
Sharp increase in dog attacks on Posties

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Australia Post urges dog owners to safely secure pets.

Nearly 1,000 Australia Post workers have been attacked by household dogs over the past five months, sparking an urgent plea by the postal service for dog owners to secure their pets.

In a concerning trend, the number of dog-related incidents recorded by Australia Post has increased more than 55 per cent, with an average of almost 7 incidents reported each day since July 2022, compared to an average of just over 4 per day in the 2021/22 financial year.

In the last five months alone, 986 incidents have been reported, compared to 1587 for the full 2021/22 financial year. Some of these attacks can lead to severe and debilitating injuries with many requiring medical treatment.

NSW recorded the highest number of dog-related incidents with 351 since 1 July, followed by QLD with 281 and WA with 183. Within these states areas with the highest number of dog-related incidents include the Gold Coast and Darra in QLD, Midland in WA as well as Warrabrook, Strathfield and Tamworth in NSW.

Australia Post Executive General Manager People and Culture Susan Davies said the data shows an alarming upwards trend in the number of dog-related incidents as well as an increase in the severity of injuries sustained.

“As we head into the busiest delivery time of the year, we want to ensure that our Posties are protected. Dogs are territorial by nature, so even the sweetest dog can be a danger to our Posties. We’ve had Posties sustain a range of injuries including puncture wounds, lacerations, scratches and bites. Sadly, team members have also suffered from long-term psychological impacts following an attack.

“Our Posties are just trying to do their job and if they feel that a situation is unsafe when they approach a home, they will not make the delivery. Our teams’ safety has to come first so we really want to stress the need for people to secure their dogs, especially if they are expecting a delivery.”

RSPCA NSW Senior Manager of Animal Behaviour, Georgie Caspar said there are many

steps we can take as dog owners to help keep our pets safe and comfortable during a home delivery.

“Providing an area to contain your dog, and giving them opportunities to occupy themselves with treats, chews and toys is not only great for their mind and body but is also an effective distraction method. Lick mats, snuffle mats and interactive puzzle feeders are a few examples of enrichment tools you can try when you know a parcel is on the way,” said RSPCA NSW Senior Manager of Animal Behaviour, Georgie Caspar.

Other tips for residents to help keep our posties safe include:

- Be careful when opening your front door to ensure that your dog doesn't run out from behind you. Keeping them safely in another room when you answer the door is a great way to prevent this.
- Keep your side gate securely closed when your dog is in the backyard.

“All dogs may experience stress, fear, anxiety, or frustration in certain situations and contexts. It is important to remember that like people, animals have different personalities and individual needs. If you find that your pet is continuously stressed by the presence of a Postie and you're not sure how to help them, we recommend engaging the services of a qualified behavioural trainer that uses force-free and reward-based approaches, or a veterinary behaviourist. We understand that behavioural issues can be distressing, and our team are always here to provide guidance and support,” added Ms Caspar.

The front gate/letterbox, footpath and front door are the most common locations where dog incidents occur. “In addition to providing our Posties with training on how to avoid dog attacks we also work closely with local councils and council rangers to ensure all incidents are reported and appropriately managed,” added Ms Davies.

(Australia Post)