Santa Barbara County Animal Services
Dealing with Animal Bites

Santa Barbara County Animal Services has a two pronged approach to protect the public from animal bites and dangerous dogs. Residents are reminded how they can protect themselves from animal bites. Animal Services has protocols in place to investigate and respond to complaints of animal bites and potentially dangerous animals.

It is best to be proactive and prevent animal bites. You should never approach a loose dog that you do not know or a dog that is confined; chained, locked in a car, in their front yard, etc. You should never leave a young child alone with a dog. Do not pet a dog without asking permission and first allowing the dog to see you. Placing your face to close to a dog’s face can be threatening to a dog and should be avoided. Leave dogs alone that are eating, sleeping, or caring for puppies. Should you feel threatened by a dog at any time do not scream and run away. The best thing you can do is to remain motionless and avoid eye contact with the dog. Once the dog looses interest slowly back away from the dog until it is out of sight.

“Any animal can bite,” says Jan Glick, Director of Animal Services, “our goal is to protect the community from animals that pose a safety risk but we need the community’s help by reporting incidents immediately.”

When an aggressive dog complaint is received by Animal Services an Animal Control Officer is dispatched. Upon investigating the situation the officer will take appropriate action which may include speaking with the animal owner, providing a written warning, sending a letter or impounding the dog. There are specific guidelines for owners to keep their dogs and keep the public safe.

A dangerous dog is classified as a dog which has bitten or caused serious injury to a person or domestic animal without provocation, menaces or attempts to bite or attack any person without provocation, engages in an attack which requires defensive action by any person to prevent bodily injury or property damage when such person is acting in a peaceful and lawful manner, engages in or is found to have been trained to engage in exhibitions of fighting, or a protection dog that is straying or has escaped from confinement or restraint.

Animal Services takes all complaints seriously. We ask that the public help by reporting dangerous dogs to their local Animal Services Shelter. If you have questions regarding dangerous dogs, need to report a dangerous dog, or need more information contact your local Animal Services office; Santa Maria at 805-934-6119, Santa Barbara at 805-681-5285, or Lompoc at 805-737-7755. Your safety is our highest priority.

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