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202-268-2155
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NATIONAL DOG BITE PREVENTION WEEK, MAY 21-27 ***Postal Service asking customers to close door on dog attacks***

CINCINNATI – Many letter carriers attacked by dogs last year were victimized by pets which broke loose of their owners grip to jump through screen or glass doors. As part of its messaging to kickoff National Dog Bite Prevention Week, May 21-27, the Postal Service is asking customers to place their pets in a separate room and close the door before accepting mail at their front door.

“Dogs are protective in nature and may perceive a letter carrier handing mail to its owner as a threat,” explained USPS Vice President and Consumer Advocate Delores Killette. “For the same reason, we also ask parents to instruct their children to refrain from collecting mail from our carriers in the presence of their pet.”

“Last year, 3,249 letter carriers were bitten by dogs across the United States—including 82 letter carriers from the Cincinnati metro area. Thanks to our aggressive community outreach efforts with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Veterinary Medical Association, and other organizations nationwide, 71 fewer letter carriers were victimized by dog attacks last year. But even one bite is one too many.”

“Safety always comes first,” Killette continued. “If a letter carrier perceives an unrestrained pet as a threat, we may curtail delivery and ask the customer to pick up their mail at the Post Office. If a pet roams a wide area, this may also result in the neighbors’ mail being curtailed. In these cases, we won’t resume delivery until the situation is safe.”

Houston postal employees suffered the most dog bites last year with 108 followed by Santa Ana, CA with 94; Indianapolis metro area, 83; Bay Valley, CA and the Cincinnati metro area with 82 bites.

Following are USPS dog bite statistics from fiscal years 1995 to 2005:

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Bites	2,851	2,795	2,798	2,541	2,729	2,721	3,158	3,070	3,743	3,429	3,249

The USPS is offering these tips for avoiding dog bites.

How to Avoid Being Bitten

- Don't run past a dog. The dog's natural instinct is to chase and catch prey.

- If a dog threatens you, don't scream. Avoid eye contact. Try to remain motionless until the dog leaves, then back away slowly until the dog is out of sight.
- Don't approach a strange dog, especially one that's tethered or confined.
- While letter carriers are discouraged from petting animals, people who choose to pet dogs should always let a dog see and sniff them before petting the animal.
- If you believe a dog is about to attack you, try to place something between yourself and the dog, such as a backpack or a bicycle.

How to Be a Responsible Dog Owner

- Obedience training can teach dogs proper behavior and help owners control their dog in any situation.
- When a letter carrier comes to your home, keep your dog inside, away from the door, in another room.
- Don't let your child take mail from the letter carrier in the presence of your dog. Your dog's instinct is to protect the family.
- Spay or neuter your dog. Neutered dogs are less likely to bite. HSUS statistics reflect that dogs that have not been spayed or neutered are up to three times more likely to be involved in a biting incident than neutered or spayed dogs.
- Dogs that haven't been properly socialized, receive little attention or handling, or are left tied up for long periods of time frequently turn into biters.

Detailed dog bite prevention information is available online as part a Postmaster's media kit at: <http://www.usps.com/cpim/ftp/bulletin/2006/html/pb22179/pb6ktxt.html>. Additional information is available through the American Academy of Pediatrics at www.aap.org, the American Veterinary Medical Association at www.avma.org, The Humane Society of the United States at www.hsus.org, and the Prevent the Bite program www.preventthebite.org.

Since 1775, the United States Postal Service and its predecessor, the Post Office Department, have connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency that visits more than 144 million homes and businesses every day, the Postal Service is the only service provider delivering to every address in the nation. It receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of \$70 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mailing and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume—some 212 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves seven million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.

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