

## Preventing Dog Bites

(NAPS)—More than 5,400 postal employees were attacked by dogs in the United States in 2021. From nips and bites to vicious attacks, aggressive dog behavior poses a serious threat to postal employees and just about everyone else.

To help people understand the enormity of this serious issue, the U.S. Postal Service provides information on the do's and don'ts of responsible dog ownership as part of its annual National Dog Bite Awareness Week public service campaign.

The campaign runs Sunday, June 5, through Saturday, June 11 but any time is a good time to consider dog bite prevention. This year's theme is "The USPS Delivers for America—Deliver for Us by Restraining Your Dog." You can help spread the news of the campaign by using the hashtag #dogbiteawareness.

"Every year, thousands of postal employees are attacked by dogs as they deliver America's mail. And while it's a dog's natural instinct to protect their family and home, we ask all customers to act responsibly by taking safety precautions with their dogs while the mail is being delivered," said USPS Employee Safety and Health Awareness Manager Leeann Theriault. "When a carrier comes to the residence, keep the dog inside the house and away from the door—or behind a fence on a leash—to avoid an attack."

### Being a Responsible Pet Owner

Dog owners with friendly dogs often expect a friendly reaction from other dogs. However, even friendly dogs will bite, depending on the circumstance. Dogs are primarily territorial in nature and protective of their owners and their owners' property. Defending its territory sometimes means attacking—and possibly biting—the letter carrier. Dog owners are responsible for controlling their dogs. The best way to keep everyone safe from dog bites is to recognize and promote responsible pet ownership.

Most people know the approximate time their letter carrier arrives every day. Securing your dog before the carrier approaches your property will minimize any dog-carrier interactions.

When a letter carrier comes to your home, keep dogs:

- Inside the house or behind a fence;
- Away from the door or in another room; or
- On a leash.

Pet owners also should remind their children not to take mail directly from a letter carrier as the dog may view the carrier as a threat.

Informed Delivery is a useful tool for dog owners. It's a free service that provides a digital preview of the mail and packages scheduled to be delivered so you can take precautions and secure your dog when parcels are delivered to the door. You can sign up at [informed-delivery.usps.com](https://informed-delivery.usps.com).

"The Postal Service takes the safety of our employees as seriously as we take our commitment to delivering America's mail,"



### Alexandria, VA, letter carrier Latasha Thompson services mailboxes as a dog passes by.

said USPS Occupational Safety and Health Senior Director Linda DeCarlo. "Please deliver for us by being responsible pet owners and make sure your dogs are secured when our carrier comes to your mailbox."

### The Victims

Many attacks reported by letter carriers came from dogs whose owners regularly stated, "My dog won't bite." Dog bites are preventable. One bite is one too many.

### Be Attentive

Letter carriers are trained to observe an area where they know dogs may be present. They are taught to be alert for potentially dangerous conditions and to respect a dog's territory.

Letter carriers are trained to:

- Not startle a dog.
- Keep their eyes on the dog.
- Never assume a dog won't bite.
- Make some noise or rattle a fence to alert the dog if entering a yard.
- Never attempt to pet or feed a dog.
- Place their foot against an outward swinging door.

If a dog attacks, carriers are also trained to stand their ground and protect their body by placing something between them and the dog—such as their mail satchel—and use dog repellent, if necessary.

Even though postal officials ask customers to control their dogs, unfortunately dog bites still happen, which may result in injuries to carriers and costly medical expenses for dog owners.

Lastly, when a carrier feels unsafe, mail service could be halted—not only for the dog owner, but for the entire neighborhood. When mail service is stopped, mail must be picked up at the Post Office. Service will not be restored until the dog is properly restrained.

The Postal Service generally receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

### Learn More

For further facts, visit [www.usps.com](https://www.usps.com), [www.facts.usps.com](https://www.facts.usps.com) and National Dog Bite Awareness Week—What We Do—About.usps.com.