

DOG SAFETY SEMINAR

Learn how to prevent and what you should do in case of a dog attack. Things you need to know, things you need to do, and things you should already have on hand in the event you need to defend yourself from a charging dog. Included in this document is how to properly greet a dog, and body language sketches.

Hosted by The PAWS Training Group

Speaker: Shari-Ann Murphy

Protecting You and
Yours

© The PAWS Training Group

Dog Safety Seminar

Hosted by The PAWS Training Group

Speaker: Shari-Ann Murphy

© The PAWS Training Group

Contents

Be Proactive	8
First Aid Kit	8
Basic Items:	8
Pet Specific Items:.....	9
Other Helpful Items:	9
Emergency Phone Numbers	9
Blankets	10
Your Dog's Vaccination Information & Medical History	10
Dog Bite Statistics	10
Does Breed Matter?	11
More Dog Bite Statistics	12
Who Is Most at Risk for Dog Bites?	12
Dog Bite Prevention	12
Never Leave Kids Alone with a Dog	12
Teach Dog Etiquette	12
Seven Signs a Dog Will Bite	13
How to Properly Greet a Dog	14
Body Language	16
Tails	17
Distance Decreasing Signals	19
Appeasing Gestures	19
Paw Lift.....	19
Play Bow	20
Submissive Roll	20
Distance Increasing Signals	21
Defensive Aggressive	21
Defensive Insecure	21
Confident and Assertive	22
Warning	22
Displacement Behavior & Calming Signals	22
Lip Licking	23
Look Away.....	24
Scratching	24
Shaking	25

Sniffing	25
Yawning.....	26
More on Dog Behavior	26
Dogs Can Correct.....	27
Escalation of Correction.....	27
State & Local Dog Laws.....	28
Loose Dogs	28
Dog Parks	29
Benefits.....	29
Dog Park Problems	29
Should You and Your Dog Go to a Dog Park?	30
Who Should Go?	30
Who Should NOT Go?	31
When You Get There.....	31
General Guidelines.....	31
Interpreting Dog Play and Interaction.....	32
Damage Control: If There's a Fight	33
Avoid Dog Attacks.....	34
Physical Actions.....	35
What Can You Carry with You?.....	36
What to Do If You Are Attacked.....	38
What If My Dog Does Start Fighting?	38
Assess for Injuries	39
Call the Authorities	39
Write Down Everything and Anything You Remember	39
Create a Folder and Keep Records.....	39
If the Dog Was On-leash When Attacking, or You Know the Dog	40
You May Need to Get a Lawyer	40
What Happens If YOUR Dog Attacks Someone?	40

Learning to protect yourself against charging and attacking dogs is not as difficult as you would think. It starts with being able to remain calm because you are educated and have developed a game plan before you may be faced with this problem. PAWS wants to make sure that you are more than equipped with information on how to prevent a dog attack, what to do when you are attacked, and proper greeting rituals for dog-dog and human-dog interactions. Most of all, keeping yourself, your family, and your pets safe from on-leash or off-leash charging/attacking dogs.

Be Proactive

How can you be proactive when it comes to dog safety? By making sure you are aware of your environment and have prepared for any emergency situation. Preparation is essential, that way in an emotionally charged situation, you can have everything you need at your fingertips. Here is a list of things to prepare just in case you need them:

- First Aid Kit
- Emergency Phone Numbers
- Blankets
- Your Dog's Vaccination Information & Medical History (files)

First Aid Kit

Every household that has a pet should have a first aid kit. If you take your dog places like the park, hiking, running, and social gatherings, you should carry one in your vehicle, too. Accidents happen when dogs play, you never know when you will need to patch yourself or your dog up.

The easiest way to start a first aid kit is to purchase one already made from a drugstore or on-line. You can get one that is specifically set up for pets or one that is for humans and add pet specific items to it.

Basic Items:

- Absorbent Gauze Pads
- Adhesive Tape
- Antiseptic Wipes
- Antiseptic Spray
- Hydrogen Peroxide – (to induce vomiting when needed. Should only be used under supervision of a veterinarian or poison control center. Also to clean wounds.)
- Emergency Blanket (foil)
- Cotton Balls
- Cotton Swabs
- Gauze Rolls

- Disposable Ice Pack – single use
- Disposable Gloves – Latex Free
- Digital Thermometer
- Digital Thermometer Covers
- Petroleum Jelly – (to lubricate thermometer)
- First Aid Scissors
- Sterile Non-Stick Gauze Pads
- Sterile Saline Solution
- Sterile Eye Wash
- Bacitracin – (not Neosporin Plus Pain)
- Tweezers
- Self-adhesive bandage – (also known as VetWrap)

Pet Specific Items:

- Muzzle – (can use strips of fabric or neck tie to use as muzzle)
- Leash (standard or slip lead)
- Pillow Case – (mostly for cats but can be used to restrain small dogs, too)
- Styptic Powder – (to stop bleeding on cuts and scrapes)
- Ear Cleaning Solution or Pads
- Pet First Aid book

Other Helpful Items:

- Diphenhydramine – also known as Benadryl. Check with your veterinarian prior to use and to get proper dosage.
- Expired Credit Card or other card – for removal of bee stingers or insect bites
- Nail Clippers
- Small Flashlight or Pen Light
- Plastic Eye Dropper
- Plastic Syringe
- Rubbing Alcohol – to sterilize tools
- Splints or Tongue Depressors
- Towels
- Needle Nose Pliers

Emergency Phone Numbers

In an emergency, you will not want to be running around trying to find phone numbers for poison control or the nearest emergency vet. Take some time now and write these numbers down,

put them in your wallet, on your fridge, and in your glove box of your vehicle. That way you will have them if you ever need them.

Below is a list of phone numbers you should have on hand:

- Animal Poison Control (ASPCA) – 888-426-4435 – 24/7 with a \$65 fee.
- Your Veterinarian
- Nearest Emergency Veterinarian (24-hour)
- Nearest Emergency Room (for you)
- Local Police Station (non-emergency)
- Animal Control Officer for your town and any other town you take your dog walking.

Blankets

One of the most overlooked emergency preparation items is blankets. Keeping blankets in your car and house can help comfort both humans and dogs in an emergency. Blankets can be used as a stretcher for injured animals and people, and they can keep you warm if your car breaks down. You can keep standard blankets and sheets or foil blankets that they use to keep people warm during emergencies or marathons.

Your Dog's Vaccination Information & Medical History

If you ever find yourself in a situation where your dog was involved in a dog fight, has bitten anyone, or has become injured, having your dog's vaccine information available is very important. If you cannot prove your dog is vaccinated against rabies, your dog can be taken from you and quarantined with the animal control officer for a period of 10 days or worst. If you were to take your dog to the emergency veterinarian, having their medical records and vaccines can help speed up the treatment process. The technicians and doctor can refer to the files you provide for all the necessary information, helping relieve some of your stress when having to answer questions. Trying to remember when your dog is due for vaccines can be hard when you are in an emotionally charged situation.

If you travel out of state with your dog, you are required to have your dog's proof of vaccines available at any time. Crossing state lines without this information can result in quarantine and fines if you are pulled over or something happens that requires the authorities to become involved.

Dog Bite Statistics

The statistics for dog bites are outstanding. According to the CDC (Center for Disease Control), 4.5 million people are bitten by dogs each year. The numbers are high because there are upwards of 80 million dogs in the United States, alone.

Why do dogs bite? This is not an easy question to answer. There are many factors that go into why a dog bites. The most common reason a dog will bite is during a reaction to a stressful situation.

They may bite when they feel scared or threatened. They may bite if they are startled, or if they are protecting their puppies. They may bite because they are not feeling well, when they feel the need to be territorial.

Does Breed Matter?

Notice I mentioned all the emotional reasons a dog may bite, and didn't specifically list breed as a reason a dog will bite. Although certain breeds of dog are bred to be guarding dogs, they are not bred to bite in every and all circumstances. Any dog breed can become a biter, especially if mishandled. So please try to remember that *any* dog can bite when they feel they have been provoked. There is no truly "safe" dog breed. There is a list of the top biting dog breeds in the United States in 2015.

