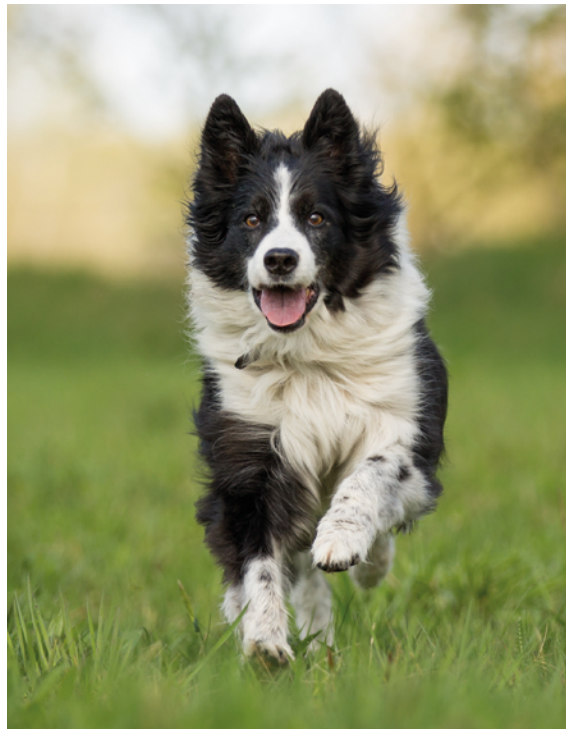


Responsible pet ownership why dogs bite

Everyone has the right to feel safe in the community. It's the responsibility of pet owners to ensure others are protected and public spaces are kept safe for everyone to enjoy.



Get the facts on why dogs bite

Why do dogs bite or show signs of aggression?

Dogs may display aggression for many reasons such as when they feel threatened, anxious, are teased, or when sick or in pain. Dogs that aren't socialised from 8 to 18 weeks may become aggressive or bite due to fear, stress or poor behaviour habits. Good socialisation includes meeting new people and other dogs and animals in this critical learning period.

Preventative measures

When you get a new puppy, consider enrolling into a puppy preschool that focuses on socialisation and allows your puppy to meet new people, children and puppies in a positive, safe and controlled manner.

Most veterinary clinics run these classes, so call your local vet to book. Your local vet can also recommend a dog trainer or behaviourist for more training once your puppy graduates from puppy preschool.

The impact of dog attacks

Being bitten or attacked by a dog can produce serious physical, psychological and emotional effects. Not only for the dog that is attacked but also for the dog's owner.

Even if a person doesn't get bitten, the threat of the attack can cause lasting trauma. If you were injured you might feel frightened or shocked, especially if the dog was familiar or the situation seemed safe.



Penalties

Dog owners are legally responsible for attacks by their dogs on a person or other animals. If you're attacked by a dog, you should take steps to get contact details for the attacking dog's owners to formally pursue the issue.

We strongly encourage reporting dog attacks. City of Sydney rangers will follow up all complaints and reports within 24 hours.

A dog that has attacked may be declared a nuisance, menacing or dangerous dog depending on the circumstances of the attack.

- The dog can be **declared a dangerous dog** if without provocation it has attacked or killed a person or animal, or it has repeatedly threatened to attack or chased a person or animal.
- The dog can be **declared a menacing dog** if it has displayed unreasonable aggression towards a person or animals, or without provocation it has attacked a person or animal but without causing serious injury or death.
- The dog can be **declared a nuisance dog** if it repeatedly runs at or chases any person or animal.

If a dog is declared a dangerous, menacing or nuisance dog, the owner must comply with the special conditions for keeping the dog under the *Companion Animals Act 1998*.

In some circumstances NSW Police and City of Sydney rangers are empowered to seize dogs declared dangerous or menacing under the *Companion Animals Act 1988*.



Pets in the city

The City of Sydney understands the importance of the human and companion animal bond. We're committed to supporting responsible pet ownership to benefit the entire community.

Responsible dog owners

- Always supervise children around dogs. Dog play can become rough and sometimes result in a bite. Constantly monitor children and dogs and never leave babies or children unsupervised around dogs.
- Teach children to stay away from dogs when they're eating, sleeping, guarding or recovering from an illness or accident. Dogs may become aggressive when disturbed in certain situations.
- Always ensure your fencing or dog enclosure is secure. Keeping your dog confined will greatly reduce the risk to others in the community.
- Desexing your dog may help. Desexed dogs can be far less aggressive and are less likely to stray. Always use a leash when walking your dog in public and treat off-leash areas with the same respect as other public places. If you're going to let your dog run in an off-leash area, always make sure you're watching your pet to control their behaviour.



Contact us

If you need more information about this or any other responsible pet ownership issue, call us on **02 9265 9333**.

Information is also available on our website at cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/pet-animal-services