



Canadian Kennel Club

Golden Rules of Finding a Reputable Breeder

Rule #1 - Always Visit the Kennel

Always visit the kennel before buying the dog. Let your eyes, ears and nose be the judge. Make certain that you are allowed full access to the kennel that conditions are clean, the dogs have ample kennel space and look healthy and well cared for in every respect. A reputable breeder will not only welcome a visit to their kennels but they will insist upon it. They will also want to know about your family, your lifestyle and where the dog will be living. In doing so they aren't being intrusive, but instead it is a sign they care about the placement and future of their dogs. During the interview process a good breeder should discuss any particular needs or problems associated with the breed. If they do not bring this up, you should ask. Knowing negatives is as important as knowing positives.

Warning Signs:

- The breeder suggests that a visit to their kennel is not essential.
- The breeder offers to sell the puppy sight unseen.
- If upon visiting a kennel you are restricted from full access.
- If upon visiting the kennel your eyes, ears and nose are sending bad signals. Any of these signs, walk away and don't come back.

Rule #2 - Make certain the dam (mother) is on the premises and available for you to see

This is an absolute must! You should also ask if it is possible to see the sire (father) and if this is not possible then ask why this is the case. It may be that the sire is owned by another breeder and was used for stud purposes only. In such cases, the sire may not be on the premises at the time. The dogs may also be the product of artificial insemination. Both are acceptable reasons for the sire not being present. A reputable breeder will also have in their possession an official Canadian Kennel Club pedigree that describes the lineage of the puppy. The pedigree should include not only the name and registration numbers of the parents but the grandparents and great-grandparents as well.

Warning Signs:

- The breeder does not have the dam on the premises or have the pedigrees available. No reputable breeder would have puppies on the premises without the dam being there and pedigrees must be available.
- If the breeder refers to the CKC, confirm that they mean The Canadian Kennel Club because a number of unofficial registries are also using these initials.
- No dam, no pedigrees, no deal.



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Rule #3 - Ask to see health certificates and records of visits to the veterinarian

This is a very important component of buying a purebred dog. Some breeds of purebred dogs have a history of inherited health disorders. Reputable breeders will have established a breeding program that dramatically reduces or eliminates the possibility of such disorders appearing in their dogs. Therefore, ask to see the formal health clearances for both the dam and the sire. The fact that the sire may not be on the premises is irrelevant. The breeder should have copies of such clearances on file. You should also ask to see the veterinary records of the puppy. Good breeders ensure that the parents have health clearances before breeding them. No credible breeder would sell their puppies without an initial visit to the veterinarian for shots and a general check-up.

Warning Signs:

- The breeder advises that health records are not available or that the health records will be sent with the certificate of registration.
- The breeder advises that the breed does not have any health problems.
- The breeder advises that it is your responsibility to take the puppy to the veterinarian after you purchase it.

Rule #4 - Insist upon being provided with a signed bill of sale stating the puppy is being sold as purebred

Your bill of sale is a significant part of your legal protection. It should be dated and signed by the breeder and it should include, at the very least, a verification that the dog is purebred, the breed of the dog, your name and the name of the breeder, the identification number of the dog (see Rule #6 below), a verification that you will be provided with registration papers (see Rule #7 below) and the total price of the dog, including all costs of registration. Never pay for a purebred dog, in whole or in part, without first being provided with a proper bill of sale containing all of the above.

Warning Signs:

- The breeder asks for a deposit or full payment with the promise that a bill of sale will be sent to you in due course. A bill of sale is a must. There are no excuses.



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Rule #5 - Insist upon being provided with a written guarantee

The CKC believes that a purchaser of a purebred dog in Canada should expect to obtain a healthy dog, both physically and mentally. It is the nature of genetics, however, that a dog may be clear of problems for five generations but problems may still crop up in the sixth. A guarantee covers what would be the recompense in the case of a problem, not an assurance that a problem will never occur. Reputable breeders will provide a detailed guarantee for the dogs they sell and reputable breeders will not hesitate to uphold their guarantee. Never buy a dog without a written guarantee and understand the intent behind it. No guarantee, no purchase.

Warning Signs:

- The breeder advises that the guarantee will be sent to you with the registration certificate.
- The breeder suggests that he or she cannot guarantee the health of a living creature. (A breeder cannot guarantee that a dog will never get sick but they can guarantee that it is clear of any genetic problems).

Rule #6 - Confirm that the dog has been permanently and uniquely identified

If the dog is purebred it must be identified prior to leaving the breeder's premises in order for it to be eligible to be registered with CKC. This is the law. It is the responsibility of the breeder to pay for the identification. Two forms of identification are acceptable: a Canadian Standard microchip transponder or a tattoo. A tattoo should be easily read with the naked eye. If the dog has been microchipped, the breeder must have an electronic scanner in his or her possession with which the dog can be scanned. Ask the breeder to scan the dog to confirm that the microchip identification is in place and that the number matches that which is indicated on the bill of sale. Failing this, he should have a veterinarian's certificate verifying the presence of the microchip in the dog.

Warning Signs:

- The breeder tells you that identifying the dog is your responsibility.
- The breeder tells you that the microchip has been implanted in the dog but is unable to scan it or provide a veterinarian's certificate stating the designated microchip is present in the dog. Leave. You are not dealing with a reputable breeder.



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Rule #7 - Confirm CKC registration of the parents, the litter and the puppy you are about to purchase

This is not a matter of choice - this is the law in Canada, as required under the *Animal Pedigree Act*. Any breeder selling a dog as purebred must register the dog and provide the new owner with the registration certificate within six months of the date of sale. In order for the puppy to be registered, the dog's parents and the emanating litter must also be registered. A reputable breeder will be more than willing to provide this information. If you have any doubts, ask the breeder for a copy of the *Certificate of Registration of Litter* previously issued by CKC. It is the responsibility of the breeder to forward the application papers to CKC and pay for the initial registration and transfer of the dog into your name. The cost to a member breeder is approximately \$25.00. Upon receiving the breeder's applications, it takes CKC about 10 days to process the applications and send the certificate of registration back to the breeder. The breeder must then send the certificate to you, as the new owner of the puppy. Obtaining official papers is the responsibility of the seller, not the buyer. Don't accept the responsibility of sending in the applications or paying for them.

Warning Signs:

- The breeder hands you the registration application papers and tells you to send them in with the required fees.
- The breeder offers you the purebred dog at one price with papers and at another price without papers.

Rule #8 - We recommend that you determine if the breeder is a member of CKC

Virtually all reputable breeders in Canada are members of The Canadian Kennel Club. Some of our breeders have been members for more than 50 years. All CKC members are obligated to adhere to CKC policies and procedures, the [CKC Code of Ethics](#) and the [Code of Practice For CKC Member Breeders](#) - non-members are not! Most reputable breeders proudly display the CKC Code of Ethics prominently in their kennel. If the breeder is not a member of CKC, then it is worthwhile asking why this is the case. Listen carefully to the answer and make your own judgements. If you have any doubts, please feel free to contact our Client Services Department at (416) 674-3699, or e-mail us at information@ckc.ca to ask for membership status about a particular breeder

Warning Signs:

- The breeder tells you there is no advantage to belonging to CKC.

The breeder tells you that he or she did belong to CKC but decided to give up their membership. Be aware that there are a number of advantages to belonging to CKC and for a breeder - one of those advantages is 50% off all registration fees. They may not belong to CKC for a very good reason or, it may be a bad reason. If any of these signs appear then it is worth a call to the CKC Client Services Department just to check.