

A Quick Guide of What to Do After A Dog Bite Incident

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Statistics show that every year aggressive dogs bite over 500,000 people, killing an average of twelve. Most dog bite victims are children.

The law of the state in which a dog attacks will determine the rights of the victim. California follows a "strict liability" theory in which the dog owner is responsible for any damage caused by an attack from their dog, irrespective of whether their dog has bitten anyone else. California law also provides "strict liability" on owners of some exotic pets or wild animals.

The biggest issues with dog or animal incidents is where the incident occurred, who owns the animal, and whether the person has insurance to cover the injuries. If the owner knew that the dog was dangerous but did nothing to prevent the injury, other recoverable damages may come into play as well.

What To Do After A Dog Bite Incident...

After a dog bite incident you must do what is necessary to protect yourself and your legal rights. We suggest the following:

1. Call the police and paramedics if necessary.
2. Obtain the names and addresses of all witnesses right away. They may need to leave the scene and go about their business.
3. Obtain a disposable camera and photograph the incident scene and especially the dog or animal that attacked you. If you cannot photograph the animal, take extensive notes about it's name, breed, size, color, location, etc. Also look to see if the animal owner has posted any "beware of dog" type signs on the property.
4. Report the incident to the dog owner and local animal control, but do not give an extensive statement until you have spoken with a lawyer.
5. Make a notation for your records of how the incident occurred. In addition to the information mentioned above, be sure to note the date and time of the incident, location of the incident, names of all witnesses, names and dates of the persons to whom you reported the incident to, weather conditions, name address and telephone number of the animal's owner as well as their insurance information and what you were wearing at the time. Keep any clothing or other evidence of the attack.

If You Are Injured...

If you have any physical complaints after the incident, you should seek medical attention right away. Any delay in seeking medical care can negatively effect your case. An emergency room can provide an immediate evaluation and diagnostic tests such as x-rays. Alternatively, see your family doctor. Either way, be sure to tell any medical personnel all of the physical complaints you are having. Don't leave any complaints unmentioned, even if they are minor! Also be sure to photograph any visible injuries immediately, such as bruises, scrapes, broken bones, etc. Always remember that a picture is worth a thousand words!

Remember That Time Is Of The Essence...

You should not delay in speaking with a lawyer after an accident, no matter how minor the accident may be. A successful case must be investigated immediately. Evidence must be preserved. Additionally, the law provides certain time limitations in which action must be taken. If the required action is not taken within that time, your case will be lost forever!