



Don't Let Your Dog Bite The Hand That Serves You

(NAPS)—Incidents involving dog attacks on Postal Service employees rose to more than 5,800 cases last year—but you can help get those numbers down and keep your own mail delivery up.

What's Being Done

As part of the USPS 2024 National Dog Bite Awareness Campaign, the organization offers crucial information for dog owners on how to be good stewards for safe mail delivery and protect both their pets and their postal delivery person.

"Letter carriers are exposed to potential hazards every day, none more prevalent than a canine encounter. All it takes is one interaction for a letter carrier to possibly suffer an injury," said Leeann Theriault, USPS Manager, Employee Safety and Health Awareness. "The U.S. Postal Service consistently encourages responsible pet ownership. The national dog bite campaign is an effort to promote dog bite awareness to keep our customers, their dogs, and letter carriers safe while delivering the mail."



What Dog Owners Can Do To Help With Safe Mail Delivery

Letter carriers know all dogs can bite, even those perceived as nonaggressive. Dogs are generally protective of their turf and dog owners have an important responsibility to control them to ensure safe mail delivery.

Most people know the approximate time their letter carrier arrives every day. Securing your dog before the carrier approaches your property will minimize any potentially dangerous 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 children not to take mail directly from a letter carrier as the dog may view the carrier as a threat to the child.

Stay Informed,

See the Mail Before It Arrives

By using Informed Delivery, a free USPS service, customers can digitally preview incoming mail and packages from a computer, tablet or mobile device. More than 52 million customers have enrolled since the service was launched in 2017. Sign-up is at informedelivery.usps.com. This service can help dog owners anticipate when their carrier will arrive.

Consequences of a Dog Attack

According to the most recent information available from the Insurance Information Institute, the average cost per insurance claim for a dog bite is \$64,555. When a postal worker suffers an injury, the owner could be responsible for medical bills, lost wages, uniform replacement costs, and pain and suffering for the employee.

Staying Focused on Delivering

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



Linthicum Heights, MD, letter carrier T.J. Jackson shows how mail carriers can use their satchel to protect themselves from aggressive dogs.

respect a dog's territory.

Letter carriers are trained to:

- Make a non-threatening noise or rattle a fence to alert a dog if entering a yard;
- Never startle a dog;
- Keep their eyes on any dog;
- Never assume a dog will not bite;
- Never attempt to pet or feed a dog; and
- Place their foot against an outward swinging door to prevent a dog from escaping.

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

"Even though a customer's dog is friendly to most people, it can always have a bad day," said letter carrier Tara Snyder. "I know, from experience, even when a dog is in the house, customers need to make sure their door is secure so their dog can't push it open and bite the letter carrier."



Letter carriers have tools to alert them to dogs on their routes. A dog alert feature on carriers' handheld scanners can remind them of a possible dog hazard, and dog warning cards must be used during mail sorting to alert carriers to addresses where a dog may interfere with delivery.

Holding the Mail

When a carrier feels unsafe, mail service can be stopped. Until the carrier feels safe enough to restart delivery, the mail will have to be picked up at the dog owner's local Post Office. If a carrier feels a house or neighborhood is unsafe to deliver the mail and there is no way to inform residents their mail service has been suspended, the residents would have to contact the supervisor at their local Post Office for more information. The residents would also have to pick up their mail at the Post Office until it is safe to resume delivery. If a dangerous dog issue is not resolved, owners can be required to rent a Post Office box to receive mail.

Post Office Facts

The United States Postal Service is an independent federal establishment, mandated to be self-financing and to serve every American community through the affordable, reliable and secure delivery of mail and packages to 167 million addresses six and often seven days a week.

Learn More

For more information about the Postal Service, visit usps.com/dogbiteawareness.