

a plastic bag or a sealed container. Put the bag or container into a tub of iced water (but not frozen) to keep it cool, so that it can be transported to hospital. It may be possible to reattach the body part using reconstructive surgery.

**For further advice contact the NHS non-emergency number on 111**

### ADVICE FOR DOG OWNERS

Owners have a duty to keep their dog under proper control.

Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (Section 3): It is a criminal offence for a person in charge of a dog to allow it to be 'dangerously out of control' in a public place, or on private property. This applies to all dogs – no matter what breed. An offence is committed if a person is left in fear the dog may injure them, even if no injury occurs.

**You need to ensure that a visitor can safely access your front door without encountering your dog.**

Civil claims can also be made against the owner for injury

- Display a sign to alert visitors to the presence of a dog
- If the dog is in the garden ensure it is secure. Lock gates so that visitors cannot enter without your knowledge.
- Correctly train dogs so that they do not react aggressively to deliveries or visitors – remember what you see as a dog being friendly by jumping up at visitors may be considered threatening by a stranger.
- Before you open the door make sure your dog is secure (e.g. shut in another room) and cannot get past you to the visitor.
- Fit a mail box, so that deliveries do not need be made through the door, or fit a cage to the back of the letter box

### REPORTING INCIDENTS

If you've been bitten as part of your job, tell your employer. They should record the incident. They may want to review their procedures, provide employees with additional advice, or ensure that further visits aren't made to the problem site. If an injury requires you to have time off work employers may need to report the accident to health and safety enforcers.

Contact the Dog Warden. We can ensure that the owner has been given practical advice to prevent further problems. In some cases we may ask you to complete a statement so that we can consider further action.

You may wish to seek advice about making a claim for your injury.

**Dog Warden Service, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council.**

Civic Offices, Merrial Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs. ST5 2AG  
Telephone 01782 717717 E-mail [customerservices@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk)

# Visiting Homes With Dogs



## Advice from the Dog Warden Service

[www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk)

## VISITING HOMES WITH DOGS

It is estimated that about 250,000 people are bitten by a dog each year and more than 7,000 admitted to hospital. Those frequently injured include Royal Mail workers, meter readers, police officers and fire fighters. Simple precautions can help reduce these numbers.

### BEFORE YOU VISIT

If you are visiting as part of your job make sure that your employer has advised you what to do to stay safe. They should have undertaken a risk assessment for the activity, and identified the precautions (controls) their employees should follow. They should have provided advice and training to ensure that the task can be undertaken safely.

Employers should keep records of any dog issues, advise employees of potential problem addresses, and if appropriate addresses not to visit.

If you are designing a leaflet think about how easy it will be to push through a letter box, small flimsy documents are harder to safely delivery.

### AT THE PROPERTY

**Remember, if you can avoid the situation, do so.** This may mean coming back another time, sounding a car horn to alert the owner or telephoning the house that you are visiting. You can also ask the owner to keep the dog in another room during your visit.

The first time you visit a property stop and make a bit of noise before you open the gate. If there is a dog it will probably bark and you can be prepared.

In a dog's mind you are a stranger and you are on his territory.

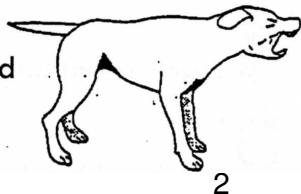
#### 1 Stop and assess

Try to read the dog's body language straight away.

Never stare directly at a dog - Staring is a threat and a direct challenge to the dog. He will have to decide whether to fight or flee.



Afraid and Angry



Wants to play a game

#### 2 Stay still and calm

If a dog approaches you, stand perfectly still and let him sniff you. If he looks happy and friendly, greet him slowly and gently but do not be too forward or overbearing, however it is generally recommend you do not reach down to pet it – simply ignore it.

#### 3 Give him space

If he shows fear in his body language, remember not to corner him. Give him room to keep you at a distance from him.

#### 4 Avoid showing fear

Walk steadily and slowly, act as relaxed as possible. Never run or make any quick, sudden movements. Try to keep the dog in your peripheral vision

#### 5 Talking to the dog may help

Use a confident but soothing voice as you would when talking to a young child.

#### 6 Don't turn your back

If you feel that a dog is likely to bite or attack, walk slowly backwards so that you are still facing the dog, but without staring. Many bites to delivery people occur when they turn to leave the house.

#### 7 Use a barrier

If you feel you are in danger, try to put something between you and the dog. A fence, gate, door or car door, maybe even a bicycle, will make a good barrier.

.... And if you've got to the front door – Remember:

- **Never put your fingers through the letter box** into the dog's territory
- If you need to push the leaflet through use something like a ruler, or wooden spoon

### IF A DOG BITES

- If a dog lunges at you and gets hold of a piece of clothing, try to **calmly remove it**
- If bitten, **don't struggle** and try to pull away as this could tear the wound resulting in a more serious injury
- **encourage the wound to bleed** by gently squeezing it, unless it is already bleeding freely
- **clean the wound promptly** by running it under warm water for 10 minutes

You should **seek medical advice** and treatment promptly. It is essential that the wound is correctly cleaned to prevent infection. A tetanus booster may be needed

In cases of serious bites, where a body part such as a finger or ear has been bitten off, you should wash the body part with tap water and place it in