



Parks and Regions Group – Safety Bulletin

Number 3/2017

Welcome to the Safety Bulletin for the Parks & Regions Group. This bulletin is produced by the staff from Adelaide Mount Lofty Ranges Region and their WHS Committee on behalf of the Group's Workplace Health and Safety Committee, keeping staff updated on new workplace safety initiatives, the theme of the quarter and other information in regards to workplace safety.

*"Safety within the Group is vital and improving safety to all Group staff is of highest priority.
Look after your workmates!"*

Quarterly Theme – Dog Bite Prevention

"Once bitten twice shy"

Do you or your volunteers:

- Come into contact with unknown dogs?
- Enter landholder properties?
- Undertake work on parks, reserves or beaches?

If so, there is an increased risk of being bitten by a dog.

Recently, an Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges regional staff member was visiting a property on DEWNR business; he entered the property and was confronted by three menacing dogs. He was subsequently attacked and sustained injuries to his arm and lower torso.

Some things to consider:

If you are entering a landholder's property or privately leased area in a park or reserve:

- contact the landholder or leaseholder before you visit (where applicable)
- make some loud noises – slam the car door – call 'hello'
- listen for barking
- look for signs like "Beware of the Dogs"
- look for food/water bowls
- observe any paw prints or scratch marks

Always stand back and observe:

If there is a dog(s) on the property or running free in a park, assess its behaviour.

- Is its teeth bared – showing aggression?
- Is its tail wagging or erect – tail erect and still or between legs can be a warning sign?
- Is it tied up or free to roam or on a leash? (check the length of the restraint)
- Allow it to approach you
 - stand still with no sudden moves with eyes down
 - stand upright and remove your sunglasses and/or hat

If entering private property or leased land:

- Acknowledge the dog before you move towards a house, building or the dog owner and away from the safety of a vehicle or barrier (e.g. wheelie bin, fence or similar)
- Talk in a soft friendly voice towards the dog

If at any time you feel uncomfortable about a dog, either do not enter or contact the local council for a dog management officer to go with you.



When in a situation with an aggressive dog:

- When you are feeling threatened, it is important to remain in control, calm and stay alert
- If the owners are present, ask them to control their dog
- AVOID ANY THREATENING POSTURES
- Stand still, side on with a balanced stance
- Avoid any quick movements
- You may feel the urge to run, but be aware that this may increase the likelihood of attack from an aggressive or defensive dog
- Ask the dog to sit and stay
- Watch the dog the entire time (without a hard direct stare)

If the dog attacks you:

- Defend yourself in any way you can
- If the dog bites you and holds on
 - Do not pull back
 - Go limp and the dog will hopefully let go
- If you are knocked to the ground
 - Curl into a ball
 - Place your hands behind your neck
 - Don't scream
 - Be as still as possible to reduce the threat perceived by the dog

Training:

Training on this topic is included in all NRM Authorised Officer's training and National Parks and Wildlife (Wardens) training as one of the many risks around access and egress to properties.

Professional training workshops are also available at a cost of \$120.00 pp (+GST) where you will learn how to safely work with, and around, unfamiliar dogs. For further information please call Australian Veterinary Behaviour Services on 08 7480 0597.



REMEMBER - YOUR SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT!