

Preventing Dog Related Injuries for DSP Drivers

Dog attacks are one of the biggest threats to delivery services across the United States and have resulted in a large increase in on-the-job injury claims.

It's critical that DSP driver's Be Prepared and know how to react should a dog try to attack.

The increase in online-shopping for goods, groceries, meals, and services has resulted in increased delivery worker interaction with dogs and a sharp increase in dog bite hazards for delivery workers.

There are approximately 85 million dogs in the U.S. with 38% of homes having at least one dog per home. There have been over 4.5 million reported dog bites each year. Over the past decade (2010-2020) there has been over \$1.26 Billion in dog-related injury claims including some fatalities.

Dog attacks are one of the biggest threats to delivery services across the United States and have resulted in a large increase in claims. It's absolutely necessary that DSP driver's Be Prepared and know how to react should a dog try to attack during a delivery. Knowing the proper reaction can possibly prevent a potentially dangerous situation from becoming a fatal one.

It is very important to understand why dogs attack in the first place. Dogs have a "Prey Drive" that can be triggered by motion, such as running. This doesn't mean every dog will react in such a manner though. Certain breeds of dogs can be more prone to having a stronger prey drive than others.

Strategies for DSP Drivers

Assess the delivery location - When pulling up to a location take your time to assess the location. It's better to assume there is a dog at most locations. Don't wear headphones while delivering packages. You need to be vigilant of your surroundings and prepared in the case of a dog is present. If you do see a dog present, ensure that you notify other employees delivering to the location that one was present, especially if they have shown signs of aggression.

If you do see an aggressive and threatening dog - back away and do not attempt to make the delivery. Report the dog as the reason why you could not deliver the package. See if you can notify the recipient and have them meet you at the delivery vehicle or have them put the dogs up.

If you do make the delivery, don't hand a package to a person of the household in the presence of their dog.

Some dogs might perceive this interaction as a threat and could give them a reason to attack. If you see a dog present at the door, ask the owner to put the dog away in the residence and/or have them step outside. If the recipient is not willing to comply, you can place the package at the front door.

Don't attempt to pet or interact with a dog. While petting and interacting with dogs can seem fun, it is unsafe to interact with dogs that you are unfamiliar with and could create an opportunity for injury.

Interaction with an Aggressive and Threatening Dog

Stay in control

When coming in contact with an aggressive dog, it's very important you remain as calm as possible. You must avoid the urge to scream, yell, run, or react in a way that the dog could interpret as aggressive behavior. Some aggressive dogs will see your aggressive behavior as an invitation to heighten the situation. It is very essential you remain as calm as possible when coming in contact with the dog. You should also avoid running away because this could also trigger an aggressive dog's prey instinct to chase you.

Avoid Staring

You must try to limit any direct eye contact with any aggressive dog if possible. Making direct eye contact with a dog may make them feel like they are being challenged and could provoke them to attack. There are some aggressive dogs that when they feel challenged or threatened they will not back down and could attack.

Claim Your Space

It is very important once you have confronted an aggressive dog you must claim your space while trying to exit the area. If you happen to have a package you are delivering place the package in front of you to take up more space around you. You must continue to stay calm, and project assertive controlled demeanor will help continue to demand the dog's respect and could help de-escalate the situation.

10 Warning Signs to Prevent Dog Attack

These are warning signs and behaviors that can indicate potential threat in an encounter with a dog. Some of the warning signs may alert you to aggressive or defensive behavior in a dog that might attack.

- The dog is defensive and backing away
- The dog's ears or head pulled inwards
- The dog's eyes are rolled back to the point that the whites of the eyes show
- The dog's tongue and jaw are flicking
- The dog is given you a fierce stare
- The dog's tail is stiff and pointed upright
- The dog has an aggressive and tense stance
- The dog has a wrinkled brow and a distressed faced
- The dog is yawning or howling
- The dog has an aggressive bark
- The hair on the back of the dog is standing up

Conclusion

It is essential that your employees be prepared if there is a possibility of interacting with aggressive dogs. The drivers should also be aware of their surroundings, know how to read warning signs of aggressive dogs and follow certain procedures when dogs are present.

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