



What is a Dog Attack?

A dog attack does not always lead to physical injury or illness. A dog attack can be an incident where a dog has acted in a way that caused fear to a person or animal. This can include being chased by a dog, a dog rushing at the fence to bark aggressively at passers-by, or "almost" being bitten. A dog attack against a person or other animal (e.g. another dog) is considered and investigated in the same manner.

Ensuring your dog is under effective control at all times

If you are the owner of a dog, you are legally responsible for their actions. Dog attacks are not only frightening for all involved, but can result in serious injury to people and animals. There are laws that guide and assist you to prevent the risk of your dog attacking a person or other animal.

The law states you must, at all times,

- ✓ Be physically able to control your dog in a way that ensures that your dog is not a risk to a person or animal, and
- ✓ have your dog restrained by holding a dog by a leash, lead or other restraining device when in public.
- ✓ If you need to tether or tie your dog up, ensure that your dog is securely tethered or tied up and is under continuous supervision of a responsible person.
- ✓ If your dog is traveling in your car, or on the back of your ute, always have your dog tied or tethered in a way that prevents any of this body moving beyond the vehicle and/or tray.
- ✓ There are no off-leash areas in the Longreach Regional Council, however if visiting other regions, ensure that you supervise your dog and you can control your dog fully with voice command if you choose to use an off-leash area.
- ✓ Ensure that your dog cannot leave your property. If adequately fencing a yard is not an option due to renting or financial difficulty, you are still required to provide an enclosure that will contain the dog. The majority of dog attacks are committed by wandering or unrestrained dogs.

Other tips

- ✓ Supervise children around dogs – particularly when the dog is sleeping, feeding or recovering from injury or illness.
- ✓ Train and socialise your dog to reduce the chance of aggression while in public areas and when around people, other dogs, or other animals.

Penalties

There are significant penalties in instances when an attack occurs because of an owner's failure to ensure that their dog is under Effective Control.

Dog attack offence maximum penalties as of August 2024 are:

- If the attack causes the death of or grievous bodily harm to a person – up to **\$96 780.00 fine or 1 years imprisonment**
 - If the attack causes the death of or grievous bodily harm to a person, and has been convicted of a serious dog offence in the proceeding 5 years – up to **\$96 780.00 fine or 2 years imprisonment**
- If the attack causes the death of or maims an animal – up to **\$64 520.00 fine**
 - If the attack causes the death of or maims an animal, and has been convicted of a serious dog offence within the proceeding 5 years – up to **\$80 650.00 fine**
- If the attack causes bodily harm to a person – up to **\$48 390.00 fine**
 - If the attack causes bodily harm to a person or animal, and has been convicted of a serious dog attack in the proceeding 5 years – up to **\$48 390.00 fine or 6 months imprisonment.**
- If the attack on an animal and the attack wounds an animal – up to **\$24 195.00**
 - If the attack on an animal and the attack wounds an animal, and has been convicted of a serious dog offence within the preceding 5 years – up to **\$32 260.00**
- In addition to these penalties, your dog may also be seized and destroyed.



On-the-spot fines that may apply:

1 penalty unit = \$161.30 (as of July 2024)

- If the dog was wandering at large – 5 penalty units = **\$806.00**
- If the dog is not registered with the Council – 2 penalty units = **\$322**
- If the dog is not microchipped – 2 penalty units = **\$322**

The dog owner's ramifications:

- You may also be fined for breaches of Local Law, for example inadequate containment, effective control and wandering at large.
- You can be prosecuted in Court resulting in convictions and substantial fines.
- Your dog may be declared as a regulated dog – either dangerous or menacing. If the dog is declared, the following implications and requirements will apply:
 - Higher annual registration fees.
 - Constructing specified fencing or containment, bearing all the associated costs.
 - The dog will be required to wear a muzzle in public, and cannot be lead with other dogs, or by a child.
 - The dog must always wear a regulated dog identification tag.
 - Installation of approved warning signage at all entry points to your property.
- Depending on the circumstances, you may also face Police actions.
- You can also face civil action and be sued for other damages. These costs may include vehicle damage if the dog being at large causes an accident, or medical and veterinary expenses.