

How to Avoid Dog Bites

Dogs and Dog Repellent



Questions and Answers About Dog Repellent

Why is a repellent necessary?

Each year Postal Service™ employees sustain more than 5,000 painful dog-bite injuries, resulting in loss of time from work and costly medical treatment. The annual estimated cost of these injuries is more than one million dollars.

When should you use repellent?

Use the repellent only when a dog attacks. Do not use the repellent indiscriminately, especially when there is danger of spraying children or adults. Indiscriminate use of the repellent will not be tolerated. Postal Service personnel who use dog repellent indiscriminately are subject to disciplinary action.

How do you use it?

Spray the repellent directly at the eyes, nose, and mouth of the attacking dog by pressing the control on top of the container. Direct application must be made. The effective range is up to 10 feet. Effectiveness against trained attack dogs is not established.

What makes the repellent effective?

The repellent consists of 0.35 percent oleoresin capsicum (extract of cayenne pepper) and 99.65 percent mineral oil, propelled by an inert gas contained in an aerosol spray can.

How does a dog react?

Without a whimper, a dog will put its tail between its legs and retreat. Within 10 to 15 minutes, the effect of the repellent will wear off, and the dog will return to normal. The repellent leaves a yellowish color on the dog's hair, which is removable by washing. The yellow color is helpful in identifying the dog if a check for rabies is necessary.

How does it affect humans?

The repellent produces marked discomfort to the eyes for about 10 minutes, but there are no lasting harmful or damaging effects. People who are inadvertently sprayed with the repellent should (1) avoid rubbing their eyes, face, and other affected areas, and (2) irrigate the eyes, face, and other affected areas with large amounts of clean water. If the repellent is sprayed on clothing, use commercial spot removers or have the clothes dry cleaned. The repellent itself has a faint, pleasant odor and is mustard yellow in color.

Does it offer any advantages to dog owners?

Yes. Many dog owners have indicated that the possible use of the repellent on their dogs reduces their worries about the dogs attacking carriers and the resulting consequences.

Does the repellent lose effectiveness with age?

The repellent is effective indefinitely. However, after long periods of nonuse, the container's nozzle might become clogged with dirt, thereby reducing the effective range of the repellent. To avoid this problem, clear the nozzle opening by inserting the tip of a pin into it, and then turn the container upside down and briefly press the nozzle until a white mist is discharged.

Has it been given adequate testing?

The repellent has undergone extensive laboratory and field tests. Veterinarians have thoroughly examined it and have stated that it is safe, effective, and a very humane method of controlling animals. The Postal Service field test showed a high degree of effectiveness in controlling attacking animals.

Has it been accepted as safe?

The repellent has been accepted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Pesticides Regulation Branch and has been registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (registration No. 7754-1). In addition, it has been registered in every state that requires it. These registrations verify that many regulatory agencies consider the product to be effective and safe.

Were humane associations aware that the Postal Service was experimenting with repellent?

Yes. The American Kennel Club, the American Humane Association, the Popular Dogs Publishing Company, and the Humane Society of the United States were advised. All of these organizations indicated no objection to the use of the product under the conditions indicated.

How should you handle the container after use?

Some residue will remain in the nozzle after use. To expel this residue, simply turn the container upside down and briefly press the nozzle until a white mist is discharged.

How should you discard used containers?

Return used containers to a Post OfficeTM for disposal. If you throw a container into a trash fire or incinerator, the inert propellant gas in the container will expand until the container explodes.

How should you handle an inquiry or complaint?

If a customer makes an inquiry or complaint, report it to your postmaster or authorized supervisor for necessary attention.

Be Safe Around Dogs

Dogs are self-elected and often highly trained protectors of their masters and their master's property. To them, you are an intruder. You must prepare yourself for a challenge every day from every dog you meet as you go about your daily work.

Basic rules to follow:

1. **Observe the area.** Take a quick glance at all the places a dog may be — under parked cars, under hedges, on the porch, etc.
2. **Size up the situation.** Determine if the dog is asleep, barking, growling, nonchalant, large, small, etc.
3. **Avoid signs of fear.** A dog is more apt to bite you if it knows you are afraid.
4. **Don't startle a dog.** If the dog is asleep, make some kind of non-startling noise, such as soft whistling. Do this before you are close to the dog, while you still have time and space for an "out."
5. **Never assume a dog won't bite.** You may encounter a certain dog for days or weeks without incident — and then one day, it might decide to bite you.
6. **Keep your eyes on the dog.** A dog is very likely to bite you when you aren't looking. Always be on the alert for a sneak attack!
7. **Make friends.** Talk in a friendly manner. Call the dog's name if you know it, but **never** attempt to pet or feed a dog.
8. **Stand your ground.** If a dog comes toward you, turn and face it. If you have a satchel, hold it in front of you and back slowly away while making sure you don't stumble and fall. NEVER TURN AND RUN.
9. **If a dog attacks you, use the repellent to protect yourself.**

Nondelivery of Mail Policy

The availability and use of the repellent does NOT replace the policy of nondelivery of mail where there is a dog menace.

Collection and delivery service personnel are to report the name and address of the customer where such a menace occurs to the postmaster or authorized supervisor, who must immediately telephone the customer and request that the dog be confined during the usual delivery hours in the neighborhood. The postmaster or authorized supervisor must further inform the customer that (1) no deliveries will be made until the dog is confined, and (2) service will be restored upon assurance that the dog will be confined.

Dog Owner's Responsibility

Dog owners are responsible for controlling their dogs. Most communities have ordinances for the control of dogs. Even though postmasters frequently ask customers to control their dogs, and have discontinued service to those who do not cooperate, injuries caused by dogs continue to mount.