



What is a Dog Attack?

A dog attack does not always lead to physical injury or illness. A dog attack can be an incident where a dog has acted in a way that caused fear to a person or animal. This can include being chased by a dog, a dog rushing at the fence to bark aggressively at passers-by, or “almost” being bitten. A dog attack against a person or other animal (e.g. another dog) is considered and investigated in the same manner.

Reporting a Dog Attack

Dog attacks are investigated under Queensland’s *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008*. When a dog attack occurs, there is a rigorous and objective process that must be followed when Council’s Authorised Officers investigate.

When an attack occurs, it is extremely important that you contact Council immediately on **(07) 4658 4111** at any time. Council has a Local Laws Officer on-call outside of business hours, and an attack is treated as urgent. Reporting an attack immediately gives Council the best chance of securing the dog and gathering timely evidence to assist in the investigation.

Why is it important to report immediately?

- Witnesses may not be able to be located, especially if they are travellers and have left town.
- Increased chance of locating the offending dog and dog owner.
- Evidence (e.g. photos) can be collected to show full extent of any injuries, prior to medical attention.
- Time delays can diminish the value of evidence – the more people talk about something, the more their recollection can be altered after repeated discussions of the incident.

What happens to my complaint?

- ✓ An Authorised Officer will speak to the person reporting the attack to gather vital information, such as identifying parties involved, description of the dog, attack location, injuries caused, potential witnesses, and more.
- ✓ If the Officer is able to confidently identify the dog or owner from the information provided, the Officer will attend the attack location or property where the dog lives.
- ✓ The Officer will speak to the dog’s owner if they are present. At this point, the owner may voluntarily surrender the dog to Council.
- ✓ If the owner wishes to retain their animal, the Officer will seize the accused dog, to be held at the Council’s Pound facility for the duration of the investigation under the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008*.
- ✓ Once the dog has been secured, the Officer will continue to gather statements from the victim, dog owner, and any witnesses.
- ✓ When all of the relevant evidence has been gathered, a decision will be made regarding the dog. The dog may be declared as dangerous or menacing, involving strict requirements that the owner must adhere to in order to have their dog released to them.

Why do Officers seize the accused dog?

Seizure of an accused dog is primarily to ensure public safety and prevent the dog from wandering at large whilst the attack investigation is ongoing. However in some cases where there is doubt, the accused dog has been found to be innocent as a second attack took place while the accused dog was held in Council’s custody.

What if a victim or witness refuses to assist Council after reporting?

Council cannot proceed with the investigation or decisions on potential declarations without adequate evidence. Lack of evidence generally means that no offence can be proven, and as such no further actions can be taken. The dog may be released back to the owner.

Report all dog attacks immediately, no matter how serious: (07) 4658 4111 (24 hour service)