



PROGRAMMED

SAFETY ALERT

247 – Dog Bite

Background

Recently a nurse was bitten by a dog when they entered a premises for a home care visit. The nurse had not been to this residence previously and the client hadn't advised there was a dog present. There was however a guard dog warning sign displayed out the front of the property and the gates were shut.

The nurse attempted to contact the client to organise for the dog to be restrained before entering, however they were unable to reach anyone at the number provided as the number was incorrect. Despite this, the nurse decided to enter the property as they were unable to see any dog in the yard. As they approach the front door to knock, a German Shepard appeared and came up behind biting them on the thigh. This dog bite resulted in a serious infection and surgery was required.

Safety Issues

It's important that all workers are aware of the dangers associated with dogs when visiting residences.

Before visiting a property ask questions about any animals that may be present and check for signage when arriving on site. If signage is displayed call the resident to restrain the dog before entering. If you are unable to contact the resident – do not enter the premises.

If approached by a dog, signs of aggression can include; barking, growling, snarling, showing teeth, ears laid back, legs stiff, tail up, hair standing up on its back. A wagging tail does not always mean the dog is happy to see you.

If attacked by a dog;

- If a dog leaps at you, cover your face and neck with your hands and arms.
- Don't turn your back or scream.

- Never lie down. If you are knocked down, lie with your face down, curl up in a ball and put your hands and arms over the back of your head and neck.
- If a dog bites you, wash and disinfect the area and seek medical treatment immediately.
- Report the incident to your Supervisor/Manager or Programmed Representative.

RECOMMENDED WAYS TO CONTROL RISK

If a dog approaches you;

- Don't panic and run, this can excite dogs and trigger an attack.
- Stand still, side on to the dog
- If you can, place an object between you and the dog
- Keep hands by your sides.
- Keep the dog in sight but don't stare directly at it
- Look down at your feet or the dog's feet
- Try firm and simple commands such as "No", "Down" or "Go Home" in a calm voice.
- Slowly and quietly back away from the dog, keeping it in sight.

For more information regarding this incident please contact:

HSE Representative:	Leanne Owen
Contact Number:	0438 413 751
Date of Issue:	24/05/2022

Report all incidents and near misses

Please display on Safety Noticeboards and raise this matter at the next Toolbox Talk or Safety Meeting.