



# **A Guide to Dealing with Dog Attacks and Fights**

There have been instances where guide dogs have been attacked by or involved in a fight with a third party dog. These are some basic guidelines that you should know which will help you identify aggressive behaviour, prevent a dog attack and also assist you in stopping a fight.

## **Identifying aggressive behaviour in dogs**

- Standing tall on tips of the toes, leaning slightly forward with ears pointed forward and up
- Long stares and refusal to break eye contact
- Raised hackles (hair between the shoulders)



- Growling from deep within the body as opposed to a throat growl
- Showing teeth
- Stiff slow movements that include a wag with the tail held high
- Biting at the air

## **How to avoid a dog fight/attack**

- Never approach a dog which is not on a lead or under control by a responsible person
- If a dog shows aggression to you or your dog, ensure your dog is on its lead and try to walk away slowly
- Do not run away or turn you back on the dog, as this can provoke an attack
- Do not scream or shout, try to stay calm

- Never stare down a dog as this can be interpreted by a dog as a challenge

## Stopping a dog fight/attack

There is no truly safe way to intervene in a dog fight, and **Guide Dogs insist that you never put yourself at risk of injury**. Even though it may be hard, if you cannot break up the fight without putting yourself at serious risk of injury, you must not intervene.

Never reach into or try to step between a dog fight – you could get bitten by mistake.

Most dog fights/attacks are not serious; often 90% sound and 10% fury, this type of fight can usually be

stopped with a loud yell or by banging on some noisy object.

## **Suggestions for breaking up a dog fight**

- Always shout for help
- Hose down the dogs with water; try to aim for the face, nose and mouth. Spraying dogs with water can often shock them into a ceasefire. It needs to be a good amount to make an impact
- Find a broom or something with a long handle that you can wrap with a towel to separate the animals without getting yourself in the middle
- Loud noises (but not human shouts) like two pots clashed together or a slamming door can also startle animals into stopping

- Drop a blanket or towel on one animal to protect it and shield it from view

Basically, anything that you can use to get between the two animals without hurting them or yourself.

Be aware at all times that the aggressive dog may turn its attention to you. If you are attacked, try to protect your face and neck with your arms, keeping your fingers curled up in a fist and stay tight in a ball.

Also remember that your dog will be scared, in pain and may bite out of fear.

You must call the police following a dog attack on an animal or person.

If your guide dog has been involved in a fight/attack ensure that you take them to the vet, even if you can not see any injuries. You must also ensure that you inform your main Guide Dogs contact at the earliest opportunity to enable them to complete an accident investigation.