



POSTAL NEWS

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Half of All Dog Bite Victims are Children

Collaboration Promotes National Dog Bite Prevention Week, May 19-25

LOS ANGELES — Of the 4.7 million Americans bitten by dogs annually, more than half are children, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The U.S. Postal Service, the medical community, veterinarians and the insurance industry are working together to educate the public that dog bites are avoidable.

“Don’t worry — my dog won’t bite’ is often heard by our letter carriers before they’re attacked,” said Mark Anderson, postmaster of Los Angeles, where 83 of nearly 5,600 postal employees nationwide were attacked last year. “Given the right circumstances, any dog can attack. Dog attacks are a nationwide issue and not just a postal problem. Working with animal behavior experts, we’ve developed tips to avoid dog attacks, and for dog owners, tips for practicing responsible pet ownership.”

The Postal Service is releasing its ranking of the top 25 cities for dog attacks to letter carriers to kick off National Dog Bite Prevention Week, May 19-25. The annual event provides dog-bite prevention tips, information on responsible pet ownership and advice about medical treatment if attacked.

The Postal Service, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), www.aap.org; the American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery (ASRM), www.microsurg.org; the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), www.avma.org; the Insurance Information Institute (III), www.iii.org; and Prevent The Bite (PTB), www.preventthebite.org; are driving home the message that dog bites are a nationwide issue and that education can help prevent dog attacks to people of all ages.

Between 12 and 20 people die from dog attacks annually, according to the CDC. Just last month a Nevada toddler was mauled to death by his family pet on his first birthday.

The Postal Service places the safety of its employees as a top priority. Letter carriers fearing for their safety due to a loose or unrestrained pet may stop delivery and ask homeowners to pick up their mail at the Post Office until the pet is restrained. In cases where a carrier sees a dog roaming and can’t discern where it resides, delivery could be interrupted to the entire neighborhood.

Harsh Realities

- Nationwide last year, 5,577 postal employees were attacked in more than 1,400 cities. Los Angeles topped the list with 83 postal employees attacked in 2011. Beyond the needless pain and suffering, medical expenses from dog attacks cost the Postal Service

- nearly \$1.2 million last year.
- “Children are three times more likely than adults to be bitten by a dog,” said PTB President Kathy Voigt, whose daughter Kelly, was mauled by a neighborhood dog. “Education is essential to keeping children safe from dog bites.” The attack prompted their creation of Prevent The Bite, a non-profit organization that promotes dog bite prevention to young children.
 - AAP President Dr. Robert Block added, “Parents, please don’t ever leave a young child unsupervised around any dog, even a dog well-known to your family. Even very young children should be taught not to tease or hurt animals. And with school almost over for the year, children will be spending more time in parks, at friends’ homes, and other places where they may encounter dogs. They need to know what to do to minimize the risk of being bitten.”
 - According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, in 2011 alone more than 29,000 reconstructive procedures were performed as a result of injuries caused by dog bites. Dr. Michael Neumeister, ASRM president said, “Even the friendliest dog may bite when startled or surprised. Be cautious, once a child is scarred they are scarred for life. We hear this line all the time ‘The dog has never bitten anyone before.’ A dog’s reaction to being surprised or angered is not predictable.”
 - “Any dog can bite,” said Dr. René Carlson, AVMA president. “If it is physically or mentally unhealthy, is in pain, feels threatened, or is protecting its food or a favorite toy, it can bite. It is important to understand how dogs behave and how our behavior may be interpreted by a dog.”
 - “Dog attacks accounted for more than one-third of all homeowner insurance liability claims paid out in 2011,” said Dr. Robert Hartwig, III president and chief economist.

Fiscal Year 2011 U.S. Postal Service Top 25 Dog Attack Rankings

Ranking	City/Location	Attacks
1	Los Angeles, CA	83
2	San Diego, CA	68
3	Houston, TX	47
4	Cleveland, OH	44
6	Dallas, TX	41
6	San Antonio, TX	39
7	Phoenix, AZ	36
8	Denver, CO, and Sacramento, CA	35 each
9	Minneapolis, MN, and St. Louis, MO	32 each
10	Louisville, KY	31
11	Chicago, IL, and Philadelphia, PA	30 each
12	Seattle, WA	28
13	Brooklyn, NY, and Portland, OR	27 each
14	Baltimore, MD, and San Francisco, CA	26 each
15	Dayton, OH, and Detroit, MI	25 each
16	Cincinnati, OH; Oakland and San Jose, CA	24 each
17	Ft. Worth, TX	23
18	Buffalo, NY and Miami, FL	22
19	Indianapolis, IN	21
20	El Paso, TX and Memphis, TN	20 each
21	Oklahoma City, OK	19
22	Kansas City, MO; Las Vegas, NV; Long Beach, CA; Pittsburgh, PA; Richmond, VA; and Tacoma, WA	18 each
23	Jamaica, NY; Milwaukee, WI, and Washington, DC	17 each
24	Charlotte, NC, and Orlando, FL	16 each

