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ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE OF IOWA, INC.

Preventing Dog Bites

PREVENTING AND AVOIDING DOG BITES

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) estimates that between 2 and 3 million dog bites are reported to local authorities each year. Millions more go unreported. Children make up over 60 percent of dog bite victims, and nearly 3,000 letter carriers are bitten every year. It's a serious problem – but it's a problem we can all help solve.

- Spay or neuter your pet. Spaying or neutering will reduce aggression but won't reduce your dog's protectiveness.
- Train and socialize your dog to teach him/her appropriate behavior. Don't play aggressive games with your dog.
- If you don't know how your dog will react to a new situation, be cautious: when a letter carrier or delivery person arrives, keep your dog restrained or shut up in a room and don't allow your dog to jump up against your door or bite the mail as it comes through the mail slot. Don't let your child take mail from the letter carrier in the presence of your dog – this may set off your dog's protective instinct.
- If your mail is delivered by a carrier in a car or truck, don't let your dog chase the vehicle. Such behavior is dangerous to the carrier and to your dog, who could be injured or killed by the moving vehicle.
- If your dog shows aggression by disobedience or dominant behavior such as growling or nipping, seek professional advice.
- Never approach a strange dog, particularly one who's confined or restrained.
- Don't disturb a dog who's sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies.
- Don't pet a dog, even your own, without letting him/her see and sniff you first.
- Avoid running past a dog or turning your back on a dog and running away.
- A dog's instinct is to chase and catch fleeing prey.
- Avoid direct eye contact with a threatening dog. Instead, in a loud and low voice, tell the dog, "go home."
- If you think a dog may attack, do not scream or run. Most dogs will only sniff you, decide you aren't a threat, and walk away. Try to remain motionless until the dog moves away, then back up slowly until he/she is out of sight. If the dog does attack, "feed" him/her your jacket, purse, or anything that can come between you and the dog.

