



Help! I've been bitten by a dog!

Dog bites are an unfortunate occurrence. On most working days somewhere across the UK, a CWU member will be bitten by a dog whilst performing his/her working duty.

Correct treatment of bites that occurred and taking steps to prevent more bites from occurring is really important. This advice sheet is intended to help you our CWU members to learn what to do if you have been bitten by a dog.

1. Get to a place of safety, Seek medical attention if required.

- If you are seriously hurt and require emergency urgent assistance, please call 999.
- All wounds may become infected and require appropriate cleaning:
 - Clean the wound immediately by running warm tap water over it for a couple of minutes – it's a good idea to do this even if the skin doesn't appear to be broken.
Remove any objects from the bite, such as teeth, hair or dirt
 - encourage the wound to bleed slightly by gently squeezing it, unless it's already bleeding freely
 - if the wound is bleeding heavily, put a clean pad or sterile dressing over it and apply pressure
 - dry the wound and cover it with a clean dressing or plaster
 - take painkillers if you're in pain, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen –
- If you have an injury to the face, hand or neck, please go to the Accident and Emergency department.
- If your injury is to a different part of the body than the face, head or neck, and is multiple or deep wounds, please go to the Accident and Emergency Department.
- If you have received a simple puncture wound or bruising to anywhere other than the face, hands or neck, please attend your GP or Walk-in-Centre for medical treatment **and further advice on whether you should attend hospital**
- If your tetanus vaccination is out of date you may require another.
- There is an extremely low risk of Rabies in the UK.
- Anything other than a minor wound is likely to require antibiotic treatment, thus seeking medical attention is important. **Please be aware dog bites are a high risk for infection.**

Even if you or the bite victim feels ok immediately after being bitten, be watchful as a bite may have an impact later. Be careful if you have been bitten on duty and you are advised or

requested to carry on completing your work tasks, or you yourself wish to carry on completing your work tasks, as you may be in a physical and psychological shock.

Physical shock is *“a medical emergency in which the organs and tissues of the body are not receiving an adequate flow of blood. This deprives the organs and tissues of oxygen (carried in the blood) and allows the build-up of waste products. Shock can result in serious damage or even death (Source; Farlex dictionary)”*

- Extreme cases of shock may result in death. However, more often the two greatest risks to a casualty are;
 1. Fainting and then doing themselves more damage in the fall.
 2. Vomiting, this in turn may block the airway. This, like any obstruction to the airway must be cleared as a matter of urgency.
 - If you're in shock or suspect that one of your colleagues is in shock, please direct them to the first aider who can provide treatment.
 - Bite victims as well as witnesses may also be in psychological shock.

You do not need a medical injury to suffer from shock; often a witness to an incident will be suffering as well as the casualty.

- If you are suffering psychologically from the experience of being bitten by a dog, **speak to your union representative and manager**. Speak to your GP who can refer you for help. It may also help to talk to the Samaritans by calling 116 123 from any phone.

2. Report the bite.

- If the dog is loose and a danger to others, call 999 for emergency assistance.
- Otherwise report the incident to the Police by calling 101.
- Report to RM or B.T manager at the earliest opportunity
- Contact your CWU ASR or Senior CWU safety rep and make them aware of the bite.
- Take photographic evidence of the bite immediately and afterwards over time as it heals. **Check the quality of the photos and take many, this** may help any potential investigation, write down details of exactly what

happened: WHO, WHERE, WHEN, WHAT. Do you know where they live or where they might be found walking their dog?

WHY DO I NEED TO REPORT IT?

- It is standard business practice that ALL dog bites are reported and recorded and control measures will need to be actioned.
- It is an offence for a dog to bite or make a person feel threatened (it does not have to bite) in both a PUBLIC or PRIVATE place, including inside the dog's home.
- Police will investigate the incident and provide appropriate guidance to the owner about what to do next to prevent another bite from occurring.
- The dog may go on to bite somebody else, and you could have prevented this if you had reported it. The dog may live with small children and the risk to them must be investigated in terms of safeguarding.
- The dog may have bitten somebody else in the past, and all progressive evidence gives more power to do something about it.
- Reporting a bite does not mean that the police will destroy the dog- their role is to assess the risk that posed by the dog to the local area and suggest relevant measures that can reduce this risk.



