

FEBRUARY *Safety Talk*

Topic: Dog Safety

Workers may encounter dogs all over the community. It is important to recognize potential danger and stay SAFE!

The most important thing to remember is that dogs are animals. We have adopted dogs and have changed them (successfully or not) to live according to human social standards. Some dogs do well in this environment and some dogs don't. You must always exercise caution when encountering dogs – always remember that they are not your pets, they are animals and their behavior may be unpredictable.



Things to remember when encountering a dog:

- Dogs are protective and territorial
- Stay calm – animals react to stress; move slowly and deliberately
- Don't turn your back on the dog
- Always keep your eyes on the dog
- Have a plan – what do you do if it attacks? Where is your escape route?
- Keep your face away from the dog's head
- Even if the dog is tied up, don't trust that it can't get loose
- An umbrella can be a good defense against an attacking dog – especially those that pop open with the press of a button
- Never assume that a particular breed won't attack or that one will attack

A dog's posture changes prior to attack:

- Legs and body appear stiff
- Ears are pinned back close to its head
- Dog might lower its head and curl lips back to reveal teeth
- Eyes are either narrow and fixed intently or wide and rounded with the eye whites showing
- Often raises the hair, or hackles, along back and over shoulders
- Tail is straight up rather than relaxed

Six Warning Signs of a possible attack:

1. Aggressive barking at you – very loud, very direct, not just making noise
2. High tail – may include fast wagging or not
3. Stiff body – very square body, may include raised hackles
4. Baring teeth
5. Growling
6. Hard eyes – may be bulging, lots of white, staring through you



Your own personal safety is very important – never assume anything when you are dealing with dogs. Use your instinct. Don't enter premises with dangerous dogs, and always plan an escape route if you unexpectedly encounter an attacking dog.