

AUSSIES	MAS
<p><b>White markings</b></p> <p><b>AKC and FCI:</b> White is acceptable on the neck (either in part or as a full collar), chest, legs, muzzle underparts, blaze on head and white extension from underpart up to four inches, measuring from a horizontal line at the elbow.</p> <p><b>ASCA:</b> With or without white markings.</p>	<p><b>White markings</b></p> <p><b>AKC and FCI:</b> White Markings: White markings are not required but when present do not dominate. Ticking may be present in white markings.</p> <p>White markings may be in any combination and are restricted to: the muzzle, cheeks, crown, blaze on head, the neck in a partial or full collar, chest, belly, front legs, hind legs up the hock and may extend in a thin outline of the stifle. If a natural undocked tail is present, the tip of the tail may have white.</p>
<p><b>White on head</b></p> <p><b>AKC and FCI:</b> White on the head should not predominate, and the eyes must be fully surrounded by color and pigment.</p> <p><b>ASCA:</b> On all colors the areas surrounding the ears and eyes are dominated by color other than white.</p>	<p><b>White on head</b></p> <p><b>AKC and FCI:</b> White on the head does not predominate, and the eyes are fully surrounded by color and pigment. Ears fully covered by color are preferred.</p> <p><b>AKC: Severe Fault:</b> White markings covering over 25 percent of an ear.</p>
<p><b>White collar</b></p> <p><b>AKC and FCI:</b> The hairline of a white collar does not exceed the point of the withers at the skin.</p> <p><b>ASCA:</b> The hairline of a white collar does not exceed the point at the withers.</p>	<p><b>White collar</b></p> <p><b>AKC and FCI:</b> The hairline of a white collar does not exceed the withers at the skin.</p>
<p><b>White belly extension</b></p> <p><b>AKC and FCI:</b> White extension from underpart up to 4 inches (10 cm), measuring from a horizontal line at the elbow.</p> <p><b>ASCA:</b> Not described.</p>	<p><b>White belly extension</b></p> <p><b>AKC and FCI:</b> A small amount of white extending from the underline may be visible from the side, not to exceed one inch (2.5 cm) above the elbow.</p>
<p><b>Disqualification</b></p> <p><b>AKC and FCI:</b> White body splashes, which means [isolated] white on body between withers and tail, on sides between elbows and back of hindquarters in all colors.</p> <p><b>ASCA:</b> White body splashes (not defined).</p>	<p><b>Disqualification</b></p> <p><b>AKC and FCI:</b> White body splashes, which means any conspicuous, isolated spot or patch of white on the area between withers and tail, on back, or sides between elbows and back of hindquarters.</p>



This Aussie's white collar and stifle white are well within the breed standards' descriptions. He has very little belly white.



This MAS's white collar, stifle white, and belly white are well within the breed standards' descriptions.



**AUSSIES:** Maximum acceptable belly white.  
**MAS: FAULT.** Exceeds 1 inch (2.5 cm) above the elbow.

## White coming up from the underpart (belly and stifle white)

If a dog appears to have excess white coming up from the underpart, lift up the hair to verify the location of the **root** of the hair. The root of the hair must not extend into the body color.

### AUSSIES

**AKC and FCI:** White is acceptable on the neck (either in part or as a full collar), chest, legs, muzzle underparts, blaze on head and white extension from underpart up to four inches (10 cm), measuring from a horizontal line at the elbow. The hairline of a white collar does not exceed the withers at the skin.

**ASCA:** The hairline of a white collar does not exceed the point at the withers.

### MAS

**AKC and FCI:** White markings may be in any combination and are restricted to: the muzzle, cheeks, crown, blaze on head, the neck in a partial or full collar, chest, belly, front legs, hind legs up the hock and may extend in a thin outline of the stifle. A small amount of white extending from the underline may be visible from the side, not to exceed one inch (2.5 cm) above the elbow. The hairline of a white collar does not exceed the withers at the skin.

**Note:** Look at both sides of the dog because markings can be different.



## Excess Body White: **Fault**

**AUSSIES AND MAS: FAULTED** according to the degree of deviation from the ideal.



## White Body Splash: **Disqualification**

**AUSSIES AND MAS: DISQUALIFICATION:** Isolated white body splash.

## WHY are white body splashes disqualified and excess body and head white discouraged?

White outside of the areas described in the standards is a warning sign that there may be health problems related to lack of pigment. Excess white can be produced by several gene combinations.

- Puppies from a **merle to merle cross** that have excess white markings are frequently blind and fully or partially deaf.
- Puppies from a **solid to merle cross** that have excess white may have two copies of the Piebald or other white spotting genes that can be associated with deafness, particularly if there is white around the base of the ear.

