



# Dog Bite Tips

Preventing, Defending and Paying off Medical Bills.

Public Figure, Attorney and Professor Michael Ehline, delves into the practical and legal aspects of preventing and dealing with attacks by dogs in California from the dog owner's and victim's perspective.

# Dog Bite Tips by Attorney Michael Ehline

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Dog bite prevention is important for both canine owners and the general public. First of all, with few exceptions, the dog, or person in charge of the dog is strictly liable to victims for any injuries caused by the animal.

Next, children and even adults can suffer lifetime suffering and disfigurement, and even death. The cost of dog bites is far worse to society than gun violence, for example. By downloading ELFPI's free safety handout you can arm yourself with the important information you need to survive a dog attack as an owner, scratched, mauled or punctured person.

Feel free to copy and distribute this piece, so long as you keep my copyright intact. /s/ Attorney Michael Ehline.

*"By downloading ELFPI's free safety handout you can arm yourself with the important information you need to survive a dog attack as an owner, scratched, mauled or punctured person."*

— Michael Ehline (*Dog Bite Tips*)

Dogs may carry several diseases in addition to the threat of their strong jaws and teeth ripping flesh. Because of this, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) created a nationwide database of people who went to the hospital after a dog bite.

Unfortunately, since the CDC statistics only tracked people who were bitten and then **went to the hospital**, they are by no means accurate. Because the CDC was primarily looking at diseases such as rabies transmission after a bite, it did not track all cases where someone did not seek medical treatment, even though they were bitten.

Also, the CDC's study period is not recent. Besides that, the CDC has not explained if this data was from all hospitals in every state, or just a sampling. Compounding matters regarding data collection, whole areas of San Bernardino County, for example, have no publicly available records of dog attacks in their respective service areas.

Wikipedia actually uses news reports as its source of information on dog bites. Obviously, journalists are not reporting every bite incident in that County. So until a public records request is done for each locale, the official recorded stats will be off. Here are some excerpts from the CDC stats.

## Dog Bite Statistics

1. At least 25 people die annually from U.S. dog attacks.
2. All dog breeds are capable of biting. **(But some non CDC studies show that certain dog breeds can be more dangerous than others.)**
3. Approximately 4.7 million people are bitten by dogs each year (around 800,000 persons seek medical care.)

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"Dog owners must first and foremost understand they are legally liable for everything their dog does against another person . . ."

— Michael Ehline (Dog Bite Tips)

## Preventing Dog Attacks – Canine Owner

Dog owners must first and foremost understand they are legally liable for everything their dog does against another person, unless there is a legal exception that applies. Because of this, dog owners must take heed.

So they must take active steps to protect potential victims to prevent dog bites. State, city and county employees are at particular risk for being bitten by a dog. For example, a postal worker could be assaulted by a loose dog while the owner is away at work.

But the dog's owner is still legally liable because the dog should not have been allowed to escape. Children are bitten in the face all the time. These are just some of the potential bite victims.



First, we need to understand that an "owner" or "controller" is the one responsible. So if you leave your dog with a dog sitter and it bites someone, you and the dog sitter are legally liable. Of course the dog's legal owner can claim the sitter is liable and seek contribution or indemnification from the sitter.

But this does not mean the owner is off the hook. Even a landlord can be liable for allowing a known dangerous dog to stay on a tenant's rented or leased land. The landowner is not relieved of his/her duty to make the property reasonably safe for passersby and visitors.

So in this sense, many people are treated as *dog owners* under the law for purposes of establishing a legal duty to make a premises, or a dog *safe*, and to pay for the injured person's damages.

Plus, there can be severe criminal penalties in addition to the tort liabilities discussed above.

*If curled into a ball, protect your fingers by making fists around your ears, face, neck and head with your arms. Determine how extensive the risks are, because you may have to stand and fight to avoid being murdered.*

Postal workers, meter maids and gas meter checkers are at particular risk for being bitten by dogs due to their closeness to dog walkers, homes and the dogs that protect them.

Small children are at a serious risk of death from even a smaller dogs such as a Poodle or Chihuahua. These tips should help reduce the risks of an attack and help you fight one off that is already taking place.

- Michael Ehline, Esq.

