

# Guide to Avoiding Interactions with Dogs and Other Pets

According to the Centers for Disease Control, dog bites account for more than 800,000 visits to the doctor each year – with almost half of those resulting in emergency room visits.

## General safety tips:

- Prior to arriving at a location where a dog or pet could be present, call ahead to request all animals are secured
  - Dogs should be secured behind a closed door where they are unable to see the interaction between the owner and guest
- Upon arrival, look for unsecured dogs/animals or signs one may be present (toys, water bowls, patchy grass, etc.)
- If a dog/animal is spotted and unable to be secured, do not exit your vehicle, contact your supervisor
- Despite familiarity with the pet, always proceed with the utmost caution and require pets be safely secured

## Safety with dogs:

- When confronted by a dog, remain calm do not run or scream
- Be aware the dog's location
- Avoid direct eye contact
- Do not disturb a dog that is sleeping, eating or caring for their young
- Do not approach an unfamiliar dog
- Do not hold your hand out in front of a dog to smell you
- No matter how friendly a dog may appear, do not pet the animal
- If necessary, use an object such as a briefcase, jacket, etc. as a barrier between you and an aggressive dog
- If knocked over by a dog, roll into a ball, lie still and cover your face
- If you are bitten by a dog and the dog doesn't release the bite, don't pull away, feed the bite
  - Feeding the bite means pushing further into the dog's mouth which will often trigger a gag reflex and cause the dog to release

Always report animal bites or scratches – no matter how minor – to your supervisor. Ensure bites and scratches are properly addressed and cared for.

## Reference

1 – (2003, July). Centers for Disease Control. *Nonfatal Dog Bite-Related Injuries Treated in Hospital Emergency Departments (archived)*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5226a1.htm>