

Dog Bite Prevention Week Kicks Off Monday

Mail carriers hope to educate the public about responsibly restraining pets and how to avoid dog bites.

Posted: May 17, 2008, 5 a.m. EDT

Post offices across the nation are delivering a message to dog owners everywhere this week: keep canines restrained to avoid dog bites. Dog Bite Prevention Week kicks off May 18 to help protect the health of mail carriers, according to Frances Frazier of the U.S. Postal Service.

Local post offices are encouraged to host events throughout the nation and to visit schools to educate children on restraining their pets and how to avoid dog bites, Frazier said. Dog owners are urged to take part by keeping their pets inside, away from the door, in another room, or on a leash when a mail carrier comes knocking to deliver a package.

“The overall goal is to bring awareness to this very serious health issue,” she said. Postal workers are provided with safety tips on how to avoid being bitten. For example, avoid eye contact and refrain from screaming if threatened by a dog, don’t run past a dog, and don’t approach a strange dog.

“This is a key message,” she said, “because employee safety is our No. 1 concern.”

More than 4 million people are bitten by dogs every year. Small children are the most common dog bite victims, followed by the elderly and USPS employees, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association. The AVMA is a joint sponsor of the weeklong event, as well as the American Academy of Pediatrics.

In 2007, more than 3,000 Postal Service employees were victimized by dogs, according to the USPS. To help educate the public about dog bites, the AVMA developed a brochure, “What You Should Know About Dog Bite Prevention,” with tips on how to avoid being bitten, what dog owners can do to prevent their dogs from biting, and how to treat dog bites.

“Dog owners can help by being a responsible owner,” Frazier said.

To access the AVMA brochure, [click here](#).