



CHICO POLICE DEPARTMENT PRESS RELEASE

530-897-4900

May 20th – 26th is National Dog Bite Prevention Week

According to the Center for Disease Control, 4.7 million people in the U.S. are bitten by dogs every year, and children between the ages of 5 and 9 are by far the most common victims. Approximately 400,000 children are bitten annually, and of the 30,000 reconstructive procedures performed in 2011 stemming from dog bites, most of the patients were children. Senior Citizens are the second most common dog bite victims, followed by mail carriers, with approximately 800,000 Americans requiring medical attention for dog bites each year. Approximately 10-20 people die each year from their injuries.

Children are most often bitten by dogs they are familiar with – 30 percent of bites are from the family dog, and 50 percent are from a neighbor's dog.

“Teaching children how to be safe around dogs can never start too soon,” said Tracy Mohr, Animal Services manager for the City of Chico, “and children should never, under any circumstance, be left alone with a dog, even a well behaved one.”

If there is a dog in your home, teach children (and adults for that matter) to never stare into the dog's eyes – especially while restraining the dog's head, don't tease the dog, or bother the dog while it is eating or sleeping. If the dog walks away, growls or barks, it is telling you it has had enough and wants to be left alone. Respect that.

Never approach a dog that is chained or an unfamiliar dog running loose, and always ask an owner's permission before approaching their dog. After getting permission, let the dog sniff your closed hand first before petting the dog on its back or side. If a loose dog approaches don't run or scream, just stand still and be very quiet without making eye contact. If the dog knocks you to the ground, curl up in a ball, using your hands and arms to protect the face and neck.

Genetics, socialization, training, supervision, health, housing and past human interactions are all factors in determining whether a dog will bite. Dogs kept on chains are 2.8 times more likely to bite and dogs that are unsterilized (not spayed or neutered) are twice as likely to bite as sterilized dogs. 95 percent of all fatal attacks involve unsterilized dogs.

Supervisor:

Watch Commander:

Prepared By: Tracy Mohr

Date/Time: 5/21/12

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Breed is generally not a factor in determining whether a dog will bite. Over 30 different breeds have been involved in fatal attacks, and the breeds of dogs involved in bites varies from year to year and from one region of the country to another based on breed popularity.

If you are a dog owner, there are several things you can do to reduce the chances of your dog biting someone. First, have your dog spayed or neutered. Make sure the dog is properly trained and socialized, especially if you are starting out with a young puppy. Your dog should be a member of the family, not left chained alone for long periods of time. Make sure your dog gets plenty of exercise, but don't play games with your dog that encourage aggression, like wrestling. Seek professional help if the dog begins to show undesirable behavior like nipping or growling.

There are currently 78.2 million owned dogs in the US, and only a small percentage of them are ever involved in a bite. Dog bites are preventable by being cautious around strange dogs and respectful of your own pet. For more information, visit the American Veterinary Medical Association at http://www.avma.org/public_health/dogbite/ or contact Chico Animal Services at 530-894-5630

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