COI policy template

Five decisions for your registry's board

VERSION 1.1 · 2026-11-04

COI policy

Work out an expected COI before you decide: the free COI calculator.

Registry or club: _____

Adopted on: ____ / ____ / _____ **Approved by:** the board, minute or motion no. _____

Next review: ____ / ____ / _____ **Policy owner (role, not name):** _____

A coefficient of inbreeding (COI) depends on choices: how many generations are counted, how missing ancestors are treated, and where the number came from. Two correct calculations can disagree. This policy records the choices your registry has made, so every officer reads a COI the same way and the next registrar does not have to work them out again.

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1. Depth

How many generations does your registry count?

Generations counted: ____ (or: every generation on record)

Guidance: the same animal can show a different COI at three, four and five generations, and every one of those figures is correct. More generations reveal more shared ancestors, so the figure usually rises with depth. Whatever you choose, print the depth next to every COI.

Example wording: "COI is calculated from five generations of pedigree by Wright's path method, and is always shown with its depth, for example 5.47% (5 generations)."

2. Missing ancestors

How does your registry show a pedigree with gaps?

Shown with each COI: ☐ pedigree completeness beside every COI ☐ a note when the pedigree is shorter than ____ generations ☐ other: _____

Guidance: standard calculations treat founders, the animals whose parents are not recorded, as unrelated and not inbred. A pedigree COI is an estimate based on the ancestry recorded: missing generations can hide shared ancestry and make it too low, so a low number from a short pedigree is weak evidence of low inbreeding.

Example wording: "Each COI is shown with the share of ancestors known at that depth. A COI from an incomplete pedigree may understate the true figure."

3. Lab and genomic results

Does your registry record DNA-based (genomic) COI?

Genomic COI: ☐ not recorded ☐ recorded, with the laboratory and test named

Guidance: a pedigree COI is an expected value from the records. A genomic COI is measured from the animal's DNA, and laboratories use different markers and thresholds. Keep the two apart: never average them, and never compare one animal's pedigree COI with another's genomic result.

Example wording: "Genomic COI is recorded only with the laboratory, the test and the date, and is shown separately from pedigree COI."

4. Visibility

Who can see an animal's COI?

COI is visible to: ☐ the public ☐ members ☐ officers and the registrar only

Guidance: members may feel strongly about this, so decide it on purpose and say it in your rules. Pedigree completeness and depth should travel with the number wherever it is shown.

Example wording: "COI is shown to members on the animal's record, with its depth and pedigree completeness. It is not published on the public registry."

5. Use

Is COI information only, or part of a rule?

COI is: ☐ information only ☐ part of a rule: _____

This rule is changed by: ☐ the board ☐ a vote of members ☐ other: _____

Guidance: for a proposed pairing, use the expected COI of the offspring, calculated from both parents' pedigrees. Never average the parents' own COIs. If COI feeds a rule (for example, a band that triggers a registrar's review), write down the band, who can change it, and how.

If a breed average is used: depth ____ generations; reference population _____; calculated on ____ / ____ / _____

Example wording: "COI is advisory. A pairing whose expected offspring COI is above ____% at five generations is flagged for the registrar's review. The board sets and changes this figure by motion."

Why this template sets no target

Breeds start from different places, so one universal COI cutoff does not travel well between them. The Royal Kennel Club's advice: "produce puppies with an inbreeding coefficient which is at, or below, the breed average" where possible, and ideally as low as possible (Royal Kennel Club, Inbreeding calculators, read 2026-11-03). A breed average only compares fairly with a COI calculated on the same depth, so record the depth, the reference population and the date it was calculated; a five-generation result is not directly comparable with an average built from all the pedigree data available. It also describes COI as a measure of risk, not a health result. Whether your registry uses a benchmark like that, and what it should be, is a decision for your board, with your breed's data in front of it.

Template from Breed Ledger. Work out an expected COI: https://breedledger.co/tools/coi-calculator · Guide: https://breedledger.co/guides/coefficient-of-inbreeding