1. Dachshund
2. Chihuahua
3. Jack Russell Terrier
4. Pekinese
5. Shar Pei
6. Chow Chow
7. Shiba Inu
8. Papillon
9. American Cocker Spaniel
10. Shih Tzu

The list of the top 10 biting dog breeds differs from the number of dog bite fatalities. It is definitely possible to be bitten by a dog without it becoming a fatality. Here is a list of the top 10 breeds and mixed breed dogs that are responsible for the most fatalities in 2014.

Breed	Bites	Deaths
Pitbull Mixes & Pitbull looking dogs	3397	295
Rottweiler	535	85
German Shepherd	113	15
Siberian Husky	83	26
Akita	70	8
Boxer	64	7
Chow Chow	61	8
Labrador	56	3
Pitweiler (Putbull & Rotweiler mix)	56	2
Labrabull (Labrador & Bulldog Mix)	43	5

More Dog Bite Statistics

- 92% of all dog bites involved male dogs of which 94% of the males were not neutered.
- 25% Fatal dog attacks were dogs who were chained up.
- 71% of dog bites occur on the Extremities (arms, hands, legs, & feet).
- 75% of dog bites occur on the victim's property, and most victims know the dog responsible!
- 1 BILLION in claims are paid out by insurance companies each year due to dog attacks.

Who Is Most at Risk for Dog Bites?

Children, ages 5-9, are the most common group of people who are bitten, followed by men. In more than half of these dog bite cases, the dogs are familiar. They are either family dogs or dogs who live with relatives or friends. The number of dogs on a household is associated with a higher likelihood of being bitten. As the number of dogs in a household increases, so does the risk of being bitten. Adults with 2 or more dogs in the household are 5 times more likely to be bitten than those living without a dog at home.

Dog Bite Prevention

The best way to prevent dog bites is to educate yourself and your family. If you bring home a puppy or dog, take the necessary steps to protect your kids with dog bite prevention: supervise them when they play with the dog, teach them dog etiquette to keep the family pet from biting unexpectedly, and show them what to do if they come across a stray dog.

Never Leave Kids Alone with a Dog

Even if you think your pet is the sweetest animal in the world, **never leave a child unsupervised with a puppy or dog.** Kids can be curious and may pull the dog's ears or poke at him if you're not around. Having your children and the dog in sight is not enough. Always be in a position to intervene immediately if anything happens, for the safety of your kids and the dog.

Teach Dog Etiquette

After supervision, the most important step in dog bite prevention is to teach your kids how to behave around a puppy or dog. Have your children follow the rules below to keep a dog from biting unexpectedly:

- **Never grab an object away from a dog.** Dogs can be protective of their toys and may bite if you try to take them. If you want the toy, use an obedience command or treat to distract the dog. It's better to outsmart him than to provoke an unnecessary dog bite.

- **Never bother a dog when he's sleeping or eating.** Give a dog plenty of space when he's napping and leave the food dish alone while the dog eats.
- **Never sneak up on a dog.** Always let your puppy or dog know that you're nearby before you pet him. Let the dog smell your open hand and then slowly reach out to him.
- **Never bark or growl at a dog or stare into his eyes.** These are aggressive behaviors to a dog and could cause him to bite.
- **Tell an adult if a dog shows any signs of aggression.** This includes growling, nipping, or biting.

If your kids warn you of aggressive tendencies in your dog, don't ignore the situation. The longer you wait to deal with the behavior, the more dangerous your dog will become and the higher the risk of a bite happening.

Seven Signs a Dog Will Bite

Dogs will give warnings before they bite. Recognizing these warnings are important. Here are the top seven signs that a dog may bite.

1. Growling and Snapping

Growling and snapping are probably the most obvious signs that a dog is about to bite. Dogs growl or snap to let you know they are unhappy or uncomfortable. If a dog growls or snaps at you when you approach him, it's time to give him some space.

Growling and snapping can be helpful, too. Pay attention to the times your dog growls or snaps. Does it happen when you approach him when he's eating, when strangers approach, or when you touch him while he's asleep? Knowing what elicits the growling and snapping allows you to manage the problem and work on changing the behavior.

2. Wagging Tail

This is one of the signs that many people find surprising. Dog trainers often hear dog owners comment that their dog was wagging his tail right up until the moment he bit someone. But pay attention to the way your dog wags his tail.

A happy dog may wag his tail and get his whole body involved. A dog who is about to bite is usually fairly rigid, and his tail will either be pointed high and moving more quickly back and forth or pointed down/tucked under them and moving more quickly back and forth. This may be a sign of an impending dog bite.

3. Raised Fur

When dogs are afraid or overly stimulated, you may see the hair on their backs stand up. In some dogs, just the hair on the back of the neck between the shoulders stands up. Other dogs have it at the neck and also near their tails. Still other dogs may have a ridge of hair that stands up down the entire length of their backs. If you notice a dog has his hackles raised, it's a signal that he needs you to back off.

4. Rigid Body Posture

Often when a dog is about to become aggressive, his body language is a dead giveaway - no

pun intended. A comfortable, happy dog usually has a relaxed body with his ears low and a happy, wagging tail. An aggressive dog is just the opposite. His entire body may go stiff, and his ears and tail are raised high. If you reach out to pet a dog, and his entire body freezes rather than wiggling to get closer, he is not happy with being touched. It's time to move away to make him more comfortable.

5. Lip Licking, Yawning and Averting Gaze

If you notice a dog is licking his lips (when food is not involved), yawning repeatedly, or turning his head to avoid meeting your gaze, he is trying to tell you something. Dogs engage in these behaviors to let you know they are uncomfortable with something going on around them. For instance, a dog who has never been around children may lick his lips or yawn when a child comes over to pet him. It does not necessarily mean that he is about to bite, but it is a warning that he is not comfortable. A dog who is uncomfortable, afraid, or stressed is more likely to bite. Your best bet when a dog uses one of these appeasement gestures is to try to alleviate his discomfort.

6. Cowering and Tail Tucking

Cowering and tail tucking are more overt signs than lip licking or yawning that you are dealing with a fearful dog. While fearful dogs don't always bite, fear does increase the likelihood. If you encounter a dog who cowers away from you with his tail tucked between his legs, back off. Let him approach you in his own time, and he'll be less likely to feel the need to bite to defend himself.

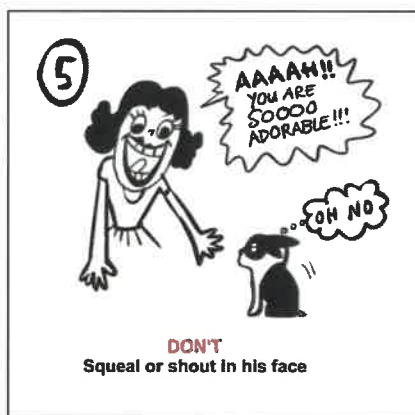
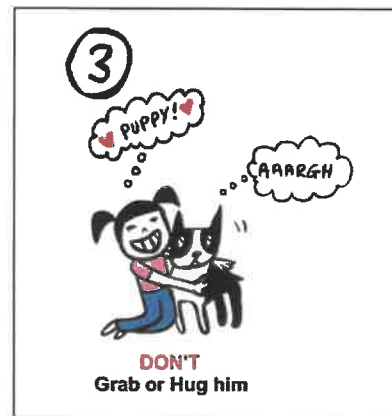
7. Seeing the Whites of the Eyes

Many dog trainers refer to this as whale eye. You'll see the whites of a dog's eye when he moves his head slightly, but doesn't move his eyes. A half-moon of white will show around the dog's eyes. Whale eye is a sign of anxiety in dogs. It's an expression many animal shelter workers are familiar with. Again, this doesn't necessarily mean that a dog is about to bite. It means that a dog is feeling anxious, and anxious dogs are more likely to bite. If you see a dog showing the whites of his eyes, it's a good idea to give him some space until he feels more relaxed.