## 10 Steps Dog Owners Should Take.

1. Invest in time to **professionally train your dog** as a pup when possible. Dogs should respond to basic commands like heel, stay, sit, roll over, fetch, etc. Dogs should always drop toys and release their bite on command. **Socialized dogs have a reduced chance of biting out of fear.**
2. Muzzle your animal when walking on leash in heavily trafficked areas and even in your own front yard.
3. Block any holes or openings in homes and fencing to prevent a small child from extending a limb inside. Electric shock collars stop dogs, not intruders or kids.
4. Spay or Neuter your dog to prevent it from running off to mate.
5. Post warning signs around your home to *beware of dog*.
6. Keep your dog(s) away from children when you have guests.
7. Consider investing in a cage or kennel. (in order to protect government workers and guests)
8. Stay up to date on important vaccinations so as to prevent diseases.
9. Remain cautious when introducing your dog to any unknown people or places. Remain alert and ready to respond if your dog displays signs of uneasiness, or exhibits any abnormal behavior. (growling, raised hair, showing teeth, etc.)
10. Play gently and never encourage aggression or roughness.



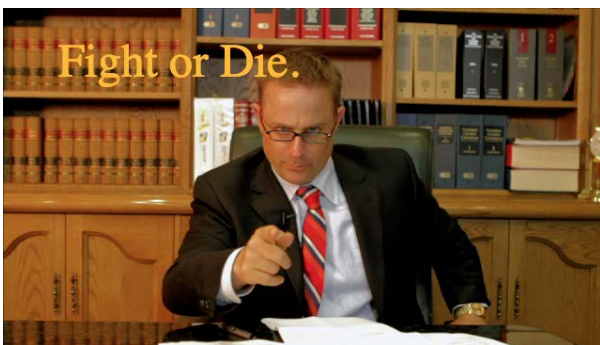
## 13 Steps in Preventing Dog Attacks - Bite Victim

1. Never leave infants or kids around any dog without adult supervision.
2. Carry pepper spray and be ready to use it.
3. Never raise your voice, or run away with your back turned to a dog. (don't startle the animal)
4. Stand perfectly still when approached by an unknown dog.
5. Never look a dog directly in the eyes, as it could be perceived as a challenge.
6. Immediately report stray dogs, or aggressive dogs to local animal control, or the humane society. Make sure to report any holes that dogs are digging in order to try and escape their yards. Children are at special risk for an ambush.
7. If petting a dog, start underneath the chin. Patting the top of the dog's head is assumed to be an act of dominance, which can alert a dog.
8. Never pet a dog unless it can sniff you and observe you as non aggressive. Go ahead and extend the back side of your hand to the dog's snout. Avoiding eye contact, show the dog you are docile and let it make the first initial warming.
9. Never try to break up a dog fight. But if no choice, use pepper spray, a water hose, or toss a towel or blanket on their heads to redirect the dog's focus.
10. Never rough house or tease any dog.
11. Beware of older dogs. They could be hearing impaired, arthritic, blind and sensitive to any contact. They could claw or nip out of the blue.
12. Don't run past dogs, especially when they are in a pack. Runners, skaters and bikers can easily trigger the dog's instinct to chase and assault.
13. Avoid dogs that are chained, left in cars or cornered. They may feel vulnerable, causing them to attack out of fear.

## 4 Steps For Fighting Off a Dog Attack

As noted, any sudden, startling, or unpredictable movement can trigger a dog. County and city employees often work in rural areas. So they are always at risk for an attack. Also, since children are notorious for this type of behavior, keep them away from dogs. But what happens when an attack is already in progress? What do you do?

1. **Get to higher ground.** Climb a tree, get on top of a car, hop a fence. Continue to stand still and avoid eye contact. (Worry about your life and paying for any property damage later.)
2. **Spray the dog with mace or pain inducing Capsaicin.** When dealing with a deadly animal, this is a proven method to gain space and distance from the threat.
3. **Play dead.** If you have no weapon such as a tree branch, metal pole, firearm, bear spray, then you can try and play dead. So cover your face and curl up into a ball.
4. **FIGHT!** Sometimes you have no choice but to fight. So try and gouge out its eyes, or gain control by grabbing its neck and **CHOKER!** Sometimes you may have to risk lacerations and ram your arm down the dog's throat, or grab its legs and try and dislocate or break them. Find a rock, brick, or even a handful of sand to disorient the animal. You may have to go full UFC old rules. You must take out the threat!



If curled into a ball, protect your fingers by making fists around your ears, face, neck and head. Determine how extensive the risks are, because you may have to stand and fight to avoid being murdered.

A barrier between you and the dog is optimal. Those teeth and that jaw can lock down on your forearm and lock you in place. So breaking that hold, or avoiding it is key. Concealed firearms carriers are at the least risk during an attack. A dead dog is not a threat.

### Were You Attacked By a Dog and Need \$\$?

At the end of the day, if you were bitten or chomped by a rabid dog, you will need money for your hospital stay and things like facial reconstructive surgery. ELFPI can assist you in holding the dog owners and controllers legally liable under California law. We don't charge for a case evaluation, so there is no risk to you in seeking legal help. If you need to speak to a serious injury lawyer, **call us now at (888) 400-9721.**

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