



National Police Chiefs' Council, Royal Mail Group and Communication Workers Union

Guide to effective crime or incident reporting of Dog Attacks on Postal Workers

As in many areas of society, dog attacks are a significant hazard. As Royal Mail's postmen and women deliver six days a week to c. 29 million homes and businesses across the UK, the issue of dog attacks is a significant concern.

We are only too aware of the life changing physical and psychological injuries that can be sustained from dog attack. The number of dog attacks remains unacceptably high with around 3000 attacks on Postal Workers (Royal Mail and Parcelforce) taking place each year, with some leading to permanent, life changing, disabling injuries. Nobody should have to endure this and postmen and women along with people who work in the community, should not be at increased risk of such attacks simply because of the job they do, and the service they provide.

Following a successful campaign, Section 3 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, allowing a dog to be dangerously out of control, was extended to cover both public and private places. This document has been drafted by the aforementioned organisations to assist both Postal Workers and the Police to deal with such incidents in a proportionate and expeditious manner, allowing early preventative measures without unnecessary prosecution, avoiding future more serious incidents, whilst holding serious or repeat offenders to account.

The overriding purpose within this document however, is to give Postal Workers the trust and confidence in both the Police and Royal Mail, that any incidents shall be taken seriously, individual's concerns listened to, and that action taken shall be expeditious, to ensure the safety of themselves, and all members of the communities we serve.

A crime or incident in progress;

1. The collation of information that may assist in the reporting of such an incident shall always come second to your personal safety and that of others. If you are subject of an incident involving a dog dangerously out of control, remove yourself to a place of safety at the earliest opportunity, and call the police, or request they be called **immediately, and request an ambulance if required.**
2. Tell the Police that this is a **crime or incident in progress.** This applies if the offender is still in the area and you are still at risk.
3. Tell the Police that you are a Postal Worker, and that you have been attacked by a dog whilst performing your duties delivering mail.
4. Inform the Police that you are reporting this in line with **the Service Level Agreement between the National Policing Chief's Council and Royal Mail.**
5. Answer any questions you may be asked over the phone with as much detail as possible, and remain in a location where you have agreed to meet with the Police.
6. Report the incident to your manager at Royal Mail so he/she can ensure it is recorded as an accident and can provide you with any support you need.
7. Should you need to leave the scene for medical treatment, arrange a time and location for the Police to speak with you, be it your home, hospital, or a police station. If an appointment cannot be confirmed, request a timescale in which you shall receive a visit from the Police.
8. Where possible, obtain **photographic/video evidence** of the incident via a mobile device. Be mindful that the device holding such images may have to be seized by Police for a short time so that the images/footage can be captured and used in evidence.
9. **Ask for photographs to be taken of any injuries, both before and after medical treatment.**

Always ensure the Police know it is an incident or crime in progress, or that the offender is still in the area. You will get a priority response.

A crime or incident that isn't in progress;

1. Report the incident to your manager at Royal Mail so he/she can ensure it is recorded as an accident and can provide you with any support you need.
2. Explain to the Police what happened, and emphasise both that you are a Postal Worker and was carrying out your duties, and that you are reporting the incident in line with the **Service Level Agreement between the National Police Chief's Council, Royal Mail and the Communication Workers Union**.
3. Arrange a time and location for the Police to speak with you in person, be it your home, hospital, or a Police station. If an appointment cannot be confirmed, request a timescale in which you shall receive a visit from the Police.
4. Where possible, **obtain photographic/video evidence** of the incident via a mobile device. Be mindful that the device holding such images may have to be seized by Police for a short time so that the images/footage can be captured and used in evidence.
5. **Ask for photographs to be taken of any injuries, both before and after medical treatment.**

Actions by Royal Mail Management

Royal Mail Managers are responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of their staff. They will ensure that:

- (i) the employee has access to medical treatment where required
- (ii) all dog attacks are reported to the police (if they have not already been reported)
- (iii) dog attacks are investigated and reported internally according to Royal Mail standards

Royal Mail operational managers are supported in this by Field Safety, Health & Environment (SHE) Advisors.

Royal Mail will also consult and proactively involve the appropriate CWU Area Health and Safety Representative and CWU HQ Health and Safety Dept.

Serious Dog Attacks on Royal Mail Staff

Guidance for investigating officers is already in place where there is an extremely serious or fatal dog attack. Should a serious attack take place on a member of Royal Mail staff the Royal Mail Group Security (RMGS) Team will assign an Investigation Manager to act as a liaison point between the Police Officer dealing and Royal Mail, the aim being to provide support to the investigation where needed, to facilitate communication channels and to ensure that due consideration is given to the victim, other Royal Mail staff, and the organization, under these exceptional circumstances.

In such cases Police are asked to contact the RMGS liaison before any decision is made to take no further action or where consideration is being given to what may be perceived to be a low-level resolution option, e.g. Police Caution or Community Protection Notice.

Royal Mail may still consider a private prosecution in such instances.

Police Response

The Police may respond in different ways depending on the circumstances of your incident or crime. Whatever those circumstances are there are things you can ask for which will help you and the Police, or things that you can ask for that will support you;

- 1) All police forces have, or have access to, a Dog Legislation Officer, referred to in the police as a “**DLO**”. These officers are experts in the legislation around dogs and have received additional training. They will support the officer that deals with the majority of incidents with their specialist knowledge. **If it is a serious or repeat incident ask the Police that attend or the person that records your incident on the phone, for the name of the DLO that covers your area, or you can specifically ask that they be notified of your incident.** Lower level incidents may not be referred to a DLO.
- 2) Police deal with a broad spectrum of incidents on a daily basis, and the person taking your call may not have a detailed knowledge of Dangerous Dogs legislation. If they inform you that it is not a Police matter, **be firm but polite**, and inform them that the legislation has changed so that **all** incidents of a dog dangerously out of control are a criminal offence, irrespective of where they occur.
- 3) Whilst the incident is still fresh in your memory, take the time to write down points that you remember about the incident. If you cannot write, ask a friend, colleague or CWU Representative to assist. These points may be very useful to

the investigating officer, and may be the difference between an unsuccessful and successful prosecution.

- 4) Points that would be useful are;
 - Exactly where the incident took place?
 - What happened, including where did you first see the dog/s, where did it come from?
 - Name and address of dog owner if known.
 - A description of the dog; colour/s, breed or type of dog/s.
 - Was anyone with the dog/s? Did they speak or call out to the dog/s? What did they say?
 - Did they help, intervene, or encourage the dog/s?
 - Were there any witnesses? Names or descriptions.

- 5) Always ask for the
 - name and contact number of the officer in charge or “OIC” of your crime or incident.
 - crime or incident reference number.

- 6) There is a huge network of support that can be accessed through the Police and Royal Mail. These support networks range from simple Victim Support to specialist charities that give expert advice to victims of crime, or people that may be nervous of dogs for a variety of reasons. Ask the OIC and/or your Unit Manager to be put in touch with appropriate support networks.

- 7) Make sure you tell the Police of the full impact of the crime or incident in terms of the level of the injury received or the ongoing threat from the dog owner/handler.

- 8) If someone is arrested or summoned for your crime or incident then the OIC should take a “Victim Impact Statement” from you. This will show to a court the full and far reaching impact that the incident or crime has had upon you and your family.



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