How to Properly Greet a Dog

Growing up, I was always taught that putting your hand in front of a dog's face is proper greeting ritual for strange dogs. Growing up, I also learned that it is ok to pat any dog on the top of the head and that a wagging tail means a friendly dog. When I became a trainer, I figured out (real quickly) that these habits of greeting strange dogs are very dangerous to us. Sticking your hand in a dog's face is rude, most dogs, who are not properly socialized, will react to it. Their reaction tells us that they are uncomfortable with this way of greeting. I have learned to follow the science. The science of dog psychology has proven that these greeting rituals that we all learned as kids, are

wrong. They are actually threatening to a dog. They are threatening because we invade their personal space and force ourselves on them in an aggressive manner. Let's take a look at the wrong ways to greet a dog:



How many of these rude greeting rituals have you been guilty of? Chances are, you've done at least 4 of them. These rituals are not wrong when it comes to greeting other humans, but to a dog they are a violation of their personal space and they take away the dog's confidence. So the question is, how *are* we supposed to greet a dog?

THE CORRECT WAY:

*** No Eye contact**
*** Let the dog approach you in his own time**
*** Keep either your SIDE or BACK towards the dog (non-threatening posture)**

*** Pet or stroke him on the SIDE of his face or body. Or on his back.**

where's my treat?

Part of learning to properly greet a dog is learning how to tell the difference between friendly body language and unfriendly body language. Educating yourself and your kids can make the difference between being bit or enjoying meeting new dogs. This lesson on body language applies to your dog as well.

Body Language

If you have spent any time around dogs and have watched dogs play with each other, then you are familiar with friendly language. Dogs communicate primarily through body language and energy. During play it is important for a dog to constantly communicate their intent to the dog(s) that they are playing with. These signals are called *distance decreasing signals*. When dogs are uncomfortable and they want a person or other animal to stop bothering them, or to go away completely, they will communicate *distance increasing signals*. In everyday life, they will use body language to diffuse situations, these signals are called *calming signals*. We are going to learn about these signals and how to read ears and tails.

Ears

Your dog's ears, whether pricked or floppy give out a lot of information into what your dog is feeling. I am going to outline the top 4 ear positions in this book. If your dog has floppy ears, you will need to study them closer to get a better idea of each of the positions.



Alert & Attentive:

Ears are up and forward.

Alert

Focused

This position indicates that the dog is aroused, and they either hear or see something that catches their attention. Their ears are fully up and forward, alert, and focused on the noise they hear or the item they see.



Relaxed:

Ears are carried naturally.

This position indicates that the dog is nice and relaxed. The ears are carried naturally. That nothing is bothering them. You will see this position often in your house. The relaxed ears can be easily confused with the alert ears if you don't know how to look at the subtle differences. So study the pictures closely.



Fearful or Anxious

Ears are flat against head.

This position indicates sensitivity, fear, anxiety, insecurity. The ears are flat against the head, whether prick or floppy. At this point, your dog is saying that they are very uncomfortable and you should remove them from the situation.



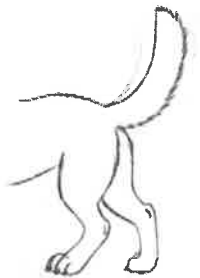
Submissive or Appeasing

Ears are held back or sideways.

This position indicates that your dog is unsure; feeling stressed, or is uncomfortable in a social situation. The ears are held back or sideways. This is the first step in feeling fearful or anxious. You will also see this ear position when scolding your dog.

Tails

Your dog's tail, whether docked, curly, natural, or stumpy, is a window into his frame of mind. Just as your dog's ears can tell you what they are thinking, the tail, even more so. Learning to read the tail can help you make the determination if you should continue working or if you should call it a day.



Alert & Aroused:

Tail held high.

Stiff

Rigid wag

The relaxed dog tail is one that you should be very familiar with. This is how your dog's tail is naturally. It can hang straight down, but be relaxed, it may wag gently, and it will be considered their natural tail carriage.

Relaxed:

Natural tail carriage.

May wag gently.



The alert or aroused dog tail is held high, it will be stiff, and have a rigid wag. This tail position is also known as “flagging”. This tail tells you a lot about your dog's frame of mind. This could mean he is excited, it could mean that he is about to react. The overall body language and energy the dog is exhibiting will determine what your next step is.

Fearful or Anxious

Tail tucked between legs.

Tail tucked right up against belly.



This fearful or anxious tail position is crystal clear. The tail will usually tucked between the dog's legs or right up tightly against the belly. Depending on how fearful the dog is will determine how tucked the tail is.

Happy

Wags from side to side.

Wags in circular motion.

Loose



Wiggly



The happy tail is unmistakable. This tail is like a windmill in your presence. It wags from side to side, in a circular motion, loose, and wiggly. This is the tail that knocks stuff off tables, whips your legs, and can poke you in the eye if you are not careful. This is an unmistakable happy and healthy gesture.

Distance Decreasing Signals

The purpose of Distance Decreasing Signals is to bring that person or animal closer. These are friendly gestures, most of the time. Take into context what the dog is doing as they are throwing out these signals. Overall body language will tell you if the dog is truly friendly.

	<h3>Appeasing Gestures</h3> <p>This dog is showing "appeasing facial expressions".</p> <p>Eyes: Opened and blinking</p> <p>Ears: Forward and relaxed or slightly back and submissive</p> <p>Lips: Long lips and relaxed muscles. Wide open mouth, lips covering or partially covering the mouth and teeth.</p> <p>Happy Tail: Wags in a sweeping motion either a gentle sway or in a faster, larger sweeping motion. May be wagging at the tip, or whole tail</p> <p>Neutral tail: straight out behind the dog, up over the dog's back. Can be hanging down behind the dog or up over the dog's back depending on breed.</p> <p>Head: No tension on face at all.</p>
	<h3>Paw Lift</h3> <p>This dog is showing happy body language that signifies care-seeking behavior. This is a submissive gesture similar to reaching out to shake hands.</p> <p>Eyes: Opened, blinking and gaze averted</p> <p>Ears: Forward and relaxed or slightly back and submissive</p> <p>Lips: Long lips and relaxed muscles. Wide open mouth, tongue hanging out sometimes, lips covering or partially covering the mouth and teeth.</p> <p>Happy Tail: Wags in a sweeping motion either a gentle sway or in a faster, larger sweeping motion. May be wagging at the tip, or whole tail.</p> <p>Head: No tension on face at all.</p>



Play Bow

This dog is showing happy body language. This body language signifies an invitation to play. This is the happiest of all body language. A true sign of friendship.

Eyes: Opened, blinking and gaze averted

Ears: Forward and relaxed or slightly back and submissive

Lips: Long lips and relaxed muscles. Wide open mouth, tongue hanging out sometimes, lips covering or partially covering the mouth and teeth.

Happy Tail: Wags in a sweeping motion either a gentle sway or in a faster, larger sweeping motion. May be wagging at the tip, or whole tail

Head: No tension on face at all.

Front legs on the ground and butt in the air.



Submissive Roll

This dog is showing insecure body language. This is an exaggerated submissive body posture. This is used quite often during greetings when the dog doesn't trust that the humans or other dogs understand their intent.

Eyes: Opened, blinking and gaze averted

Ears: Forward and relaxed or slightly back and submissive

Lips: Long lips and relaxed muscles. Wide open mouth, tongue hanging out sometimes, lips covering or partially covering the mouth and teeth.

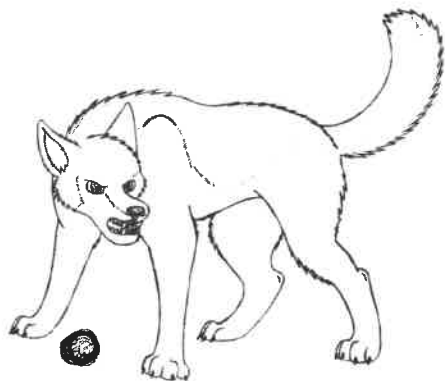
Happy Tail: Wags in a sweeping motion either a gentle sway or in a faster, larger sweeping motion. May be wagging at the tip, or whole tail

Head: No tension on face at all.

