

# Dog Attack

## Responding to dog attacks in the community

**A dog attack is traumatic for both the victim and the dog owner but most can be avoided if dog owners properly manage their pets.**

### Dog Attack

The Dog Act 1976 interprets an “attack” to be aggressively rushing at or harassing any person or animal; or biting, or otherwise causing physical injury to, a person or animal; or tearing clothing on, or otherwise causing damage to the property of, the person attacked; or attempting to attack, or behaving in such a manner toward a person as would cause a reasonable person to fear injury. Heavy penalties may be imposed under the Dog Act 1976 (Maximum penalty \$10,000).

### What to do if I am attacked?

If you, or someone you observe, are threatened or attacked by dogs, call 9550 3777. If serious or life threatening injuries are sustained call 000 or seek the required medical attention.

### What is Council doing to prevent dog attacks?



Ranger Services are working hard to reduce dog attacks through public education and the application of relevant legislation.

The City's Rangers conduct regular patrols of beaches, parks and local streets to ensure that dog

owners are leashing their dogs in public and effectively controlling them in dog exercise areas.

Owners have a high level of responsibility to ensure their dogs are effectively contained, have adequate fencing and are under effective control by an adult when in a public place. Rangers may take legal action against owners who ignore their responsibilities.

### What does the City do when a dog attack report is received?

- Make sure that the dog is no longer a threat to the community and the victim is now safe
- Make contact with the victim or any witnesses to gather all available evidence
- Make contact with the dog owner (if known) and try to mediate an outcome for all parties concerned
- Court action may be taken at the City's discretion depending on the circumstances of the attack which may include severity of injuries, quality of evidence and consideration of the animals history. If court action is proposed you may be required to attend to give evidence in the matter.

### What evidence do council Rangers need?

It is necessary to contact the Rangers directly to report the incident as soon as possible after the attack. Rangers will need to obtain the following information in order to make an informed decision;

- Details of the attack (as it occurred) time, date, location
- Victim's details
- Extent of injuries sustained
- Description of dog breed, colour, sex, and any other distinguishing features of the dog
- Witness details
- Written statements (by interviewing complainant/victim/witnesses)
- Photographic evidence - of any injuries to a person or animal
- A doctor's report- details of injuries suffered by any person
- A vet report/bill - details of injuries suffered by animal



## What will the outcome be?

All facts will be considered before determining the outcome. Once Rangers have thoroughly investigated the attack consideration must also be given to:

- The severity of the attack and the circumstances leading to the attack
- Whether there is any known previous history of attack by the offending dog
- Willingness of victim and witnesses to attend if the matter proceeds to court.

In line with City of Mandurah's Education before Enforcement policy, possible actions/outcomes may include:

- Verbal & written cautions
- Voluntary surrender of offending dog for euthanasia
- Issuing of infringements – ranging from \$200 (nuisance attack on person & dog off a leash)
- Declaring the offending dog 'dangerous' (imposing additional control requirements)
- Court action – with possible penalties up to \$10,000 or 12 months imprisonment and/or request for an order of destruction of a dog (only a magistrate can order this)
- Dog registration record updated noting offence/outcome.

## What should I do if my dog attacks a person or another animal?

- Restrain the dog immediately or move it away from the scene of the attack
- Keep the dog confined
- Check victim's condition. Seek medical/ veterinary advice to evaluate severity of wounds - untreated wounds (even minor ones) can lead to infections.
- Provide your contact details including name, address and phone number
- Notify the City's Rangers and report the dog attack immediately
- Cooperate with officers throughout the investigation
- Consult a dog trainer/vet for advice about your dog's behaviour to help prevent further incidents.

**Q:** Can the City help to recover my costs such as medical, veterinary, or other personal expenses?

**A:** No. Any claim for costs associated with a dog attack should be resolved between the parties and if necessary, we encourage you to seek independent legal advice.

Please report all dog attacks to City of Mandurah Rangers on **9550 3777** - available 7 days a week

For further information please contact the City of Mandurah Rangers on **9550 3777** or visit [www.mandurah.wa.gov.au/rangers.htm](http://www.mandurah.wa.gov.au/rangers.htm)

