

DOG ATTACKS

INFORMATION SHEET | MELTON CITY COUNCIL



REPORTING A DOG ATTACK

To report an attack on a person or animal, call Melton City Council on 9747 7200.

Alternatively call the Dangerous Dogs Hotline on 136 186.

COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO DOG ATTACKS

- Dog attacks include dogs biting, rushing at or chasing a person or animal.
- Council encourages that all dog attacks be reported and commits to investigating all reported attacks to a conclusion.
- Dog attack investigations are initiated with the mindset that they may all result in a court case.
- The owner (or the person in apparent control of the dog at the time of the attack) will be held responsible for a dog attack.

INVESTIGATION OF A DOG ATTACK

For an investigation to commence, Council must receive notification stating the nature of the incident or event. A Council Officer will contact the complainant to obtain further information to establish if an offence has been committed under the Domestic Animals Act and will explain the investigation process. Enforcement options are limited if the complainant is not willing to provide evidence in court.

The consequences of a dog attack will usually include a combination of the following:

- a. The dog owner may be issued with an infringement notice or have a fine imposed by a court.
- b. The dog may be declared menacing or dangerous by Council.
- c. The dog may be seized and held by Council pending the outcome of any legal action against the owner. Daily costs and release fees will be applicable.
- d. If a dog attack is proven in court, a criminal conviction for the dog owner or person in charge of the dog at time of the offence, or both, may result.
- e. Council may pursue all costs associated with the case including veterinary or medical fees.
- f. Council will not pursue legal action against the owner of an attacking dog on behalf of the victim to obtain reimbursement of damages only.
- g. The owner of the dog may be subject to a banning order preventing dog ownership for up to 10 years.
- h. The dog involved in the attack may be ordered by Council or a court to be destroyed.
- i. Serious dog attacks may result in imprisonment of the dog owner if the dog has previously been declared dangerous or is a restricted breed dog.

THE ROLE OF COUNCIL'S AUTHORISED OFFICERS

- a. The Act gives authorised Council Officers the authority to investigate and prosecute dog attacks.
- b. A dog attack can be stressful and emotional for all parties, however authorised officers responsible for enforcing relevant legislation have a right to do so without being subject to harassment, obstructive behaviour or abuse.
- c. Authorised officers are impartial when investigating an alleged dog attack. They are simply enforcing the legislation contained in the Domestic Animals Act.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Call Animal Management Unit: 9747 7200

Refer to Council's Dog Attack Guideline, and Section 29 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994