Sometimes accompanied by peeing.

Distance Increasing Signals

Distance Increasing Signals are designed to do just as it sounds, increase distance between the dog and the trigger. These signals are primarily used when your dog is insecure and afraid of that trigger approaching. We are going to discuss many of the common ones. Regardless of how reactive your dog is, you will see some, if not all of these signals at one point or another.



Defensive Aggressive

This dog is exhibiting insecurity while trying to control the resource (ball)

Eyes: Staring and Intense

Ears: Upright and slightly back

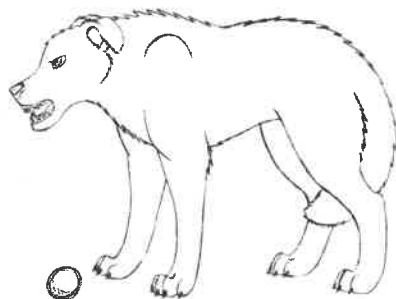
Lips: lifted enough to bulge the muzzle out. There are ridges of muscle visible on the lips and near the jaw. The lips are drawn back to show incisors and canines

Tail: Raised, still or flagging (short sharp motion)

Head: Extended Forward and lowered

Neck: Lowered

Hackles evident across entire back (hair standing up from base of neck to base of tail)



Defensive Insecure

This dog is scared. It can be heard growling loudly and will bite without hesitation.

Eyes: Staring and Intense

Ears: Drawn back and flattened slightly



Lips: lifted enough to bulge the muzzle out in the whisker area. There are ridges of muscle visible at the corner of lips and on the jaw. The lips are drawn back to show incisors and canines

Tail: Lowered and tucked.

Head: Extended Forward and lowered

Neck: Lowered

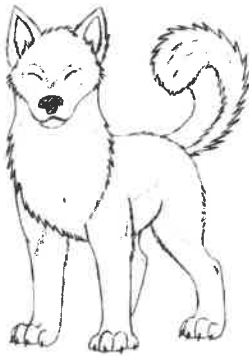
Hackles evident across entire back (hair standing up from base of neck to base of tail)

	<p>Confident and Assertive</p> <p>This dog is confident and not afraid. It is sure it knows what it is doing. This dog will bite without hesitation.</p> <p>Eyes: Staring hard and Intense</p> <p>Ears: Upright and straining forward</p> <p>Lips: Lifted, drawn back into a “C” shape, muscle ridges evident on the whole muzzle to show the canines and incisors.</p> <p>Tail: Raised and extended over back. Still or flagging (short, sharp motions)</p> <p>Head: Extended Forward and high</p> <p>Neck: Raised</p> <p>Hackles evident across entire back (hair standing up from base of neck to base of tail)</p>
	<p>Warning</p> <p>This dog is giving a visual indicator that they do not want to be approached.</p> <p>Eyes: Intense</p> <p>Ears: Up and slightly back</p> <p>Lips: lifted enough to bulge the muzzle out in the whisker area. There are ridges of muscle visible at the corner of lips and on the jaw. The lips are drawn back to show canines. Mouth resembles a “C” shape.</p> <p>Tail: Up and still.</p> <p>Head: Extended Forward and up</p> <p>Neck: Raised</p> <p>Hackles evident at shoulders</p>

Displacement Behavior & Calming Signals

Calming signals are also called *displacement behaviors*, these signals help dogs maintain a healthy social hierarchy and avoid fights. They are offered by a dog in an inappropriate context as a result of internal conflict. Basically the dog will perform a behavior like licking their lips in the absence of food, yawning when they are not tired, shake when they are interacting socially. Dogs calm each other down and diffuse fear or aggression with this very specific canine body language.

These ritualized signals help resolve conflict between dogs without the fur flying. Confident dogs use these gestures to tell frightened pups they mean no harm. Insecure or submissive dogs use the same signals to show others they mean no harm.



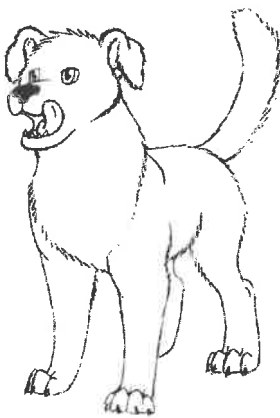
Blinking

Blinking is when a dog is averting or softening their eyes to avoid conflict. Eye to eye contact amongst dogs is an adversarial gesture.

Used:

- During greetings with people and dogs
- Often paired with turning away and yawning.

You: Can replicate this signal by softening your eyes when greeting your dog or other dogs.



Lip Licking

Lip Licking is a very quick movement of the tongue over the nose or upper lip.

Used:

- When approaching another dog
- when you bend over and lean over your dog
- when you hold your dog tightly
- when you bend down to grab your dog
- when you talk to your dog in an angry voice
- When your dog is in other uncomfortable situations.

You: Cannot replicate this signal.



Look Away

Looking Away is also known as a “head turn”. Turning the head away or body away will sometimes calm down other dogs and people.

Used:

- During wild and rough play, to slow down the intensity
- When another dog growls or corrects them
- When a dog acts threatening towards your dog
- When inappropriately greeted by other dogs and humans
- When you reprimand your dog in an angry tone
- When your dog feels you are angry
- When young dogs pester older dogs, the older dog will turn their back to the younger dog to calm them down.
- When you jerk at the leash, your dog may turn away from you, maybe even pull harder

You: Can replicate this when greeting a nervous or shy dog. When greeting your own dog and he jumps on you, turn your back to take your attention away from him and to calm him down.

Often paired with a yawn or blinking.



Scratching

Scratching is a normal thing for dogs, out of context scratching is completely different. The calming signal “scratching” is done at random times in situations that your dog may find stressful.

Used:

- To calm themselves during stressful situations
- To sooth other dogs and people who are stressed.

You: Cannot replicate this signal.

Can develop into a “nervous tick”.



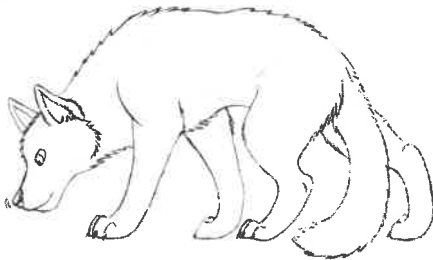
Shaking

Shaking whole body from head to tail

Used:

- When dog is corrected by another dog
- To relieve stress
- If play gets too rough and dog gets nipped or becomes uncomfortable
- When one dog is uncomfortable, another will shake to signify they are friendly
- Immediately following an incident between friends
- when being reprimanded in an angry tone

You: Cannot replicate this signal.



Sniffing

Sniffing is when the dog puts their nose to the ground and starts sniffing randomly and out of context. It can be quick or for long periods of time. Sometimes sniffing in circles while casually looking up at another dog or human.

Used:

- When being approached by a dog
- When someone walks straight at your dog
- When a sudden situation occurs, such as 2 dogs suddenly become too close
- When your dog is unsure of something approaching, such as someone carrying something your dog doesn't recognize
- When another dog is stressed. This conveys that the environment is safe
- When you reprimand your dog in an angry tone

You: Cannot replicate this signal.



Yawning

Yawning is the opening of the mouth to expel air. This may include a slight whine at the end.

Used:

- When over stimulated
- When stressed or uncomfortable
- To calm themselves in social situations
- During improper human greetings
- When being “stared down” by humans and other dogs
- When being reprimanded by humans in a harsh angry voice
- When your dog is not sure what to do in social situations
- For many other situations

You: can be used when your dog is unsure, uncertain, a bit scared, stressed or worried. You can use it when you want to calm your dog down a bit.

May be paired with the turn away.

