

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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spcaLA Offers Tips for Dog Bite Prevention
National Dog Bite Prevention Week is May 18-24

Los Angeles, CA – A report from the Insurance Information Institute and State Farm indicates that California leads the nation in dog bite insurance claims. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles (spcaLA) offers tips on dog bite prevention. A bit of prevention will help reduce the risk of injury, expense, and heartache due to dog bites.

How should I meet an owned dog?

- Practice your **ABSCs**.
 - o **Ask** the owner if you can pet the dog.
 - o **Bend** down so you don't tower over the dog.
 - o Let the dog **sniff** your closed fist.
 - o Pet the dog under the **chin** or on the **chest**.
- Approach slowly and quietly.
- Do not pet the dog if his owner has to physically restrain him, or if the dog does not approach you (*even* if the owner says it's okay).
- Do not hug the dog, or put your face in the dog's face.

What clues will an owned dog give me to tell me whether or not it's okay to pet him?

- **GREEN LIGHT:** The dog is okay to pet if his:
 - o Ears are pricked, but relaxed;
 - o Body and tail are relaxed;
 - o Mouth is relaxed into a smile;
 - o Body is in "play bow" position;
 - o Tail and eyes are relaxed (or tail is possibly wiggly).
- **RED LIGHT:** DO NOT pet the dog if his:
 - o Back is hunched, he's cowering, or he is close to the ground;
 - o Ears are pricked and forward;
 - o Body is tense and forward;
 - o Eyes are glared;
 - o Teeth are bared;
 - o Expression is worried;
 - o Or, if he's sleeping or eating, playing with a toy or chew, or caring for her puppies.

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What should I do if I see a stray dog?

- **DO NOT RUN.** The dog may chase you.
- **DO NOT PET.** Some dogs may be dangerous, infected by parasites, or carry disease.
- **Become a “tree.”** Stand very still and put your fists under your chin.
- **Keep the dog in sight,** but do not look him in the eye. The dog may view direct eye contact as a challenge.
- **Back into a wall or fence.** When dogs stalk, they circle their prey. Walk slowly with your back against the wall or fence in order to get to safety.
- **Call Animal Care Services.** If the pet is lost, this his best chance to be reunited with his family.

What should I do if a dog approaches me aggressively? GO BIG!

- Make yourself seem bigger by using your arms and voice.
- Wave your arms and yell “NO!” or “GET AWAY!”
- Use a jacket, purse, or backpack as a shield.
- Move in a serpentine motion to confuse the dog.

What if a dog jumps on me and knocks me to the ground? BECOME A ROCK!

- Curl up on the ground to protect your stomach and face (knees down on the ground).
- Stay very still.
- Put your fists over the back of your neck to protect your throat and neck.

What do I do if a dog bites?

- Wash the wound carefully and immediately see a doctor.
- Report the bite to your local animal care services, and the health department.

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact Ana Bustilloz at 323-730-5300 x252, 323-707-1271 (cell), or by email at abustilloz@spcaLA.com.

About spcaLA

Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles, or spcaLA, is an independent, nonprofit animal welfare organization serving Southern California since 1877. There is no national SPCA, parent organization, or umbrella group that provides financial support to spcaLA. Donations run programs and services including Cruelty Investigation, Disaster Animal Response Team, Humane Education, and a variety of shelter services.