

Incidents Involving Animals – Initial – Species Prompts

Canine Quick Reference Animal Fact Sheets

There are many breeds of dog likely to be encountered in operational situations. Greater risks are often associated with size, breed characteristics and trained aggression. However any dog that is suffering injury or anxiety may respond fearfully or aggressively.

Key Message

First responders should consider the type of dog (and owner); environment the dog is in, potential cause of fear or aggression, sources of help and urgency of the task that requires interaction with the dog. If in any doubt of your capabilities, isolate the problem and request specialist advice or assistance from more equipped and trained personnel.

Situations that can cause adverse reactions:

- Being crowded or pressurised with no obvious escape route
- Sudden threatening (or perceived threatening) movement or noise
- People entering their space who don't understand dogs and may themselves be fearful
- Interacting with over stimulated or aggressive dogs
- Being chased or aggressive attempts to control or contain
- Over stimulating or fearful surroundings

Canines may respond to:

- Reducing stimulation or removing from the source of anxiety or fear
- Friendly, calm and confident voice
- Non-threatening movements, calm scene
- Confident professional handlers
- Food

When dealing with dogs:

- Assess the wider situation
- Determine hazards and risks. How will the type, breed, temperament and size impact the situation? (Large or powerful breeds will affect the type and nature of potential injuries to a responder that may be life changing. Small breeds will have lesser life changing injury risk, however may still cause injuries)
- Is there a responsible person who can support you?
- What might make this dog become dangerous?
- Are you physically able to deal with this dog? (Capability, PPE and equipment?)
- Can you control the environment and reduce the threat

Associated risks when dealing with dogs:

- Bites, causing bruising, puncture, crush or tear injuries
- Lifting a dog or sudden changes in direction when on a lead, leading to muscular-skeletal injury
- Injuries caused during physical capture or restraint, slips trips and falls
- Faeces and blood contamination
- Infection from scratches and bites