

# DOG BITE PREVENTION HANDOUT (FIELD PERSONNEL)

- According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) man and woman's best friend bite more than 4.7 million people a year; about 800,000 of these victims seek medical attention annually.
- On average, about a 25 people die each year from dog attacks
- No one breed is more or less susceptible to biting.
- All dogs are capable of biting and should be considered a bite risk.
- County employees working in the field are at great risk of dog bites because:
  - They work in rural areas
  - They don't know that a dog is present
  - They don't know the residents or animals
  - Animals are distressed by their presence



## WHY DOGS BITE

Dogs generally bite for four reasons:

- 1) Excitement: When somebody plays with a dog, the dog gets excited and because they don't have hands they use their mouth to grasp. When this happens, the dog can accidentally bite and hurt you.
- 2) Protection: Dogs can be very possessive, they will protect themselves, family, property, and territory.
- 3) Pain: When dogs are in pain, they don't understand where the pain is coming from. If you touch them, they may think you are causing the pain and could bite you to fight back.
- 4) Fear: Dogs get scared too. When a dog is scared or startled, their only known protection is to bite.

## WARNING SIGNS

Watch and listen for the warning signs that may signify that a dog is getting ready to bite. These warning signs include:

- The dog is growling with teeth showing
- The dog's ears are pulled all the way back
- The dog's hair is raised up
- The dog is looking directly at you
- The dog has lowered its tail and is wagging it slowly
- The dog is standing forward on its toes



## PREVENTING DOG BITES

- Don't approach an unfamiliar dog, especially one that's tethered or confined.
- Don't run past a dog, they naturally like to chase and catch things; don't give them a reason to get excited or aggressive.
- Approach dogs from the side or front; do not sneak up on them from behind.
- Never disturb a dog that is caring for puppies, sleeping, or eating.
- If a dog approaches you to sniff you, stay still.
  - In most cases the dog will go away when it determines that you are not a threat.
- Never tease a dog, or pull their ears, tail, or feet.
- If a dog threatens you:
  - Remain calm
  - If you say anything speak calmly and firmly
  - Avoid eye contact
  - Stay still until the dog leaves
  - Do not turn and run
- If you fall or are knocked down:
  - Curl into a ball
  - Place your hands over your head and neck
  - Protect your face.