

SO YOU WANT TO BUY A FRENCHIE!

When buying, selling, or breeding a French Bulldog, you should have a written contract, signed and mutually agreed upon by all parties, and each signature witnessed by a third party. And no; e-mails are not good enough!

Many people, desperate to get their first Frenchie (often difficult, as there's an unwritten Catch-22 that says that if you've not had a Frenchie before then you shouldn't be allowed to buy one), unfortunately become entangled in co-ownership or puppy-back agreements without really understanding what they are getting into. Only experienced Frenchie owners and breeders should do this, and even they often run into major trouble with it, even when dealing with friends. If you are a novice, new to the breed (and maybe even to dogs), avoid like the plague any sort of transaction other than a straight purchase agreement with no strings attached.

A contract concerning the purchase of a French bulldog should address, as a bare minimum, the following points:

MONEY: should include the purchase price, whether there is to be a deposit, when and how the deposit and/or balance due will be paid. If part of the purchase price will be refunded upon having a pet puppy spayed / neutered, the details about proof required and timing of refund should be included.

USE OF DOG. Will it be a pet, a show dog, used for breeding, trained for performance events, therapy dog? It's probably not going to be a guard dog, herding dog (though there is at least one herding Frenchie!), tracking dog, hunting dog (except maybe for the occasional ground squirrel), fighting dog, or attack dog...

HEALTH: The contract should specify that the pup is in good health, and require that the buyer take it to her own vet within 72 hrs. of taking possession. If the vet finds that the dog is ill or unsound, it may be returned to breeder within a specified period of time for replacement or a full refund. It should describe how the breeder will deal with any congenital (present at birth) or genetic (inherited by a known genetic mechanism) problems that are detected within a specified time period. Note, however, that the issue of what health problems in Frenchies are known to be inherited is not at all clear.

REGISTRATION. The seller should certify that the dog is a purebred French Bulldog and eligible for AKC registration. A puppy bought as a pet under "limited registration" may be registered, but no litters produced by it are eligible for registration. The seller may also specify the name under which the dog will be registered.

OWNER'S RESPONSIBILITIES should be described, including licensing the dog, obtaining permanent identification (as by microchip or tattoo), providing appropriate vet care, training the dog appropriate to its function, and providing a safe environment (e.g., fenced yard; air conditioning if in a warm climate).

RIGHT OF RECOVERY/PLACEMENT. The contract should provide for return of the dog to the seller (usually in exchange for some specified compensation), or inclusion of the seller in placement decisions, if the buyer is unable to care properly for the dog, or if the buyer should die or become disabled.

Every aspect of the contract (which may include a lot of information not included above) should be thoroughly discussed, and changes made as agreed upon by both buyer and seller so that both parties understand fully all of the aspects of this very important transaction: buying a French Bulldog.