More on Dog Behavior

I run group socialization classes. During this class, I walk around and talk to my students and monitor the play and watch for certain body language. When I see a certain kind of body language or I see the dog's body language change from friendly to unfriendly, I step in and separate immediately. Sometimes you have time and other times you don't. Things can escalate quickly. You have to get in there quickly and separate by any means necessary. Usually this means grabbing the leash and quickly pulling the dogs apart. My students are always shocked that I can see an issue coming before the dog has committed to reacting to the situation. What behaviors am I looking for?

- **Suddenly Stiffening.** When dogs become uncomfortable in a social situation, they will stiffen their body as they are deciding what the next course of action they will take. We call this “the calm before the storm”. The dog will react immediately following the stiffening of the body with either a correction to the other dog or person, walk away from the situation, or follow up with another visual cue to tell the other dog that they are uncomfortable.
- **Lip Lift.** This is a visual cue that the dog is unhappy. It will immediately follow or happen at the moment of the stiffening of the body.
- **Hackles Up.** This is when the hair on the back of the neck and at the base of the tail stand up on end. On some dogs, it will look like “porcupine quills”. This is another visual cue that a dog

is uncomfortable. This may be shown at the same time that a dog stiffens, or the hair will come up on the back of the neck and base of tail when the dog becomes scared.

- **Growling.** This is an audible cue that a dog is unhappy. When you hear growling, it will either defuse a situation or it will escalate a situation. It all depends on why a dog is growling.

Dogs Can Correct

Although in the human world, a dog growling or snapping at a human or other animal is never allowed, it *is* important for a dog to be able to correct other creatures when they feel uncomfortable with that other creature's behavior. When dogs are participating in social events whether with dogs or humans, they may feel the need to correct once in a while for behaviors that are offensive, just like you would correct your dog for the same behaviors. There is always an escalation process before the dog physically touches another animal (there are some exceptions to this rule). Dogs don't necessarily have to growl or snap to prove their point, they have other things they can do to express that they are not interested in that behavior.

Escalation of Correction

When a dog is properly socialized and properly trained, they develop the skills they need to defuse situations that they feel are inappropriate. For instance, when another dog is grabbing hard at their ears, or when a child throws themselves on top of the dog when it sleeps, when a stranger approaches the dog and is staring them down as they try to reach for the dog on the top of the head. These examples happen every day and dogs give corrections to the offenders of these behaviors. Let's discuss the escalation of correction.

1. **Visual Cue.** Almost every uncomfortable situation is announced by a visual cue. That cue could be the dog's ears pinned back, eyes really wide, the dog stiffens their body, lifts a lip, hackles go up. These are some visual cues to look out for. Sometimes, there are several cues thrown out all at once.
2. **Verbal Cue.** Every visual cue is followed up by a verbal cue. This cue could be a low grade growl, a loud growl, or a bark. Sometimes, the dog will express several verbal cues during the interaction so that they can give as many opportunities for the offending subject to stop the behavior before they escalate to the next level.
3. **Physical Touch.** The last type of correction a dog will give is a physical touch. If socialized properly and trained properly, these types of corrections will very rarely leave a mark or break the skin. It is a warning, a hypothetical shot across the bow. Not many dogs will go right from a visual cue to a physical touch unless they felt it was absolutely necessary. Most of the physical touches is what looks like a "rattle snake" attack. Meaning the dog will touch and let go immediately. If they wanted to harm, they could. If the offending subject does not stop after the physical touch, then a harder physical touch will be used, most of the time this second touch will be one that really hurts and may break the skin.
4. **Displacement Behavior.** As soon as a dog corrects someone, they will offer displacement behaviors to smooth over the situation. Most of the time, it is a yawn or the dog will shake.

These signals are communicated so that the offending subject knows that “Even though I had to correct you, we are still friends]. If the correction happens during play, the dog will go right back to playing with the offending subject.

Keep in mind, these steps only apply when a dog is socialized properly and trained properly. A mishandled dog will not use the correction escalation process to warn an offending subject. Also, if a dog is put into a position to have to constantly be uncomfortable, and their escalation process is ignored by the offending party, they will go right to a physical touch. They learn that warnings and cues are a waste of time and they will just start biting. It is important to recognize the correction at the first step and remove the dog from the situation. The more they escalate, the more common the escalation processes becomes.

State & Local Dog Laws

Massachusetts has state laws governing dog ownership including leash laws, dog bite responsibility, vaccination requirements, and court rulings about responsibility of dog ownership. All of these subjects can be found on the Mass.gov website. Just type “dog laws” into the search engine and a whole slew of subjects will come up. I have read all of the laws and rulings. On top of state laws, each municipality has their own bylaws. To find the information on the bylaws, you must visit the website of your municipality. Whatever the town or city you reside in, the bylaws are available online or at city hall. It is important that you know that the laws will protect you if you are attacked. You should also make sure that your dog is licensed with your city or town. If a dog attack happens and your dog is injured, you can be fined for not following the law and licensing your dog. It cost \$10-15 to license your dog. All you need to do is provide proof of rabies, and spay/neuter certificate. You can still license your dog if you haven’t spayed or neutered yet, it just cost a few dollars more.

Loose Dogs

Most off-leash charging dogs that you will encounter in your neighborhood will live within your neighborhood. Getting to know where they live will help you when you need to call animal control and report an incident. If you don’t already know what dogs live in your neighborhood, you can find that out by walking around your neighborhood during the morning before everyone goes to work, or around 6 pm, when everyone has gotten home from work and they are taking their dog out or out for a walk. Besides the weekend, these are the times where you will encounter the most off-leash dogs.

One of the hardest things to do is to get people to report off-leash dogs to the proper authorities. No one wants to be “that person” in the neighborhood so people will turn a blind eye to the problem. That is all fine & dandy until someone gets injured. Then the outrage as to “how can this happen in our neighborhood?” will begin. It can and will happen in the neighborhood unless someone steps forward and reports those loose dogs before a serious problem occurs. Your best course of action is to notify animal control when you see a dog running free in your neighborhood.

The more reports that are filed and the more complaints that are made, the more they have to find the owners of the dog and instruct them to keep their dog confined. 99% of municipalities have leash laws in Massachusetts. They are in place for a reason. So please, be *that* person and keep your neighborhood safe.

Dog Parks

Benefits

Many behavior problems in dogs are caused by a lack of physical and mental activity. Dogs were born to lead active lives. They've worked alongside people for thousands of years, hunting game, herding and protecting livestock, and controlling vermin. Dogs' wild relatives lead busy lives, too. Their days are full of hunting, scavenging, avoiding predators and complex social interaction. Most pet dogs, on the other hand, spend the majority of their time alone at home, napping on couches and eating food from bowls-no hunting or scavenging required. Many become bored, lonely and overweight. They have excess energy and no way to expend it, so it's not surprising that they often come up with activities on their own, like tearing apart couches, raiding trash cans and chewing on shoes.

To keep your dog happy, healthy and out of trouble, you'll need to find ways to exercise her brain and body. If she enjoys the company of her own kind, visits to your local dog park can greatly enrich her life. Benefits of going to the dog park include:

- **Physical and mental exercise for dogs** Your dog can zoom around off-leash to her heart's content, investigate new smells, wrestle with her dog buddies and fetch toys until she happily collapses. Many dogs are so mentally and physically exhausted by a trip to the dog park that they snooze for hours afterwards.
- **Opportunities to maintain social skills** Dogs are like us, highly social animals, and many enjoy spending time with their own species. At the dog park, your dog gets practice reading a variety of other dogs' body language and using her own communication skills, and she gets used to meeting unfamiliar dogs on a frequent basis. These valuable experiences can help guard against the development of fear and aggression problems around other dogs.
- **Fun for pet parents** Dogs aren't the only ones who enjoy dog parks. People do, too. They can exercise their dogs without much effort, socialize with other dog lovers, bond and play with their dogs, practice their off-leash training skills, and enjoy the entertaining antics of frolicking dogs.

