



CHICO POLICE DEPARTMENT

PRESS RELEASE

530-897-4900

May 19th – 25th is National Dog Bite Prevention Week

According to State Farm insurance company, California tops the list of states with the most claims for dog bites. In 2012 there were 451 dog bite claims worth \$17.1 million in California.

The Center for Disease Control reports that each year approximately 4.5 million people are bitten by dogs and roughly one in five, or 885,000 of those seek medical attention. Of those seeking medical attention, 386,000 require treatment in an emergency room. In 2012 there were 38 fatalities cause by dog bites. Half of the fatalities were children under 8 years old, and 15 of the children were under age 2. 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.

Overall, half of dog bite victims are children, and the rate of dog bite-related injuries is highest for children ages 5 to 9 years. Almost two thirds of injuries among children ages four years and younger are to the head and neck region. Senior Citizens are the second most common dog bite victims, followed by mail carriers.

“Dog bites are largely preventable,” said Tracy Mohr, Animal Services manager for the City of Chico. “Dog owners are responsible for properly training and handling their dogs, and individuals are responsible for behaving safely around animals.”

If you own a dog or are considering getting a dog:

- Have your dog spayed/neutered – dogs that are not spayed/neutered are twice as likely to bite, and 95 percent of all fatal attacks are by dogs that are not sterilized.
- Consult with a professional (e.g., veterinarian, animal behaviorist, or responsible breeder) to learn about suitable breeds of dogs for your household.
- Dogs with histories of aggression are inappropriate in households with children.
- Be sensitive to cues that a child is fearful or apprehensive about a dog and, if so, delay acquiring a dog.
- Spend time with a dog before buying or adopting it. Use caution when bringing a dog into the home of an infant or toddler.
- Never leave infants or young children alone with any dog.
- Make sure your dog gets plenty of exercise, but don't play games with your dog that encourage aggression, like wrestling.

Supervisor:

Watch Commander:

Prepared By: Tracy Mohr

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- Properly socialize and train any dog entering the household.
- Your dog should be a member of the family, not left chained alone for long periods of time. Dogs kept on chains are 2.8 times more likely to bite, and in some places it is illegal.
- Immediately seek professional advice if the dog begins to show undesirable behavior like nipping or growling.

Here are a few basic safety tips on how to stay safe around dogs. Share this with any children in your household:

- Never approach a dog that is chained, or an unfamiliar dog running loose.
- Always ask an owner's permission before approaching their dog.
- Let the dog sniff your closed hand first before petting the dog on its back or side, not directly on the top of its head.
- Avoid direct eye contact with a dog, especially while restraining its head.
- Do not tease a dog, or disturb a dog that is sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies.
- If the dog walks away, growls or barks, it is telling you it has had enough and wants to be left alone. Respect that.
- If a loose dog approaches, do not run or scream, just stand still and be very quiet without making eye contact. Remain still until you're able to slowly back away to a safer area.
- If the dog knocks you to the ground, curl up in a ball, using your hands and arms to protect the face and neck.
- If bitten, immediately report the bite to the owner and the nearest authority.
- Immediately report stray dogs or dogs displaying unusual behavior to authorities.

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 Center for Disease Control at <http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/dog-bites/biteprevention.html>, or contact Chico Animal Services:

To report a loose or aggressive dog, or an animal bite in the City of Chico, contact Chico Animal Control at 530-897-4960. If you found or lost a dog within the incorporated area of the City of Chico, please contact the City of Chico Animal Shelter, located at 2579 Fair St, Chico, at 530-894-5630.

Website: www.chicoanimalshelter.org. Facebook: www.facebook.com/ChicoAnimalShelter

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