

Pet Peeves

Be Aware: Any Dog Can Bite

(NAPS)—Most people would probably agree that having a dog charge at them and bite is a frightening experience. The Postal Service reports that that is exactly what happened to over 5,800 letter carriers in 2020. That represented an increase over the previous year. Several things added to the mix; more people were at home, more packages were being delivered and more dogs had been adopted.

The Postal Service places the safety of its employees as a top priority and dedicates a week each year to dog bite awareness. “Raising awareness about dog bite prevention and how to protect our letter carriers as we deliver the mail is paramount,” said USPS Acting Employee Safety and Health Awareness Manager Jamie Seavello. “Dogs are instinctive animals that may act to protect their turf.”

Here are some tips to prevent dog bite injuries. They should be enforced year ‘round:

- If a carrier delivers mail or packages to your front door, place your dog in a separate room and close that door before opening the front door. Some dogs can burst through screen doors or plate-glass windows to attack visitors. Always keep the family pet secured.
- If your dog is in the yard when a carrier is delivering the mail, do not let them run free. Make sure that they are properly restrained on a leash away from where your mail carrier makes delivery. Mail delivery service can be interrupted at an address or in a neighborhood that the carrier deems unsafe because of an unrestrained dog. When service is interrupted at an address or neighborhood, all parties involved will need to pick up mail at their local Post Office.



Annapolis, MD letter carrier Thomas as Tyler takes a protective stance against an approaching dog.

- Parents should remind their children not to take mail directly from carriers in the presence of the family pet, as the dog may view the person handing mail to a family member as making a threatening gesture.
- A great way for customers to know if their carrier may be knocking on their door to deliver a package is through a free USPS service called Informed Delivery. Customers get a daily email with digital scans of the mail and packages that are scheduled to be delivered that day. You can easily sign up for Informed Delivery by going to: informeddelivery.usps.com. By knowing about deliveries in advance you can take precautions to keep your carrier safe.

It is important to know that if a dog attacks a letter carrier, the dog owner could be held liable for all medical expenses, repayment of lost work hours and the replacement of the carrier's uniform and other costs. This can run into thousands of dollars.

It is in the best interest of all parties, including our dogs', for pet parents to heed these safety tips irrespective of their dog's breed, because ultimately, any dog can bite.