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**From:** lissa [lissa@lissa.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 14, 2005 7:45 PM  
**To:** 'MAGDRL'  
**Subject:** [ExtMAGDRL] DOE Topic #12: If your dog bites someone

Hi All,

Sorry this is late but it's been a busy weekend (and the AKC Agility Nationals was on TV last night!) MAGDRL has a wealth of information on how to prevent dog bites, but I came across information on several web sites about what to do if the worst happens. It's worth sharing as Dog Owner Education Topic #12.

The numbers are staggering!!! According to Humane Society of the United States, between 2 and 3 million dog bites are reported every year, and children make up more than 65% of those victims. In an average year, a dozen people die from dog bites. And AutoInsuranceCenter.com reports that dog bites cost society over \$1 billion a year, with insurers paying out about \$250 million in liability claims. So, if your own dog bites someone, what should you do?

### **What to Do if your Dog Bites Someone**

If your dog bites someone, there are a few things lawyers suggest you should do:

- Stay calm. Don't argue. Don't accuse. Avoid making any statements about the situation. Be nice to the victim. He or she will have to make a decision about pursuing you for damages.
- Obtain the name, address, and phone number of every witness.
- Avoid making statements because there are possible criminal consequences when a dog bites or injures someone.
- Make sure the victim gets medical attention. Take him or her to the hospital or to a doctor. Be considerate.
- Locate and preserve your dog's medical records, including proof that he has received rabies shots. Make a copy of the rabies certificate and give it to the victim, to put his or her mind at ease.
- Whether or not you have insurance, if you have any money or credit at all, you should offer to pay for the victim's medical bills. That goodwill may go a long way in helping the victim decide whether to sue.
- Once a bite happens, immediately confine your dog. Technically, you are the wrong doer because you own the dog; wrong doers are legally required to minimize the danger to the victim and possibly others.
- In the days and weeks after the attack, keep in touch with the victim if possible. Show a genuine interest in his or her condition.
- The local animal control authorities may require that your dog be quarantined. If your dog is up to date on its shots, sometimes the quarantine can be at your own home.
- Report the incident to your insurance company. If you are a homeowner or if there is any possibility that you have other insurance that may provide coverage for the dog attack, get in touch with your insurance agent and make a proper report. Tell the truth about the dog and what happened.
- And if you are not insured, consider talking to an attorney about the incident.

As always, thanks for educating yourself to benefit all dog owners!

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"A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than he loves himself." - Josh Billings