Once you are fully fit for work and due to resume, please try to remember the 5 step AVOID approach if confronted by any dog whilst working.

Avoid – AVOID interacting with ALL DOGS – a dog only becomes 'dangerous' AFTER it has attacked someone. Do not pet any dog, do not give treats. It creates unnecessary risks.

Value yourself– IT REALLY COULD HAPPEN TO YOU!! –_On average 8 CWU members are bitten every day whilst completing work related tasks. Most people are bitten by a dog they already know or are aware of. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that 'dogs like me' or 'I will be okay'. Your health and wellbeing is more important than any need to come into contact with any dog.

Observe – Check your known hazard information and stay observant and look for any signs that a dog is present or loose on a property. Make a noise if necessary before you risk entry.

Remember that there may be new or visiting dogs so do not become complacent. Know what your risk control measures are and stay vigilant and alert.

Inform – Inform others about the potential risk to avoid them being bitten. Do not ignore it. Report all relevant information, including new dogs to staff, managers and police if need be. **It is necessary to keep everyone safe.**

Defend – If required, defend against a dog bite by using your work equipment, to create a barrier between you and the dog. Most bites occur on the limbs, so wearing long trousers and sleeves can help protect from serious injury. **If you are bitten, SHOUT for help. If the dog holds on, STABILISE the area to avoid tearing. Use a wall or fence to support yourself to stay upright and get behind for protection once possible.**



Understanding dog behaviour

YOUR DOG'S BODY LANGUAGE CAN HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND HOW THEY ARE FEELING

A happy dog

A dog who is happy will be relaxed.

1

Dog has a relaxed body posture, smooth hair, mouth open and relaxed, ears in natural position, wagging tail, eyes normal shape.



2

Dog is inviting play with bottom raised, smooth hair, high wagging tail, eyes normal shape, ears in natural position, may be barking excitedly.



3

Dog's weight is distributed across all four paws, smooth hair, tail wagging, face is interested and alert, relaxed and mouth open.



A worried dog

These dogs are telling you that they are uncomfortable and don't want you to go near them.

1

Dog is standing but body posture and head position is low. Tail is tucked under, ears are back and dog is yawning.



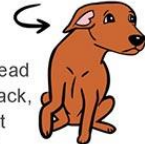
2

Dog is lying down and avoiding eye contact or turning head away from you and lip licking and ears are back.



3

Dog is sitting with head lowered, ears are back, tail tucked away, not making eye contact, yawning, raising a front paw.



An angry or very unhappy dog

These dogs are not happy and want you to stay away or go away.

1

Dog is standing with a stiffened body posture, weight forward, ears are up, hair raised, eyes looking at you – pupils dark and enlarged, tail is up and stiff, wrinkled nose.



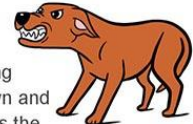
2

Dog is lying down cowering, ears flat, teeth showing, tail down between legs.



3

Dog is standing with body down and weight towards the back, head is tilted upwards, mouth tight, lips drawn back, teeth exposed, eyes staring, ears back and down, snarling.



Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Wilberforce Way, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 9RS
www.rspca.org.uk facebook.com/RSPCA twitter.com/RSPCA_official

The RSPCA helps animals in England and Wales. Registered charity no: 219099. The RSPCA only exists with the support of public donations.
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Other useful educational resources on dog communication and body language:

- An interactive app - <http://www.dogdecoder.com/>
- Blue Cross website - <https://www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-advice/be-safe-dogs>



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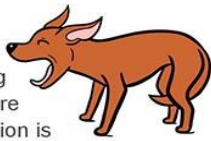


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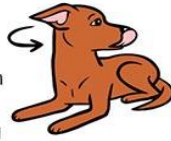
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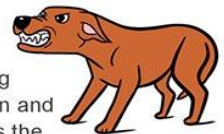
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