



SAN FRANCISCO
SPCA

Dog Safety for Humans

Training and Education are Essential for Success

Socialization

Puppies should be inundated with positive experiences by interaction with a very large number and variety of people and other dogs. They should be actively taught to thoroughly enjoy contact with strangers - especially children - and be conditioned to love being handled and having possessions removed.

Early Flagging and Intervention

While growling, snarling and snapping are obvious signs to be concerned about, there are often earlier flags to tip you off to a potential aggression problem in your dog. They are:

- Wariness or discomfort around strangers or particular categories of strangers
- Tension or possessiveness around food dish, bones or toys
- Reluctance about being handled in certain ways or in certain body areas

If any of these are present, seek the help of a competent trainer or behaviorist. The SF/SPCA may be able to refer you to a trainer near you. Other good resources are the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) and the Animal Behavior Society (ABS).

Public Education: Canine Safety

How should you approach a strange dog? With outstretched hand? Should you pat him on the head? Under the chin? **The answer is simple: never approach or touch a strange dog.** If you would like to meet a dog, there are two conditions: first, the presence of an owner who can inform you whether the dog likes strangers. And, second, the approach test: crouch down and invite the dog to approach you with an encouraging voice. The dog will accept or decline the invitation.



If you are attacked by a dog, here are important do's and don't's.

If you have kids, get them to rehearse this maneuver until it comes easily to them.

DO: roll into a tight ball on the ground, face down, with your head and elbows tucked firmly in and your hands clasped together over the back of your neck - this protects your abdomen, throat and face

DO: remain still and quiet (play dead) in this position until help arrives or the dog moves on

DON'T: try physical force or confrontation - the dog may escalate

DON'T: scream, flail or run away - this "wounded animal" simulation could elicit predatory reflexes in the dog