25	Baton Rouge, LA, and Rochester, NY	15 each
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The National Dog Bite Prevention Week partners offer the following tips:

Avoiding Attacks

- Never leave a baby or small child alone with a dog.
- Don't run past a dog. The dog's natural instinct is to chase and catch you.
- If a dog threatens you, don't scream. Avoid eye contact. Try to remain motionless until the dog leaves, then back away slowly until the dog is out of sight.
- Never approach a strange dog, especially one that's tethered or confined.
- Don't disturb a dog that is sleeping, eating or caring for puppies.
- Anyone wanting to pet a dog should first obtain permission from the owner.
- Always let a dog see and sniff you before petting the animal.
- If you believe a dog is about to attack you, try to place something between yourself and the dog, such as a backpack or a bicycle.
- If you are knocked down by a dog, curl into a ball and protect your face with your hands.

Be a Responsible Dog Owner

- Obedience training can teach a dog to behave properly and help owners control their dogs.
- When letter carriers and others who are not familiar with your dog come to your home, keep your dog inside, in another room away from the door.
- In protecting their territory, dogs may interpret people's actions as a threat.
- Spay or neuter your dog. Neutered dogs are less likely to roam.
- Dogs that receive little attention or handling, or are left tied up for long periods of time, frequently turn into biters.

If Bitten

- Rinse the bite area with soapy water.
- Elevate limb(s) that have been bitten.
- Apply antiseptic lotion or cream. Watch the area for signs of infection for several days after the incident.
- For deeper bites or puncture wounds, apply pressure with a clean bandage or towel to stop the bleeding. Then wash the wound, dry it and cover with a sterile dressing. Don't use tape or butterfly bandages to close the wound.
- It's a good idea to call your child's physician because a bite could require antibiotics or a tetanus shot. The doctor also can help you to report the incident.
- If your child is bitten severely, call 9-1-1 or go to the emergency room.
- When going to the emergency room, advise the personnel of:
 - your tetanus vaccination status;
 - vaccine status of the dog;
 - who the dog owner is; and,
 - if the dog has bitten before.

Advice from the Experts

Note: Journalists are encouraged to contact National Dog Bite Prevention Week partners for in-depth interviews.

American Academy of Pediatrics

"Parents, please don't ever leave a young child unsupervised around any dog, even a dog well-known to your family," said AAP President Dr. Robert Block. "Even very young children should be taught not to tease or hurt animals. And with school almost over for the year, children will be spending more time in parks, at friends' homes, and other places where they may encounter dogs. They need to know what to do to minimize the risk of being bitten." *Contact: Gina Steiner, gsteiner@aap.org; www.aap.org, 847-434-7945*

American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery

"Most children love dogs and like to put their face up close to the dog's face. Parents should never permit this," said Dr. Michael Neumeister, president of the American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery. "Even the friendliest dog may bite when startled or surprised. Be cautious, once a child is scarred they are scarred for life. We hear this line all the time 'The dog has never bitten anyone before'. A dog's reaction to being surprised or angered is not predictable." *Contact: Krista Greco, kristagreco@isms.org, www.microsurg.org, 312-456-9579*

American Veterinary Medical Association

Any dog can bite. Protect your family and community and the welfare of dogs with early education programs. The Blue Dog Parent Guide and CD is targeted and tested for children from 3 to 6 years old and is intended as a tool to be incorporated as part of a more comprehensive prevention program. Visit www.avma.org/dogbite for information on dog bite prevention material from the AVMA and its National Dog Bite Prevention Week partners. *Contact: Sharon Granskog; sgranskog@avma.org, www.avma.org, 847-285-6619*

Insurance Information Institute

Dog bites accounted for more than one-third of all homeowners' insurance liability claims, according to the Insurance Information Institute (III). Homeowners and renters insurance policies typically cover dog bite liability if your dog injures another person or damages someone else's property. The best way to protect yourself is to prevent your dog from biting anyone in the first place. *Contact: Justin Shaddix (national) justins@iii.org, 212-346-5522, www.iii.org or Candysse Miller (California); cmiller@iinc.org, 213-624-4462, www.iinc.org*

Prevent The Bite

A nonprofit organization devoted to keeping children safe from dog bites, Prevent The Bite meets the national standards of education, and makes it possible for anyone to teach children how to avoid being bitten. Dog attack victim Kelly Voigt is available for interviews. *Contact: Kathy Voigt, kathy@preventthebite.org, www.preventthebite.org, 847-223-5084*

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 151 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, usps.com, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 35th in the 2011 Fortune 500. In 2011, the U.S. Postal Service was ranked number one in overall service performance, out of the top 20 wealthiest nations in the world, Oxford Strategic Consulting. *Black Enterprise* and *Hispanic Business* magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for six years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

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