

FACT SHEET

DOG ATTACKS

Dog attacks and bites are becoming too common, particularly involving young children. Council strives to prevent and reduce the number of dog attacks and dog harassment cases, but co-operation from dog owners and members of the public is necessary.

While educating children and adults on how to behave around dogs is the most effective way to reduce the risk of dog attacks and bites, it is imperative dog owners take full responsibility for their dog. Serious dog ownership leads to a reduction in serious dog attacks.

Did you know?

- Each year dogs bite more than 100,000 Australians
- two out of three bites occur from a dog known to the victim
- almost 50% of all serious dog bites occur in children under 10 years of age, with the most common victims being between one and four years old



How to avoid an attack

Dog attacks can be avoided and prevented by:

- choosing a breed that is suited to your family lifestyle and environment
- always supervising children and babies near dogs
- teaching your children appropriate behaviour when around dogs
- giving your dog obedience training
- ensuring your dog is exercised regularly
- ensuring your yard is secure and the dog cannot escape
- socialising your dog with other dogs and people



Children and dogs

Always make sure young children are supervised around dogs. If the dog is not properly trained, it may snap at, or even bite, a young child whom it perceives as a threat, or who wants to play rough.

Once permission has been given from the owner, extend the back of the hand towards the dog and allow the dog to approach and sniff the hand.

It is important to teach your child to:

- curl his or her fingers and allow the dog to sniff the back of the hand
- once the dog has sniffed (or licked) the hand, stroke the dog gently on the chest, shoulder, or under the chin - never pat it on the head
- never approach dogs that are sleeping or eating
- never approach a strange dog without permission from the owner
- stand still if being approached by a strange dog
- avoid eye contact with the dog
- never tease a dog or pull its ears or tail
- never rush at a strange dog

For more information on nurturing the relationship of children and pets, refer to material produced by the Dog and Cat Management Board.

Strange dogs

Strange dogs wandering the streets can be dangerous. Do not approach the dog. If the dog approaches you, stand very still, do not stare the dog in the eye and keep quiet and calm. Do not run or scream as this may cause the dog to chase after you. If these actions are taken the risk of being harassed by a dog is greatly reduced.

Council encourages the reporting of all dog attacks, bites and harassment. Incidents can be reported by phoning 8563 8444 and speaking to a General Inspector.

More information can be obtained by logging onto www.barossa.sa.gov.au

