



## Animal Management - Dog Attack

Gladstone Regional Council investigates hundreds of alleged dog attacks in the Gladstone Region every year.

Attacks by dogs on humans, other companion animals and livestock can be prevented in most cases by being a responsible pet owner and interacting safely with other people's dogs.

It is an offence under the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 to allow or encourage a dog to attack or cause fear to someone else or another animal. Offenders can be issued with an on the spot fine or prosecution.

### Why do dogs attack?

All dogs, regardless of age, breed or temperament have the capacity to cause harm or injury to another animal or person, especially children and the elderly.

A dog's likelihood of biting can depend on many interacting factors such as:

- Heredity (genes, breed)
- Early experiences
- Socialisation and training
- Health (physical and psychological)
- The behaviour of the victim
- Territorial defence

### What measures can I take to prevent a dog attack?

#### Be a responsible pet owner

- Ensure your dog has an effective enclosure and is unable to escape over, under or through the fence or other type of boundary in which it is kept.
- Ensure your dog is always under effective control in a public place and held by a lead no longer than two metres.

- You must be able to physically control your dog.
- Take time to understand basic dog behaviour and use appropriate training techniques such as positive reinforcement (praise not punishment) to help train your dog.
- Training and socialising your dog decreases its fear, anxiety and aggression towards other dogs and people.
- Training improves a dog's ability to cope with new situations.
- Desexing your dog can decrease the risk of it wandering or displaying aggressive behaviour.
- Male entire dogs (dogs that have not been desexed) are a greater risk of displaying increased aggression. Guarding behaviour can be displayed from the entire male towards humans and other animals.
- Entire females add to the risk by attracting males.

#### Educate your family

Teach your family to be calm, respectful and gentle around dogs.

Never approach a dog that is:

- sleeping, eating or chewing a bone
- playing with its toys
- injured or sick
- in its kennel, on its bed, in a car
- on the back of a ute or tied up
- fighting or play fighting
- behind a fence or gate; or with its puppies
- not with its owner and unfamiliar with you

If approached by an unknown dog:

- stand very still and do not run, as the dog may chase
- be very quiet; curl fingers and keep arms down by sides

- look away from the dog, not into its eyes
- wait for the dog to go away
- tell an adult what happened

#### Suggestions that may help in a dog attack situation

**Note: All dog attacks are different and these suggestions may not stop a dog attack**

- **DO NOT RUN.** Running from a dog presenting with aggressive behaviour could activate the dog's prey instinct and cause it to chase and drag you down just like its prey. Move calmly and with purpose but do not ignite the dog's interest with sudden movement.
- Yell at the animal in a strong, loud, deep voice. This is a key command technique in control of animals both domestic and wild. In the wild the Alpha animal in the pack is the loudest and strongest representing as the Alpha in an attack scenario with your voice may be all that is required to deter an attack from taking place.
- Using objects in your environment can also be of assistance in preventing an attack or even minimising the risk of injury in an attack.

If a dog latches on to you in an attack **DO NOT FIGHT THE BITE.** Resisting the bite by pulling back away from the dog may cause the dog to thrash and pull back; this can in turn create a far worse injury. If you do find yourself in this situation try to remain as calm as possible, call for assistance or try and break the dogs concentration with a loud noise such as a whistle to get the dog to release.

#### What do I do if a dog attack has occurred?

Seek medical assistance and treatment immediately. Notify and report the incident to Council's Regulatory Services Division on (07) 4977 6821 as soon as possible after the time of the incident. Record details of the incident as soon as practicable to assist in your recollection of events. When dealing with a dog attack, Council can be contacted 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

#### Key elements to recall

- Date and time and location of the attack
- Description of the dog, such as colour, breed, size and specific identifying features
- Details of the dog's owner (if possible)

Remember that reporting the incident as soon as possible is essential.

If a dog attack has taken place it is imperative that it is reported to Council Local Law Officers immediately or as soon as reasonably practicable after the attack so that the appropriate action can be taken to investigate and minimise further risk to the community.

#### How Council handles a dog attack

Upon receiving a dog attack report, Council will investigate by collecting evidence from all parties involved and, depending on the severity of the attack, there could be a number of outcomes. Some investigations can take many months to finalise.

If a dog rushes at or chases or causes fear to someone the owner may be issued a fine; and the dog may be declared MENACING.

If a dog attacks or injures another person or animal:

- Fines may be issued to the owner; and
- The dog may be declared a "Regulated (dangerous or menacing) Dog" and the owner will be responsible for stringent controls as well as an annual Regulated (dangerous or menacing) Dog registration fee.
- The dog will be under strict enclosure and control rules set by state law.
- The owner may face legal action from Council and civil action from the person attacked.
- The dog may be seized and/or destroyed by Council.

#### How can you contact us?



(07) 4970 0700

STD CALLS: 1300 733 343

For those residents who currently incur STD call rates when contacting their local customer service centre



(07) 4975 8500



info@gladstone.qld.gov.au



www.gladstone.qld.gov.au

