow AKC requirements for record keeping, identification of animals, and registration procedures. Animals selected for breeding should:

- (i) be of temperament typical of the Golden Retriever breed; stable, friendly, trainable, and willing to work. Temperament is of the utmost importance to the breed and must never be neglected;
- (ii) be in good health, including freedom from communicable disease;
- (iii) possess, and make publicly available in an online approved database, the following examination reports in order to verify status concerning possible hip dysplasia, hereditary eye disease, hereditary cardiovascular disease, and elbow dysplasia. Online approved databases include registries under management of veterinary professional associations; registries maintained by non-profit organizations with veterinary staff or advisory boards; and university-based registries under veterinary advisement. Health examination results for U.S. dogs should be recorded in U.S. databases.
 - a. Hips – for U.S. dogs, a report from the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals or PennHIP at 24 months of age or older. For dogs outside the U.S., a report from a health registry approved by the Golden Retriever club of that country (e.g., Canada - Ontario Veterinary College; Great Britain - BVA/KC Hip Score). A report from the accepted health registry of another country may be used for U.S. dogs that are 24 months of age or older when x-rayed.

b. Eyes – an appropriate report from a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmology (ACVO) or from a BVA/KC approved ophthalmologist (Great Britain). For dogs outside the U.S., a report from an ophthalmologist, as recommended by the Golden Retriever club of that country after 1 year of age. Examinations must be done within 12 months of a breeding and reports should be recorded (certified) in an online approved database as described above.

Dogs that produce offspring should continue to have ophthalmology examinations on a yearly basis for their lifetime, and the examination reports should continue to be recorded in an online approved database if the findings do not prevent recertification. For frozen semen from deceased dogs, either an ophthalmology examination within 18 months of the date of death, or status that was in compliance with the Code of Ethics in effect at the time of the dog's death, will be considered current.

c. Hearts – an appropriate report from a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine, Cardiology Specialty, at 12 months of age or older. Reports should be recorded (certified) in an online approved database as described above.

d. Elbows – for U.S. dogs, a report from the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals at 24 months of age or older. For dogs outside the U.S., a report from a health registry approved by the Golden Retriever club of that country at 24 months of age or older. A report from the accepted health registry of another country may be used for U.S. dogs that are 24 months of age or older when x-rayed.

Breeders of Golden Retrievers in the U.S. who use health registries from other countries should fully reveal their reasons for doing so. Consideration should be given also to other disorders that may have a genetic component, including, but not limited to, epilepsy, hypothyroidism, skin disorders (allergies), and orthopedic disorders such as osteochondritis.

(iv) Assuming that all health and examination reports are favorable, the age of the breeding pair also is of consideration. Generally, a Golden Retriever is not physically and mentally mature until the age of 2 years; an individual dog's suitability as a breeding animal is difficult to assess until that time.

Adopted by the GRCA Board of Directors on April 20, 1997, and revised to include elbow clearances in May 2001. Additional revisions approved in February 2008 and June 2011.