

# Liability for your pet really bites

RIGHT SIDE OF THE LAW

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**A**nimal bites, mainly perpetrated by dogs, make interesting cases for a variety of reasons.

For one, in Ontario the owner is strictly liable for their dogs' actions. This means that if your dog bites someone, you are responsible, period. There are very few exceptions to this absolute rule.

Why is this so important to you? Let

me tell you, most people think it is only the large dogs that can do any damage but stats show it's the small ones responsible for most bites. My assistant was bit by a Chihuahua last year. She had to go to the hospital to get stitches and the wound became infected.

As a rule of thumb, stay away from dogs you do not know. The temperament of even the smallest dogs could be volatile. Do not let your kids play with strange dogs.

If you are a dog owner, take precautions. If you know your dog has a volatile temperament, use proper restraints. Do not take your dog off the leash in crowded areas. Do not let strangers play with your pet

unless you are 100% sure your pet will act appropriately. Make sure your insurer knows about your dog so you are properly covered in case of an accident.

We all love dogs, me included, and no one knows a dog better than its owner. So if your dog is easily spooked, doesn't take well to strangers and can get volatile, don't invite them into a situation that could be dangerous. You could be sued and you could lose your dog. ■

*Sandra Ziskind provides an educational article for viewing, it should not be construed as legal advice. If you need Legal advice, please contact a lawyer or Sandra Ziskind at 416 850 PAIN*



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