



# **How to Avoid Dog Bites**

Dogs and Dog Repellent

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# Questions and Answers About the Dog Repellent

## Why is a repellent necessary?

Each year Postal Service™ employees sustain more than 5,000 painful dog bite injuries, resulting in loss of time from work and costly medical treatment. The annual estimated cost of these injuries is more than one million dollars.

## When should you use the repellent?

Use the repellent only when a dog attacks. Do not use the repellent indiscriminately, especially when there is a danger of spraying children or adults. Indiscriminate use of the repellent will not be tolerated — personnel so observed are subject to disciplinary action.

## How do you use it?

Spray the repellent directly at the eyes, nose, and mouth of the attacking dog by pressing the control on top of the container. Direct application must be made. The effective range is up to 10 feet. Effectiveness against trained attack dogs is not established.

## What makes the repellent effective?

The repellent consists of .35% oleoresin capsicum (extract of cayenne pepper) and 99.65% mineral oil, propelled by an inert gas contained in an aerosol spray can.

## How does the dog react?

Without a whimper, the dog will put its tail between its legs and retreat. Within 10 to 15 minutes, the effect of the repellent will wear off, and the dog will return to normal. The repellent leaves a yellowish coloration on the dog's hair, which is removable by washing. This coloration is helpful in identifying an animal if a check for rabies is necessary.

## **How does it affect humans?**

The repellent produces marked discomfort to the eyes for about 10 minutes, but there are no lasting harmful or damaging effects. People who are inadvertently sprayed with the repellent should avoid rubbing their eyes, face, and other affected areas, and should irrigate the eyes, face, and other affected areas with large amounts of clean water. If it is sprayed on clothing, use commercial spot removers or have the clothes dry cleaned. The repellent itself has a faint, pleasant odor and is mustard yellow in color.

## **Does it offer any advantages to dog owners?**

Yes. Many dog owners have indicated that the possible use of the repellent reduces their worries about their dogs attacking carriers and the resulting consequences.

## **Does the repellent lose effectiveness with age?**

The repellent is effective indefinitely. However, after long periods of nonuse, the container's nozzle might become clogged with dirt, thereby reducing the effective range of the repellent. To avoid this problem, clear the nozzle opening by inserting the tip of a pin into it, and then turn the container upside down and briefly press the nozzle until a white mist is discharged.

## **Has it been given adequate testing?**

The repellent has undergone extensive laboratory and field tests. Veterinarians have thoroughly examined it and have stated that it is safe and effective and is also a very humane method of controlling animals. The Postal Service field test showed a high degree of effectiveness in controlling attacking animals.

## **Has it been accepted as safe?**

The repellent has been accepted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Pesticides Regulation Branch, has been registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and bears registration No. 7754-1. It has been registered in all states requiring such registration. The significance of these registrations is that they identify the product(s) as effective and safe.

## **Were various humane groups aware that the Postal Service experimented with repellent?**

Yes. The American Kennel Club, the American Humane Association, the Popular Dogs Publishing Company, and the Humane Society of the United States were advised and indicated no objection to the use of the product under the conditions indicated.

## **How should you handle the container after use?**

Some residue will remain in the nozzle after use. To expel this residue, simply turn the container upside down and briefly press the nozzle until a white mist is discharged.

## **How should you discard used containers?**

Return used containers to a Post Office™ facility for disposal. If containers are thrown into a trash fire or incinerator, the inert propellant gas inside the container will expand until the container explodes.

## **How should you handle an inquiry or complaint?**

If a customer makes an inquiry or complaint, report it to your postmaster or authorized supervisor for necessary attention.

# Be Safe Around Dogs

Dogs are self-elected and often highly trained protectors of their masters and their property. To them, you are an intruder. You must prepare yourself for a new challenge each day from every dog you meet as you go about your daily work.

## Basic rules to follow:

- 1. Observe the area.** Take a quick glance at all the places a dog may be — under parked cars, under hedges, on the porch, etc.
- 2. Size up the situation.** Determine if the dog is asleep, barking, growling, nonchalant, large, small, etc.
- 3. Avoid signs of fear.** A dog is more apt to bite you if it knows you are afraid.
- 4. Don't startle a dog.** If it is asleep, make some kind of non-startling noise, such as soft whistling. Do this before you are close to it, while you still have time and space for an "out."
- 5. Never assume a dog won't bite.** You may encounter a certain dog for days or weeks without incident — and then one day, it might decide to bite you.
- 6. Keep your eyes on the dog.** A dog is basically a coward and a sneak and is more apt to bite you when you aren't looking. Always be alert for a sneak dog attack.
- 7. Make friends.** Talk friendly, call the dog's name if you know it, but never attempt to pet it.
- 8. Stand your ground.** If a dog comes toward you, turn and face it; if you have a satchel, hold it in front of you and back slowly away while making sure you don't stumble and fall — by all means, NEVER TURN AND RUN.
- 9. If a dog attacks you, use the repellent to protect yourself.**

## **Non-delivery of Mail Policy**

The availability and use of the repellent does NOT replace the policy of non-delivery of mail where there is a dog menace!

Collection and delivery service personnel are to report the name and address of the customer where such a menace occurs to the postmaster or authorized supervisor, who must immediately telephone the customer and request that the animal be confined during the usual delivery hours in the neighborhood. The postmaster or authorized supervisor must further inform the customer (1) that no deliveries will be made until this is done, and (2) that service will be restored upon assurance that the animal will be confined.

## **Dog Owner's Responsibility**

It is the dog owner's responsibility to control the dog. Most communities have ordinances for the control of dogs. In spite of the fact that postmasters have frequently requested customers to control their dogs, and have discontinued service to control this problem, injuries have continued to mount.