## DEFINITION of white body splash

### AUSSIES

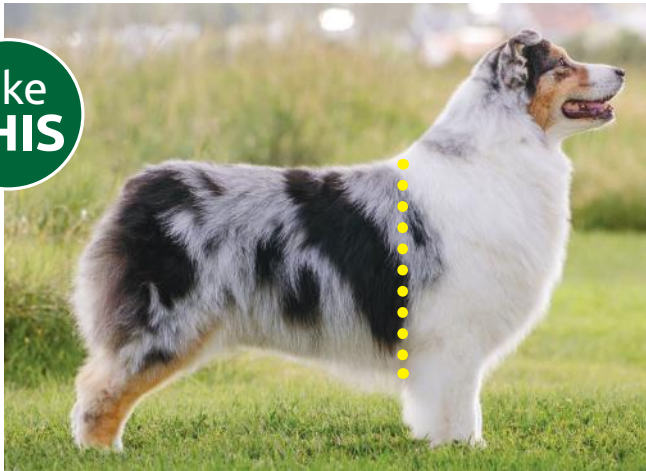
**AKC and FCI:** White body splashes, which means white on body between withers and tail, on sides between elbows and back of hindquarters in all colors. (The AKC Glossary defines "splashed" as irregularly patched, color on white or white on color.)

**ASCA:** Not defined.

### MAS

**AKC and FCI:** White body splashes, which means any conspicuous, isolated spot or patch of white on the area between withers and tail, on back, or sides between elbows and back of hindquarters.

Like  
**THIS**



HELENE NILSEN PHOTOGRAPHY

The white collar and white on the chest and front legs of the above Aussie above are within the standards.



HELENE NILSEN PHOTOGRAPHY

The hairline (root) of the white collar should not exceed the point of the withers.

Not  
**THAT**



A white collar that exceeds the point of the withers is **FAULTED** according to the degree of deviation from the ideal.

## ALL STANDARDS

**The hairline of a white collar does not exceed the point of the withers at the skin.**

### HANDS-ON EXAMINATION

If the white collar of a dog appears to extend past the point of the withers, it is important to examine the collar with your hands. Lift up the hair and verify the location of the **root** of the hair. The root of the white collar hair should not exceed the point of the withers. A hands-on exam reveals that the white collar of the dog at upper left does not exceed the point of the withers and is acceptable according to the standards.

The white collar on the dog at lower left exceeds the point of the withers and she has excess white on her loin. The excess white is **FAULTED** according to the degree of deviation from the ideal.

When making breeding decisions, avoid pairing sires and dams who both have maximum white trim. These pairings may produce puppies with excess white trim and the possibility of deafness. See next page "White on ears."

Like  
**THIS**



**Acceptable amount of white on head**

### AUSSIES

**AKC and FCI:** White on the head should not predominate.

**ASCA:** On all colors the areas surrounding the ears and eyes are dominated by color other than white.

### MAS

**AKC and FCI:** Ears fully covered by color are preferred.

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Information about color used with permission from ASGHI.org and "A Field Guide To Coloration of Australian Shepherds" at: <http://color.ashgi.org/color/index.html>.

Not  
**THAT**



**White on ears**

### AUSSIES

**AKC and FCI:** White on and around the ears is not specifically mentioned.

**ASCA:** On all colors the areas surrounding the ears and eyes are dominated by color other than white.

### MAS

**AKC and FCI:** Ears fully covered by color are preferred. **AKC: SEVERE FAULT:** White markings covering over 25 percent of an ear.

### **WHY?**

White surrounding the ears can predispose dogs to deafness. If the hair cells in the inner ear lack pigment, the nerve endings will atrophy and die in the first few weeks of life and full or partial deafness will result. However, many dogs with white ears have normal hearing.

Not  
**THAT**



**White should not surround eyes**

### AUSSIES

**AKC and FCI:** White on the head should not predominate, and the eyes must be fully surrounded by color and pigment.

**ASCA:** On all colors the areas surrounding the ears and eyes are dominated by color other than white.

### MAS

**AKC and FCI:** White on the head does not predominate, and the eyes are fully surrounded by color and pigment.

### **WHY?**

White color around the eyes may indicate eye defects resulting from improper development of the tissues of the eye. This applies only to puppies from **merle to merle** pairings.



This red merle has merling only on her face.



DIANA FALCONER PHOTOS



HOLLY REGINA PRESS PHOTOGRAPHY

## Minimal merling (incorrectly called cryptic or phantom merle)

The two dogs above have very little merling and could be mistaken as solid color when they are actually merles. The red merle has merling only on her face. The blue merle has merling only on his face, throat, and chest. **The color and markings of both dogs are correct according to the standards.**

Minimal merles can have small patches of merling on the body that might appear to be white body splashes, which is a disqualification. If there is doubt, slide an armband or white piece of paper under the gray hair to compare it to true white. Be very careful not to mistake pale gray hair for white hair, especially under artificial lighting.

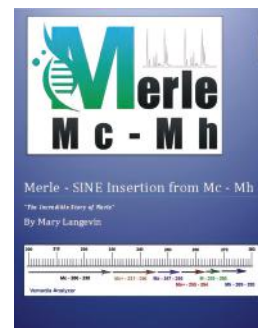


BRANDI CAREY PHOTO

Three patches of merling, not white. This coloration is correct.

## Light color merling

Merling can be very light in color, appearing almost white, as shown on the dog above. There may be small patches of merling on the body that might appear to be white body splashes, which is a disqualification. If there is doubt, slide an armband or white piece of paper under the gray hair to compare it to true white. Be very careful not to mistake pale gray hair for white hair, especially under artificial lighting.



## Further reading on the merle gene:

*The Incredible Story of Merle*  
by Mary Langevin. Order online.

<https://www.merle-sine-insertion-from-mc-mh.com/>