

# Dog awareness and confrontation risk as we re-instate Signature Capture and embed Capture Photo on Delivery.



Intended Audience: For Delivery OPGs via DOMs and WPCs

Mar 22

## Overview

The safety of our colleagues is paramount. We have worked hand-in-hand with the CWU through our Dog Awareness Week campaigns to minimise the risk to colleagues from dog attacks and to develop the right tools and procedures to keep our colleagues safe from harm by dangerous dogs.

As we move out of the pandemic into a new era of 'living with Covid,' as a business we are re-instating Signature Capture between Monday 4 April - Sunday 1 May 2022 after a temporary suspension of the service since March 2020. At the same time, we are embedding our Capture Photo on Delivery feature. As we do this, we are consulting with the CWU nationally and locally managers should involve and work with local CWU Reps. Royal Mail and CWU are in agreement that at this time of change and transition back to 'business as usual', it is crucial that delivery and collections staff are reminded of the correct procedures around dog hazards.

## The AVOID message: a reminder

The AVOID message, outlined below, is crucial. **Please share and discuss this information and use it to help you and your colleagues to 'AVOID Dogs and Stay Safe'**

- **Avoid:** interacting with any dogs. 72% of our dog attacks happen at a customer's door or in their garden so take no risks and never put your fingers through a letterbox. Never accept a dog owner's assurances – always ask owners to restrain their dogs – put them in a secure place and step away
- **Value yourself:** It could happen to you – don't think it can't!
- **Observe:** Check your Walk Log and mark your frame with yellow dots
- **Inform:** Report all new dogs to your manager.
- **Defend:** Use your delivery equipment (pouch or trolley) to form a barrier and defend yourself if necessary.

## Dog attack risk – special reminders relating to the re-instatement of Signature Photo and Capture Photo on Delivery

More than 72%% of dog attacks take place on the doorstep and in the garden. Many households acquired a pet during lockdown. Colleagues should be alert to a possible increase in the number of dogs they encounter on their rounds.

While collecting signatures at the door you are at a higher risk of dog attack. When delivering parcels or signed for items with a known dog:

- As the customer approaches the door, announce who you are and ask them to put their dog away before they open the door
- Step back to create a safe space between you and the door
- Do not pass the item into the customer/dogs' space
- If the customer needs to leave the doorstep to fetch ID or another item, politely ask them to close the door/secure the dog

### Important Reminder:

Don't put your fingers through the letterbox when delivering standard mail items. More than 1,000 postmen and women have suffered serious hand injuries in the past five years, including fingers and part - fingers bitten off through the letterbox. Exercise caution: dogs will not always bark and can be completely silent before attacking the mail and your hand when it comes through the letterbox - so you may not know a dog is there.

## Actions and further assistance

**Managers and Workplace Coaches: Please ensure that colleagues are briefed on the importance of using AVOID.** Long-standing colleagues will need a refresher on AVOID and a reminder of the importance of dog awareness. Colleagues who have joined the business within the past two years (since the temporary suspension of Photo Capture) may need a comprehensive briefing on dog awareness, and an explanation of the importance of AVOID. Discussions about dog awareness among colleagues – old and new – that involve sharing where they encounter animals on their walk and what methods they use to keep safe can be powerful and helpful for everyone. Please encourage these conversations.

### **Risk of Confrontation**

- The guidance in 'Walk Safe' (now offsite risk assessment) should be communicated to the delivery workforce and adhered to in order to reduce the risk of confrontation
- If OPGs feel threatened or find themselves in conflict with a customer then **they should remove themselves from the threat and leave the item if necessary and leave the premises**
- It is important that, if at any stage a frontline employee feels threatened or in danger, **they should walk away from the doorstep (leaving the item if unable to take the item back) and inform the Security Helpdesk, their manager and the police (if required).**

For Further Information and Guidance on dealing with the hazard of Dogs please visit this page:

[Dog Attack Library \(royalmailgroup.com\)](http://royalmailgroup.com/DogAttackLibrary)