Dog Park Problems

Despite the many benefits dog parks provide, it's important to be aware of the risks before you decide to become a dog-park devotee:

- **Health risks:** Healthy, vaccinated dogs are at low risk of becoming ill as a result of visiting the

dog park. There are health risks any time your dog interacts with other dogs, just as there are for us when we interact with other people. Talk to your veterinarian about the risks and whether they recommend vaccinating for Bordetella ("kennel cough") if you become a regular park user. Fleas are everywhere—including on squirrels, rabbits and raccoons—so the key to flea control is providing adequate protection on your pet.

- **Injury:** Your dog could get injured in a fight or during overly rambunctious play. It's highly unlikely, but small dogs could even be killed at a dog park because larger dogs sometimes perceive smaller dogs as prey.
- **Dog problems:** For some dogs, especially those who are naturally shy or easily overwhelmed a visit to the dog park can be stressful. If your dog has unpleasant experiences with other dogs—if they bully or fight with her, intimidate her or just play too roughly—she might decide she doesn't like them at all! She could start growling, barking, snarling, snapping and lunging to drive other dogs away, and even biting if they approach.
- **People problems:** Everyone has a different perspective, and some people have strong opinions about dog behavior. Pet parents don't always agree about what's normal dog behavior, what's acceptable during play, what kind of behavior is truly aggressive, which dog behaviors are obnoxious, whether or not one dog is bullying another or who's at fault in an altercation. People might argue about how to respond when problems between dogs arise. Since there's rarely an authority figure to appeal to at a dog park, disagreements can get heated and result in *human* behavior problems!

Should You and Your Dog Go to a Dog Park?

Many people feel that the benefits of dog parks outweigh their risks. Others decide that they're not comfortable going to dog parks. To make the best decision for you and your dog, consider the pros and cons above, read the guidelines below, and visit local dog parks without your dog just to watch and learn more.

Who Should Go?

- **Well-socialized dogs:** Dog parks are best for dogs who *love* interacting with other dogs. They're *not* for dogs who simply tolerate other dogs, dogs that only get along with certain types of dogs or dogs who routinely fight with other dogs.
- **Young dogs:** Although adult dogs can have fun at dog parks, young dogs (under the age of two) benefit most. They can burn some of their youthful energy and gain valuable social experience with other dogs and people. Younger dogs are also more likely to enjoy multiple playmates than older dogs, which often get more picky about their friends as they mature.
- **Healthy dogs:** To be well protected at the dog park, your dog should be fully vaccinated and have a good immune system. Since dogs do a lot of wrestling and running at the park, your dog should also be physically sound and free of chronic injuries or pain. Ask your veterinarian about your dog's health-readiness for going to dog parks.
- **Spayed and Neutered Dogs:** To avoid unwanted sexual behavior at the dog park, it's best to spay

or neuter your dog before visiting the dog park.

Who Should NOT Go?

- **Un-vaccinated Puppies:** It's essential for young puppies to meet and interact with a variety of different dogs during their socialization period, from about 3 to 16 weeks of age. However, before they've been fully vaccinated, puppies are extremely vulnerable to potentially deadly contagious diseases, such as parvovirus. Because so many dogs frequent a dog park, the chances of exposure to dangerous pathogens are higher there. Until your puppy has had all her shots, don't take her to the dog park. Instead, you can arrange play dates at the homes of friends and family who have healthy dogs and puppies. You can also enroll your puppy in a puppy class that includes off-leash playtime in a safe, hygienic area.
- **Females in Heat and Un-neutered Males:** To avoid unwanted pregnancies, don't take an un-spayed female dog to the park when she's in heat. Avoid taking an un-neutered male to the dog park as well. In addition to siring accidental puppies, intact males can experience social problems. An un-neutered dog's high testosterone level can make him the target of harassment or aggression from other male dogs.
- **Under Socialized, Fearful, Anxious, or Aggressive Dogs:** Many people mistakenly believe that dogs that fear or dislike other dogs just need more socialization. However, if your dog is fearful or nervous around other dogs, exposing her to the hectic environment of a dog park will only worsen her problems. Similarly, if your dog is aggressive toward other dogs, visits to a dog park might exacerbate her behavior and put other people's pets at risk or ruin their enjoyment of the park. If you'd like to change the way your dog behaves around other dogs, please call a reputable trainer or behaviorist who has experience in these fields
- **Bullies:** Some dogs, because of their personalities or learning experiences, just don't play well with others. Dogs who bully can traumatize their weaker or more timid playmates or provoke fights. If bullies are allowed to practice their behavior at the dog park, their behavior often worsens over time-and bad experiences with bullies can cause aggression problems in *other* dogs.
- **Dog Dorks:** Some dogs don't bully other dogs on purpose, but they lack more refined social skills and just aren't capable of playing politely. Despite their good intentions, they seem socially clueless. They're usually high-energy dogs who enjoy play with lively wrestling, hard mouthing and crashing into other dogs like canine bumper cars. When their playmates dislike the rough treatment and try to communicate their desire to quit playing, these dogs don't seem to understand. They can also hurt or upset people at the Dog Park if they jump up and mouth on hands, arms or legs. Because rough players can easily spoil the fun for other dogs and their people, they're not good candidates for dog parks either.

When You Get There

General Guidelines

Keep the following recommendations in mind to minimize your risks and maximize your fun:

- Before you enter the park, check out the crowd for a few minutes. Do the dogs seem to be romping happily? If so, let the fun begin! If, on the other hand, you notice canine troublemakers bullying or fighting with other dogs-or if you simply feel uneasy about letting your dog play with a particular group of dogs-plan to come back at a later time.
- When a new dog arrives at a dog park, the other dogs often rush over to investigate. This sudden flood of attention can overwhelm newcomers. To avoid a canine mob scene, linger outside the park for a few minutes and let other dogs notice your dog's presence outside the park's enclosure. When their excitement about her arrival dissipates, you can enter the park together. After your dog has played a while and become part of the group inside the park, don't let *her* become a mob member. Instead, call her to you when you notice newcomers arriving.
- Keep your attention on your dog and her playmates so that you're aware of what she's doing at all times. If you see signs that the play is not going well, you can step in to stop interaction before things get out of hand. (Please see *Interpreting Dog Play and Interaction*, below, to learn about these signs.)
- Avoid canine clumping. When a pair or group of dogs plays nonstop for more than a few minutes, playmates can get overexcited and tension can arise. Instead of standing in one spot during your entire visit, move to a new area of the park every few minutes. Encourage your dog to follow you when you walk to a new spot. Praise and reward her for keeping track of where you are and for coming when you call.
- If at any point you think your dog might not be having fun, take her home. If she's interacting with another dog, don't hesitate to ask that dog's pet parent to help you end the play session. It's better to call it quits early so your dog still has a good experience overall. You don't want her to decide that she doesn't enjoy playing with other dogs anymore.

Interpreting Dog Play and Interaction

While you're at the dog park with your dog, it's important to closely monitor interaction between playmates. But interpretation can be difficult sometimes. What do dogs look like when they're friendly with each other? How about when they don't feel so friendly? What constitutes polite play between dogs? How can you tell when playmates aren't getting along, and how do you know when it's time to intervene? The information below should help you interpret and evaluate dog play. For illustrations and more information about how dogs communicate, please see Chapter 5, *Body Language*.

What Good Play Looks Like

When dogs play, they often play-bow, paw at each other and bounce around like puppies. Their bodies look relaxed, rather than stiff, and they might make "play faces"-they hold their mouths open and look like they're smiling. During play, the dogs might growl playfully and open their mouths wide, exposing their teeth and pretending to be ferocious. They might switch roles so that one dog's sometimes on top when wrestling and sometimes on her back, sometimes chasing and

sometimes being chased, sometimes pouncing and sometimes getting pounced on. The dogs might also frequently switch games, alternating between stalking and chasing each other, wrestling and rolling around on the ground, mouthing on each other, playing with toys, and taking breaks to drink water or sniff around. As the dogs run and wrestle, you might notice them pausing or freezing frequently for just a second or two before launching back into the game. These little pauses and breaks in play help ensure that play doesn't get out of hand.

