

## **Chapter One: Dog Bites**

If you are bitten by a dog on someone's property, you likely have a claim that can be made against the owner or the renter of the home or apartment where you were bitten. This is an area of law called "strict liability" and it means the dog's owner is held strictly liable for the damage the dog causes you.

There are several factors that increase the likelihood that a dog will bite a person:

- The breed of the dog
- Environmental factors
- Situations that make a dog wary or upset

### **The Dog Breed**

A dog's breed can increase the likelihood that the dog will bite, though it is not the only determining factor. Certain dogs have been bred to be more aggressive. The most common breeds that attack people are:

- Labradors
- German Shepherds
- Pitt bulls
- Rottweilers
- Huskies

### **How The Jackman Law Firm Can Help After a Dog Bite**

After being attacked by a dog, you may be wondering what you are allowed to recover legally. The law is very clear about the damages that are available to you. They are:

- Past medical bills
- Future medical bills
- Pain and suffering
- Out of pocket expenses
- Loss of consortium

The Jackman Law Firm has successfully negotiated with many insurance companies for homeowners and businesses for money for these various damages. While we always hope that we can resolve things amicably outside of court, if we cannot, then we will take your case to court and obtain a jury verdict for your injuries. We can help you in all of these areas.

Feel free to call The Jackman Law Firm for a free consultation to discuss.

## Chapter Two: Dog Bite Victim

If the dog that bit you was not your own, there are several actions you need to take. Seek immediate medical attention for serious injuries. If you do not need to immediately get to a hospital, you can assess the injury for the severity (bite level).

After determining the bite level (this should not take long), you will need to get some basic information from the dog owner:

1. Owner's full name and contact information
2. Contact information of the dog's regular vet
3. Record of rabies vaccination

Take pictures of the wound. You may need to submit these as part of an insurance claim. If you need to seek immediate medical attention, you can request images from the doctor or hospital that treats you.

### Potential Injuries from Dog Bites

As the main perpetrator of animal bites in the US, dog bites are not uncommon. Many owners ignore bites that don't break the skin or simply clean bites that are not deep. However, any dog bite can pose serious health risks, particularly if the dog has not received a regular rabies vaccination.

Children are at greater risk of being bitten. They do not know how to be careful when interacting with dogs and are more likely to agitate a canine with loud noises, pulling on a dog's tail, or other behavior that makes the dog uncomfortable. Of reported bites, children made up half of the victims. They were also more likely to be injured by a bite than an adult.

If you, your child, or someone you know is bitten by a dog (including your own), there are different potential injuries that may be a result from the incident:

- Infections
- Diseases transmitted through the bite
- Long-term damage that can affect you for months, years, or the rest of your life.
- 

### Infections and Compartment Syndrome

It is estimated that 18% of these bites will get infected, which is why regular cleaning and monitoring of the wound is important, regardless of the severity. The deeper the bite, the greater the risk of infection. These bites should always be treated by a medical professional and may require antibiotics to properly heal. Scarring is also likely for these wounds.

The most serious kind of infection that could occur because of a dog bite is MRSA. It is a type of staph infection that can have serious long-term effects to the area around the bite, as well as causing infections of the lungs or urinary tract. If MRSA spreads to your lungs or bloodstream, it could be fatal.

Compartment Syndrome is caused when pressure builds up from internal bleeding or swelling in the tissues of your body. The pressure decreases blood flow. You will know you

have it if you have bad pain, a feeling pins and needles, and a general feeling of weakness. It is a very serious condition.

### **Transmitted Diseases**

A dog's mouth has more than 60 varieties of bacteria. Most of these pose no threat to humans, but a few do and can cause infection or illness. If a dog has been infected by something more serious, you are at a much greater risk of a serious illness. Other common transmitted diseases from a dog bite are:

- Rabies
- Tetanus
- Capnocytophaga
- Pasteurellosis

## **Chapter Three: Handling Insurance Claims After a Bite**

Most insurance companies offer dog bite coverage to home owners, and this is the insurance that will need to be filed against following a dog bite. There are some other ways dog bites can be covered by insurance, so it is important to thoroughly review your insurance policy if you are a dog owner.

Even if the owner has insurance that covers their dog, that does not mean that the insurance company will automatically approve a claim. They will take a number of factors into account when reviewing the claim to determine if compensation is warranted.

A home owner is not responsible for what happens on their property if the dog is not theirs. The liability is squarely on the dog owner. If the dog owner is the home owner, they may have insurance that covers dog bites. The homeowner will be liable for not only physical pain and suffering, but emotional and mental trauma sustained because of the attack.

### **Dog Owner Liability**

The law puts the responsibility on the dog owner if their dog bites someone. There are only two exceptions to this rule:

- If a person is trespassing on the property where the dog lives, the owner is not responsible for the attack.
- If a police dog bites someone while working, the dog owner is not liable for the bite and injuries sustained.

With state laws generally favoring the victim of a dog bite, you need to understand the law, especially if you have a dog.

### **Landlord Liability for Dog Bite**

Landlords are not responsible for the dogs of their tenants. The only times when a landlord can be held liable for a bite are if the landlord is also the dog owner or if the landlord is either the keeper of the dog. However, the renter of the home or apartment might have a renter's insurance policy that will cover your medical bills and pain and suffering.