

Animal Bite Prevention



Best practices for staying safe from animals during field activities



Are you at risk?

State employees provide services in a variety of locations. Site visits, entering homes or working in urban areas present a select group of exposures that could result in injury. Protecting yourself is the key to getting home unharmed when it comes to animal encounters. The safest approach is to avoid putting yourself in a position of physical contact.



DO YOUR DUE DILIGENCE

- Review records and case files to identify past safety concerns or issues.
- Research crime statistics for the neighborhood.
- Drive the area ahead of time to familiarize yourself.
- If possible, call ahead and request that any animals in the home are secured away from the meeting area.



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

- Dress for success: Shoes should be low or no heels; boots can protect lower legs from animals that may nip or bite. Pants protect the lower extremities better than skirts and jackets can provide an extra layer of protection. No sunglasses or hats; dogs need to see your face and eyes.
- Carry items that can be used to block animal contact: E.g. tablet/Ipod, clipboard, umbrella, walking stick, or cane.
- Carry pet-friendly items, e.g., a leash to offer the client if pets are unrestrained; Pet treats or toys that can be tossed away from you to distract the animal.



POLICY AND PROCEDURES

- Establish animal bite prevention policies and procedures for employees who work in the field.
- Encourage field based employees to work in pairs as much as possible.
- If you don't feel safe, work with management to reschedule or have law enforcement assist you if rescheduling is not possible.
- Provide/attend regularly scheduled safety training.
- Form a safety committee to develop and monitor safety processes, address incidents reported, and provide recommendations for corrective actions.

REPORT ALL INCIDENTS TO YOUR SUPERVISOR PROMPTLY

For a Workers' Compensation Injury,
Please call the Employee Injury Call Center

 (800) 685-2877