Signs of Trouble

If possible, watch for warning signs and step in *before* a fight happens. Your first clue that things aren't going well during play might be the absence of all the signs of polite play described above. Instead of those signs, you might notice the dogs' bodies becoming stiffer and more tense. Their movements might seem faster and less bouncy. Play might become louder and build in intensity, without any breaks or pauses. If you see any of these signs, it's time to separate the playmates. You should also interrupt play if you see a dog that's pursuing and playing too roughly with a playmate who's trying to get away, or who's repeatedly knocking down or standing over another dog. Intervene immediately if a number of dogs start to chase a single dog-especially if that dog is small.

Damage Control: If There's a Fight

Sometimes, despite your best efforts to monitor playtime, dogs get into fights. These scuffles often look and sound ferocious. The dogs might growl fiercely, snarl at each other, bark, snap and show their teeth. However, most dog fights don't result in injury to either dog. They're usually the equivalent of getting into a brief, heated argument with a friend or family member. Even so, if a fight lasts more than a few seconds, the dogs' pet parents should separate them. Doing this can be dangerous. If you grab a dog that's in the middle of fighting with another dog, they might startle and reflexively whip around to bite you. We call this *rattlesnaking*. To reduce the likelihood of injury to all parties, follow these guidelines:

- Prevent fights from happening in the first place by actively watching dogs during play. If you think things are starting to look a little tense, end play for a while by calling your dog to come to you or go get your dog and happily move them away.
- Have a plan and don't panic. Remember that most dog fights are noisy but harmless. If you stay calm, you'll be able to separate two fighting dogs more safely and efficiently.
- Before you try physically separating two fighting dogs, make lots of noise. Clap and yell. Consider carrying a mini-air horn or two metal pie pans to bang together. A sudden loud sound will often interrupt a fight.
- If there's a hose handy, you can try spraying the dogs with water. If you carry a can of citronella spray, you can spray them with that instead.
- If you've tried briefly (3 seconds or so) making noise but the dogs are still fighting, you and the other dog's pet parent should approach the dogs together. Separate them *at the same time*. Both of you should take hold of your dogs' back legs at the very top just under the hips, right

where the legs connect to the body. (Avoid grabbing the dogs lower on their legs, like by their knees, ankles or paws. Doing so could cause them serious injury.) Like you'd lift a wheelbarrow, lift your dog's back end under his hips so that his back legs come off of the ground, and move backwards away from the other dog. As soon as you can, turn your dog away from the other dog.

- DO NOT grab your dog by the collar. It seems like the natural thing to do, but it might startle your dog and cause them to rattlesnake you. This kind of bite is like a reflex that's done without thinking. Many pet parents get bitten this way even when their dogs haven't shown any signs of aggression in the past.
- After a fight stops, put both dogs on leashes and end the play session. Avoid giving the dogs another chance to fight. If the dog park is large enough, you can walk your dog to another area, far away from the dog she squabbled with. After they have calmed down and relaxed again, try letting them off leash again to play with other dogs. If the park's not that big, just call it quits for the day.

Avoid Dog Attacks

When you are on a walk with your dog, there are things you can do to avoid being attacked or mauled by a dog.

- When approaching an on-leash dog who may not be friendly, try to maintain a safe distance between you and the dog. If you have to, cross the street. If you cannot cross the street or get away and the dog is on a long leash, ask the owner to reign the dog in and get control of it before you pass by.
- Ask permission before approaching a dog, whether on-leash or in the dog's yard.
- Look for a color-coded warning on the dog's collar or leash. This is a growing trend that spells out if a dog should not be approached in any way. It may say "no dogs", "caution", "nervous", "blind", "deaf", and "working". The collar or leash may be red, yellow, green, or blue. If you see a dog with one of these collars or leashes on, do not approach the dog or the owner. Give yourself space around the animal and keep walking.
- Never approach a dog that is barking, growling, snarling, sleeping, eating, or nursing puppies. Even if you think the dog is friendly, do not approach it!
- Be aware of dogs that are a block or more ahead of your path. Be prepared to change your route or turn around to avoid areas that you know may have off-leash dogs.
- Know the seven signs a dog may attack (see section in this handout). A wagging tail does not always mean the dog is friendly. It could be a sign that a dog is nervous and they are thinking about attacking you.
- Do not stare *any* dog in the eyes. Staring down a dog is adversarial. You are asking to be bit! Staring down a dog is a sign of aggression. Dogs will look away and give you "the shifty eyes" to avoid confrontation. If a dog offers you this behavior, reciprocate immediately!
- Turn your body sideways when approached by a dog. This is the least threatening body posture that you can offer a dog. If a dog is charging you, turning sideways can defuse a mild situation.

- Don't run or the dog will chase you. You cannot outrun a dog.
- Stand still and be a tree. Slowly withdraw or maintain a constant slow pace out of the dog's territory.
- Speak gently and calmly to the dog unless you must escalate.
- At the beginning of the attack, try and stuff something into the dog's mouth to prevent biting. A stick, a shoe, an umbrella, a jacket, or a bag (purse).
- If you are actually attacked, curl up into a ball and protect your face, neck, and head. These are the common areas in which you can sustain massive damage, so you will want to protect them.
- Use decoy treats if you need to. Bring some treats with you. If you need to, try throwing some away from you. Some dogs will become distracted and forget what they were doing.

Protecting Yourself from a Dog Attack

No matter how much you try to avoid confrontation by off-leash or stray dogs sometimes it is inevitable. So what can you do to protect yourself and your dog from injury? Many things. It's true!! Everyday household objects can be carried as protection and you won't need special training to use them. There are also physical actions you can take to resolve the situation if you can think fast enough and are prepared to use them.

Physical Actions

Stepping Towards Dog and Yelling "Stop" and "Go Home"	If you have enough time to think before the dog reaches you, acting as if you are an authority figure can stop a charging dog right in their tracks. Stepping towards the dog, raising your hand up and giving the "Stop" signal (like a police man stopping traffic) and yelling out "Stop, go home!" or "Stop, sit!" but not screaming it out of anxiety. Plus, avoid direct eye contact because it can be adversarial.
Walk Quickly and Try and Put a Solid Object Between You and the Charging Dog	Putting any solid object between you and the charging dog can stop a dog from reaching you and potentially harming you. Find an object like a tree, pole, fence, mailbox (Postal Service, not a residential single mailbox), or car. Walk quickly to the object, do not run. Running will cause the charging dog to run faster. Be calm and quick, and keep your eye on the dog.

What Can You Carry with You?



A Pop-up Umbrella

Opening an umbrella, quickly, can startle a dog with the quick movement. Startling the dog can activate the fight or flight response and cause the dog to flee. This method is highly successful.



Citronella Spray

Carrying a can of citronella spray can stop a dog dead in their tracks. Citronella spray works by imitating an asthma attack in the dog and taking their breath away. Shake the can for a couple seconds, flip the red button and spray for the nose. It will cause them to feel like they are suffocating. They will back off and run away if they are not rabid. This model has a belt clip. Keep one in the glove box so you will always have it when you are traveling with your dog. This product will not escalate aggression.



Pepper Spray

Pepper Spray is a good deterrent against people too! BUT it can escalate the aggression in certain circumstances with certain breeds. This is a point and shoot spray as well. It is now legal to carry it in Massachusetts without a permit.



Air Horn

Blasting an air horn can startle the dog enough to stop them in their tracks. Any amount of abrupt noise can cause a dog to pause or stop. Keep in mind that this is a little bulky and these cans are not cheap. This product does work!



Shovel

Carrying a folding shovel can be helpful. This item can work like the Physical Action of putting a solid object in between you and the charging dog. Using a folding or camping shovel makes it portable and easy/lightweight to carry. Swinging the shovel at the dog can also startle the dog and cause it to run away.



OR



Cane or Walking Stick

Carrying a cane or walking stick can be useful as well. It can be used as a weapon to stop a dog attack or it can be used to break up 2 dogs that are fighting. Waving around one of these while a dog is charging can startle them and cause them to run away. Do not try to hit the dog, you may agitate them further.

