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To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

Dog Awareness Week 3 – 9 July 2023 – Don't Put Your Fingers Through the Letterbox Warning - Posting Peg Saves Liverpool Postman's Fingers as Mail is Attacked By a Dangerous Dog (See Poster Images) – Don't Let It Happen To You!

1000 Postmen and Women have had a finger or part finger bitten off or severely injured in dog bites through the letterbox in the last 5 years across the UK.

The key message to all delivery Postmen and Women CWU members this Dog Awareness Week 3 – 9 July 2023 is follow the 'Golden Rule' and **'Never Put Your Fingers Through the Letterbox'**.

Use a 'Posting Peg' whenever you can, especially where there's a dog at the address. The 'Posting Peg' isn't suitable or practical to use on every occasion due to the type of mail piece being delivered or with certain types of letterbox. However, whatever the circumstances, deliveries should never be made by pushing your fingers through the letterbox aperture so that they protrude through the other side, on the inside of the property and thereby provide a 'sitting target' for a dog waiting to pounce on the inside.

Remember that not all dogs 'kick up a racket' and bark loudly, giving warning signs that they are there. Dogs are intelligent animals and on many occasions when postmen and women have had fingers bitten off, the dog sat in complete silence, obviously not wanting to frighten away their 'prey' or 'target'. Then as soon as the postman or postwoman's fingers came through the letterbox the dog launched a ferocious attack biting into or clean through the fingers or hand.

In a recent case in Liverpool a postman did the right thing by using a posting peg and as he did so a dog inside attacked and bit clean through the tough hard plastic posting peg (see attached poster photo).

On this occasion the trusty posting peg certainly saved the hand and fingers of a CWU member postman from a dangerous dog.

The posting peg therefore can, and does, prevent serious injury, saving postmen and postwomen from being bitten by a dangerous dog whilst delivering mail through an unguarded letter box.

If there's a problem with a particular delivery point's letterbox in relation to getting the mail through the aperture due to brushes, draft excluders, flaps, security hoods etc., then rather than chance getting bitten, take the mail back and report it to the manager. Take no risks! Always adopt a 'Safety First' and 'Zero Tolerance' approach when it comes to defending yourself against dog hazards!

Dog bites cause extensive pain and suffering to victims. Hospital treatment is required, sometimes involving extensive surgery, stiches, skin grafts, blood tests, amputations, precautionary Tetanus injections and courses of antibiotics to deal with a number of dangerous infections such as Rabies, Sepsis and Pasteurella. Apart from physical injury, some suffer mental ill-health caused by the terrifying experience and the depressive aftermath of the experience, including extensive treatment sometimes for life changing injuries.

Because this is a broken posting peg and not a finger bitten off, it demonstrates how robust this simple, cheap, easy to use dog control measures can be when used properly. In this case in Liverpool, this posting peg has saved a postman's fingers, saved Royal Mail money and saved the dog owner a potential criminal prosecution and conviction plus a civil action and paying out personal injury compensation to the dog bite victim. Even the smallest of injuries have to be treated appropriately as there have been a number of cases in which dog bite victims didn't seek medical treatment and they subsequently died of blood poisoning and bacteriological infection in a matter of days after being bitten. It's therefore imperative that dog attack victims never delay in getting immediate medical attention from the NHS.

All postal delivery staff are encouraged to carry a posting peg with them and use the simple item when delivering mail where appropriate. You never know what is behind that letter box!

It can lead to the attached!

Attachment:

Poster - Posting Peg Bitten by Dangerous Dog Highlights Dangers to Postal Delivery Workers So Don't Put Your Fingers Through the Letterbox!

[Acknowledgment: Photos and story - Jamie McGovern ASR, Mark Evans D/ASR CWU Greater Mersey Amal Branch]

Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer