



DOG BITE PREVENTION BEST PRACTICES

It is estimated that 4.7 million dog bites occur in the United States, and 368,245 persons receive hospital emergency department care for nonfatal dog bites and related injuries.

Animal Exposure Guidelines for Meter Readers, Service Personnel & Crossing Guards

1. When confronted by an aggressive dog, **DO NOT RUN AWAY** unless you are certain of quickly reaching a place of safety, like your vehicle.
2. Never pet a dog, especially those in a vehicle. Do your job and let the animal be.
3. Stand still and face the dog to assert control.
4. While keeping your eyes on the dog, back away slowly while speaking in a firm, calming voice to the animal. Back slowly to a safe place. Avoid making eye contact with the dog.
5. Order the animal to "stay" or "sit" in an authoritative tone of voice.
6. Back against any available object to prevent an attack from the rear if more than one dog is present.
7. Call for the dog's owner or handler.
8. If you have pepper spray and must use it, spray the dog's face. The effects last a maximum of 10 minutes.
9. Use your flashlight or other objects to strike the dog rather than throw anything at it.
10. Do not back a dog into a corner.

Prevention Strategies to Avoid Being Bitten

- **Be Cautious Around Strange Dogs.** To avoid being bitten, never approach an unfamiliar dog, especially one who is tied or confined behind a fence or in a car. Do not pet an unfamiliar dog without the owner's permission, and make sure to let the dog see and sniff you first. Always assume that a dog who does not know you may see you as an intruder or as a threat.
- **Never Turn Your Back on a Dog and Run Away.** A dog's instinct will be to chase and catch you. Instead, remain motionless, with your hands at your sides. Avoid direct eye contact, as this may be perceived as challenging behavior. When the dog loses interest, slowly back away.
- **Do Not Disturb a Dog** while it's sleeping, eating, chewing on a toy, or caring for puppies. Be sure the dog is aware of your presence before you touch the dog - even your own. A startled dog may bite as a reflex action.

If the Dog Attacks:

- **Put Something Between You and the Dog.** Use your coat, purse, tool bag, equipment, or another object to separate yourself from the dog.
- **Protect Your Head.** If you are knocked down, cover your head and ears with your hands and curl into a ball. Try not to move or scream.
- **Care for Any Wounds.** Wash any wound with soap and water and seek medical attention.
- **Report the Attack** to the police or animal control agency. Try to get as much information as possible about the attack, especially whether the animal has had rabies shots.