All of these objects have been proven to help you gain control in an off-leash charging or attacking situation. Be careful of the pepper spray and citronella spray usage. Do not spray into the wind or so close to the dog that it sprays back on you. It can incapacitate you and leave you vulnerable to further attack.

Another note about pepper spray vs citronella spray. Citronella will mimic an asthma attack in dogs. When a dog is startled in this manner, most will stop immediately and flee. Citronella is proven not to escalate the violence the way pepper spray will. Not all dogs will escalate their aggressive response, but many will if they are already in the "red zone". Keep that in mind when choosing a product.

Cane, walking stick, or shovel works great when deterring a dog attack. Wave it around and start yelling "stop, go home". In many cases, the dog will be startled and run away. This will not work

on animals that are intent to injure. Your best bet would be to pair up one of these objects with citronella spray and or an umbrella.

An air horn works wonderful to startled the dog right in its tracks. It is an amazing tool. If I do a dog park or if I have a big group of off-leash dogs around, I always have one on me.

What to Do If You *Are* Attacked

The scariest moments come when you least expect them. Once an attack happens, you will most likely go into shock. It can't always be prevented, no matter how cautious you are. It isn't your fault, you did nothing wrong, it was just how the moment ended.

An attack will go on for what feels like an eternity. Chances are, if you have a dog or dogs with you, the charging dog will be going after your dog.

If you have a small enough dog to pick up, this is the time you should pick your dog up. There are a couple of draw-backs to picking a dog up:

- a. When you pick up your dog, you are limiting your ability to freely move your body. It is harder to defend yourself while holding an animal
- b. Holding a dog leaves you open to that dog jumping up at you and just throwing out bites all over you and your dog

I am definitely not saying not to pick your dog up, but you need to be aware of what further complications it may create. You can put your body between your dog and the charging dog. Give your dog some room to move out of the way so you can address the problem. Pinning them down to a short area is asking to be tangled in the leash and for your dog to become a "sitting duck".

If your dog is too big to be picked up, the best thing you can do is force the dog behind you. Do not let them "fight it out". Once dogs start fighting, it is incredibly difficult to separate them without injuring yourself and really increasing the injuries to your own dog.

What If My Dog Does Start Fighting?

DO NOT PUT YOUR HANDS ON ANY DOG IN THE MIDDLE OF A FIGHT! It is a great way to get seriously injured and have your fingers severed, or your hand broken. Seriously, do not put your hands on any dog in the middle of a fight, especially around the head or neck area, like reaching for the collar to spread the dogs apart. It will not work, especially when you are alone!!

Best thing to do when two dogs are fighting is to spray them both with citronella, or pepper spray, or use an air horn to separate them. If you must make contact with your dog or the other dog, be aware that even your own dog will *rattlesnake* you when they are in the heat of the moment. What does *rattlesnaking* mean? It means that a dog is in such fury when fighting, that they just react to anything that physically touches them. They are so far into the zone that they don't know it is you and they can bite you! Yes, your dog can bite you and you can't blame them for doing it! This is where your leash comes into play. Hook your dog's leash to a solid surface like a fence post, a tree, a telephone pole, then grab the other dog by the legs and spin in a counter-clockwise position until the

dogs let go. Do NOT pull them apart. You must SPIN them apart. Lifting a dog by their hind legs will disorient them. Most dogs cannot snap back and make contact with your hands while you are lifting their hind legs off the ground. They are not as flexible as a human being so their bodies are too stiff and not agile like ours are. Once you get the dogs separated, throw the other dog by the hind legs as far and hard as you can and be prepared to pull out your spray or weapon to stop the dog from attacking a second time. For me, I would make as much noise as I can to draw attention from the neighborhood. Many people will feel the need to come and assist you, especially if they see you struggling.

Assess for Injuries

Check your arms and hands for injury. If you do not have any injuries, immediately check your dog for puncture wounds. Contrary to popular belief, puncture wounds seldom bleed. They will ooze a little but only when they start to close up and the healing process begins. My dog was attacked and I did not visually see any injury on him. 2 days later, his body was covered in scabs, all the way down his back and over his chest. There was no blood what-so-ever. It was very surprising.

If you do not see any marks on your dog, you should still take them to the vet. The vet will see what you cannot with your eyes. Check your dog over from nose to tip of the tail. Check their head, ears, eyes, lips, mouths, feet, neck and chest. These are the areas where most of bite wounds show up.

Call the Authorities

As soon as you assess for injuries, grab your cell phone and call the police. Call them and report the incident. Unless your dog is seriously injured, wait for the police to arrive. Once they take your information and an incident report, tell them you are taking your dog to the vet to make sure that it does not have injuries. If the police give you push back for filing a report, make them. You may need to do some of the investigation yourself. With the Massachusetts laws, you may need to push the authorities to investigate, especially if there are no injuries. The police may have their hands tied. Call Animal Control and report it with them as well. The police don't always alert animal control when there is an incident.

Write Down Everything and Anything You Remember

Make sure you write down the description of the dog, street names and the time in which it happened. Get the names of any and all witnesses and their contact information. Try to do this immediately following the attack so that you don't forget anything. Anytime you are in a terrifying situation, you may suppress some information. Make sure you keep the notepad with you so that you can write down anything that may come to mind.

Create a Folder and Keep Records

Keeping your ducks in a row can make the difference between being reimbursed in the event of an injury to you or your dog and getting nothing resolved. Keep records of all vet bills, medical reports/bills, police and animal control reports, and any other documentation you are given during the course of the incident. Keeping good records will be immensely helpful.

If the police or animal control find the owners of the dog, keep the information for the owners and find out what insurance company they use.

If the Dog Was On-leash When Attacking, or You Know the Dog

If you were attacked by an on-leash dog, or you know the owners of the dog, you need to demand the dog's vaccine information. You need to request this information to make sure that the dog is vaccinated. If the dog is not vaccinated or the owner is not known, in the event that the dog attack produced wounds where the skin was broken, you will need to undergo a series of rabies shots. That's right, Rabies shots! They are extremely painful! You should also obtain the dog's veterinarian information if you can. You will need this in the event that you need to hire a lawyer.

You May Need to Get a Lawyer

If the police or animal control cannot help you recover damages for the injuries you have sustained, make sure you consult a lawyer. Do not go away with an apology. Apologies mean nothing to people who know they have a dog with behavioral issues. If they allow their dog to escape their yard or let them roam free to terrorize the neighborhood, they do not care about the community and any apology you get from them will not stop them from letting their dog roam free or escape again. The only way to make them stop is to press charges against them or sue them for damages. They need to be held accountable for their actions. If the dog escaped by accident, and you believe it was an accident, and they are willing to compensate you for any money out of pocket for injuries, then don't worry about getting a lawyer. A dog owner who takes responsibility is few and far between. Do not let anyone bully you into letting things go. If it happened to you, it can and will happen again.

What Happens If YOUR Dog Attacks Someone?

If you happen to have that dog who is the aggressor and runs after another person or their dog, the biggest thing I can tell you to do is ***YOU NEED TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY*** and apologize for the incident and cooperate with the authorities. Provide the information they request and follow the advice and demands of the animal control officer. This is not going to go away easily but if you cooperate, you will find that the process isn't complicated.

You will need to take future precautions. If you have a fenced in yard and your dog has found a way out of the yard, then put your dog on a tie out. You may need to keep a muzzle on your dog

when they are outside of the house, or get a 10-foot x 10-foot kennel enclosure with a roof on it. These are demands that animal control may make you do. They are the most common. If you fail to keep the community safe after these restrictions are placed on your dog, then your dog will be confiscated and euthanized. You may be asked to rehome your dog outside of the community. If you can't find a home for your dog, then you must euthanize it. So compliance is important. Also, even if the authorities do not demand that you get help for your dog, you really should consult a trainer and get professional help for your dog. It shows that you really want to be responsible.