

## Dog Encounters/Animal Attacks

### Dog Encounters

Whenever you enter a customer's home or property, there is a possibility that you may encounter the family dog. Be alert to indications that there may be a dog on the property. Look for dog toys, food bowls, and patterns in the lawn; shake the gate latch; and ask the owner if he/she owns a dog. Even if the owner states the dog is not harmful, politely ask that the dog be restrained in a place away from your work area. While many dogs appear friendly, always be alert to the possibility that the dog may be dangerous.

If confronted by a dog, proceed cautiously at every step of the encounter. Determine the type of dog and the best course of action based on the dog type. There are three types of dogs that may threaten you.

- Dominant dogs - very dangerous
- Prey dogs
- Defensive dogs

The table below describes how to identify the different dog types, what to do to avoid triggering a dog attack, and the best actions to take to try to avoid a confrontation.

| Dog Encounters                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
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| Dominant Dogs                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Body Language                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Triggers to Avoid                                                                                                           | How to Handle                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ears erect</li><li>• Tail up - wagging stiffly or held straight</li><li>• Standing on tip toes</li><li>• Eyes staring straight ahead</li><li>• Hair probably not up</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shouting</li><li>• Gesturing</li><li>• Sudden movements</li><li>• Staring</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not threaten the dog.</li><li>• Talk calmly.</li><li>• Face the dog.</li><li>• Do not look at the dog's eyes.</li><li>• Give commands such as good boy and sit.</li><li>• Try to avoid confrontation - move away in a submissive posture.</li><li>• If you have to confront a dominant dog, have something in your hand for protection or to keep the dog away from you.</li></ul> |

| Prey Dogs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| Body Language                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Triggers to Avoid                                                                                                                        | How to Handle                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ears up</li> <li>• Excited - may be crouched in anticipation</li> <li>• Eyes wide and focused on you</li> <li>• Tail wagging</li> <li>• Hair down</li> </ul>                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden movements</li> <li>• Gesturing</li> <li>• Loud noise</li> <li>• Threats</li> </ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move calmly.</li> <li>• Shield yourself.</li> <li>• Talk very softly.</li> <li>• Move away.</li> <li>• Try to distract the dog by gently throwing a rock or stick.</li> <li>• Give the dog some food.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                             |
| Defensive Dogs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Body Language                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Triggers to Avoid                                                                                                                        | How to Handle                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ears back</li> <li>• Lips back</li> <li>• Displays of threat</li> <li>• Dog's barking sounds tense</li> <li>• Dog moves a great deal</li> <li>• Dog appears nervous or uneasy</li> <li>• Hair up</li> <li>• Eyes may be averted or staring at you</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden movements</li> <li>• Direct threat</li> <li>• Loud noise</li> <li>• Gesturing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move confidently and calm.</li> <li>• Talk softly and calm.</li> <li>• Give commands.</li> <li>• Try to ignore the dog.</li> <li>• Do not turn your back on the dog.</li> <li>• Do not trust this dog, even if it acts friendly.</li> <li>• Do not try to scare this dog off, unless you are sure it has an escape and you are not close enough to panic the dog.</li> </ul> |

## Procedures for Animal Attacks

If the dog attacks, do not lose control of the situation. Look for hidden dangers that could result in you tripping, falling down, or getting boxed in. Do not spray mace at the dog. This will only make him angrier. Take actions to protect yourself as follows:

- Shield your body from the dog with any item available. If nothing is available, use your arm (preferably the left arm if you are right handed or the right arm if you are left handed).
- Kick at the dog, but stay on your feet.
- Move to a gate, door, or car door.
- Attempt to get the dog on one side of a barrier with you on the other and make the dog let go.

All wounds resulting from an animal bite must be thoroughly washed with soap and warm water, disinfected (hydrogen peroxide) and covered with a sterile dressing/bandage. Precautions listed on the below table must be followed after an animal attack/bite:

| Animal                             | Immediate Treatment                                                                                                                                                                               | Follow Up Procedures                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Domestic Dog                       | Wash wound with soap and warm water, disinfect (hydrogen peroxide) wound and cover with sterile bandage.                                                                                          | Confirm whether the animal has been inoculated against rabies; then consult a doctor or a medical professional as soon as possible. |
| Rat, Raccoon, Bat, Wild Dog or Cat | Wash wound with soap and warm water, disinfect (hydrogen peroxide) wound and cover with sterile bandage.                                                                                          | Immediately consult a doctor or medical professional.                                                                               |
| Snake                              | Wash wound with soap and warm water, disinfect (hydrogen peroxide) wound and cover with sterile bandage. Do not apply cold compress and is possible, keep the wound below the level of the heart. | Seek immediate medical attention.                                                                                                   |

*Report all animal bites and attacks to your supervisor immediately; describe the location where the attack occurred, a description of the animal (size, color, breed, type of ears, hair, etc.) and injuries sustained.*