Dog Attack Prevention Guideline

Understanding Canine Behavior:

Dogs were originally bred for a specific purpose such as herding animals, locating game, retrieving game, and ferreting out nuisance animals and to guard property or humans.

Dog’s drives are:  DEFENSE
                PREY
                PLAY
                FOOD
                SEX

Dog jaw pressure per square inch (psi):

Labrador – 400-500 plus psi
Rottweiler – 1800-2000 psi
Pit Bull Terrier – 2500-2700 psi

Dogs react under the fence and barrier syndrome:

The dog learns that it can conquer by being more aggressive.

A submissive/aggressive dog will lose security provided by a barrier, e.g. wall, fence, door, and could cower out of fear.

A dominant/aggressive dog may not be affected by the loss of the barriers and become even more aggressive.

Many dogs are very protective of their territory, owner, or children.

Dogs are highly motivated to dominate regardless of their size, age, sex, or experience.

An elevated tail and direct stare would be perceived as a threat and a likely attack would probably follow.

Dogs do not usually like to be looked at directly in the eye; this is taken as a challenge.

A soft growl and a comfortable distance from and individual can also be an indication of a possible attack.
Some other signs of dominance and daring are standing or stiff tail; maintaining erect ears, and establishing direct eye contact with the person.

A very aggressive dog will be one that advances toward you threatening you. These dogs usually show the more common outward signs of aggression. That is, teeth bared, hair bristled, growling, and ears erect.

Indications of a fearful dog are: Lowered head, ears flattened back against the head, tail tucked between the dogs legs, shivering or trembling. This type of dog may try to avoid you, salivate or pant. This type of dog has the potential to become a “fear bitter”.

Female dogs with puppies will often become very aggressive and may attack you or show signs of aggression. Care should be taken when approaching this animal.

Site Evaluation Summary:

Evaluations should be made of all work sites. A site evaluation is simply looking around for signs indicating a dog is likely to be present.

1. Check for bones, dog food, water bowl, chair or ropes.
2. Be prepared; carry items you can protect yourself with.
3. Make noise, like a whistle or soft non-threatening announcement as you enter the work site.
4. Respect the dog’s territory if a dog is confronted.

Safety Tips when a dog is present:

Ask the owner to put the dog away in a room or secure area where you will not need to enter.

Advise the owner that you will not enter the work site with the dog present.

If the owner refuses to remove the dog, immediately notify your supervisor.

Self Protection Techniques

Remember any dog can be a threat, treat all dogs as individuals. Stay alert, a dog can attack quickly.

If confronted:

1. Stop – Don’t run past a dog. Dogs naturally love to chase and catch things. Don’t turn and run. Don’t give the dog a reason to become excited or aggressive.
2. Do not panic or scream.
3. Stand still, stay as calm as possible. If the dog approaches to sniff you – stay still. In most cases the dog will go away when it determines you are not a threat.
4. If you say anything, speak calmly and firmly. Tell the dog to go away.
5. Place your hand around your neck.
6. Keep elbows close to the body.
7. Avoid direct eye contact.
8. Wait until the dog leaves, or is controlled by the owner, before you move away to safety.
9. Give the dog something to bite other than you, such as a jacket, tool, or other object you may be carrying.

If you have fallen or tripped and are down without protection:
1. Stay Calm, be still and quiet.
2. Cover your head and neck with your hands in a fist. Protect your face.
3. Wait until the dog leaves before getting up.
4. Move slowly; watch the dog as you move away.

If you are knocked down or have fallen with protection:
1. Let the dog bite your protection item whatever it may be.
2. Hold onto the protection item until you are safe.
3. When you are safe, let the dog take your protection item.

If you are bitten:

Obtain medical attention as quickly as possible. In all cases report the bite to your supervisor, the Washington University Police Department at 935-5555, who should file an incident report and in all cases, a report should be filed with the St. Louis County Animal Control. You can call the Animal Control Center at 727-7017. If the injury occurs during your normal work duties you should also call the University Insurance Department at 935-5627 and complete a First Report of Injury.

Tell them everything you can about the dog:
1. The owners name, if you know it.
2. The location where the attack and bite took place.
3. The colors, size and breed of the dog if known.
4. Tell them if you have seen the dog before.

NOTE: The use of halt or pepper sprays may not be totally effective as a deterrent and will have virtually no effect on some breeds of dogs with a high pain tolerance. Individuals who carry these products should only do so after they have been properly trained in their use.

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