



TEXAS DOG BITE GUIDE

*When Man's
Best Friend Attacks*

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If you've been bitten by a dog, you're probably scared and unsure of who to trust. Dog attacks are traumatic experiences that leave victims physically and emotionally scarred. An experienced San Antonio dog bite lawyer can help you protect your rights and recover the compensation you deserve.

Americans love our furry friends, and we bring them with us everywhere. Unfortunately, some dog owners are irresponsible. They know their animals are aggressive, yet don't take the proper precautions to prevent attacks.

The sad truth is that dog bites are more common than you might think. According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than 4 million Americans – many of them children – are bitten by dogs each year. Nearly 1 in four of these victims requires medical attention. Yet, beyond the trauma and physical pain, dog bites also cause financial suffering. Medical bills, counseling and the lost wages add up quickly, leaving victims struggling with new financial burdens.

BITTEN BY A DOG IN TEXAS

You may be entitled to compensation for your injuries and emotional suffering. Our Texas dog bite lawyers want to help. We are experienced in Texas dog bite laws, and have helped clients successfully fight for and win compensation for dog bites in Texas. If you've been injured, don't hesitate to call. Contact an experienced San Antonio dog bite lawyer at Rush & Gransee for a free case evaluation and to learn more about protecting your rights.

DOG ATTACKS: WAS THE OWNER RESPONSIBLE?

Dog owners have a responsibility to protect the public from their pets. In fact, nearly every city in Texas has regulations in place that help to protect the public.

Examples include leash laws, fencing requirements, signage laws, and other requirements to protect the public.

Unfortunately, many owners are ignorant of the laws, or believe that their pet would never harm an individual. They don't take the proper safety precautions and leave the public at risk.

In Texas, dog owners are liable for any costs associated with an attack by their animal. This can include medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering costs, etc. Texas dog bite laws are especially strict, if an owner knows their dog to be aggressive and does not take precautions to protect the public. In the event of a biting incident, it can be difficult, though, to prove who is at fault.

That's how an experienced San Antonio dog bite lawyer can help. Our legal team has deep experience in Texas dog bite cases. We understand the laws completely, and can help you build a strong case that proves negligence. Our team will investigate your case, gather evidence, and help to show that an owner was responsible for your injuries.

HAVE YOU BEEN BITTEN BY A DOG? HERE'S WHAT TO DO

In the immediate aftermath of a biting incident, you're likely scared, in immense physical pain, and unsure of what to do next. Taking the right steps after a dog bite can help you protect your safety and your rights. Critical steps to take after an incident include:

- » **Seek Medical Attention** – Your safety comes first. Call 911 for serious injuries and puncture wounds. If an animal has not been vaccinated, your wounds may become infected – that's one reason it's so important to seek medical care.



- » **Document Your Injuries** – You'll likely be scared and in shock. But if you're able to, collect photos and videos of your injuries. Take pictures of any wounds you have, as well as areas of clothing that have been ripped or torn. Note any pain that's not visual, as well.
- » **Exchange Contact Info:** Ask for the contact information of the owner; be sure to get the owner's name, address, phone number and other contact details. If the owner will not share details, contact law enforcement.
- » **Gather Evidence** – If any witnesses were present, ask them for their contact information. Additionally, note all of the details you remember – including what led up to the attack, how the animal approached you, etc.
- » **Contact Animal Control/Police** – You should report the dog bite as soon as possible. We recommend contacting law enforcement or filing a report with animal control.
- » **Call an Experienced Attorney** – A Texas dog bite lawyer can help you file insurance claims, pursue a lawsuit, and help you build your case. The sooner you contact an attorney after the attack, the better. In the immediate aftermath, your lawyer will help collect evidence, file claims, and begin the process of pursuing compensation.

WHAT COMPENSATION AM I ENTITLED TO?

Negligent dog owners may be liable for any costs a victim incurs after a biting incident. If you've been bitten, you may be entitled to compensation for any physical, financial and emotional injuries.

A qualified dog bite lawyer can help you pursue any and all forms of compensation, and your attorney will also help you fight for the maximum compensation. All too often insurance companies – even your own – will bully you into accepting unfair settlements. Your lawyer defends against this aggressive behavior and

helps you receive all that you're rightly entitled to. After a dog bite, you may be entitled to compensation for:

- » Medical bills and long-term care
- » Disfigurement or disability
- » Lost wages and lost future earnings
- » Counseling
- » Pain and suffering
- » Emotional distress
- » Occupational therapy

Punitive Damages. If you choose to file suit against a negligent dog owner, you may be entitled to punitive damages, as well. This is a form of financial punishment for negligent owners, and it's awarded to victims on top of compensatory damages for medical bills and other costs. If your case goes to trial, punitive damages may be one avenue of compensation to pursue. Your lawyer will help you determine if this is appropriate to your case.

DOCUMENTING YOUR INJURIES

Documenting your injuries after an attack is one of the most important steps you can take in protecting your case. Of course, you'll likely be scared and suffering in the moment. Yet, after the shock has worn off, it's vital that you note any and all injuries with photos, videos and medical records.

Document all effects of your injuries including:

- » Pain
- » Loss of mobility
- » Disfigurement
- » Cuts and puncture wounds
- » Bruising
- » Emotional distress

In addition, keep detailed records of the financial costs of your suffering. This might include medical bills, pharmacy receipts, and any other records. Documenting these costs will help your lawyer properly file for the maximum compensation for your injuries.

ARE INSURANCE COMPANIES TREATING YOU FAIRLY?

After an attack, you may seek to file an insurance claim with your provider. This can help you cover medical expenditures and other costs related to your injuries. Remember, though, that insurance companies are businesses, and they're most concerned with the bottom line. As such, insurers – even your own insurer – may bully you, delay payments, or undervalue the costs of your pain and suffering.

We recommend contacting a qualified attorney prior to talking with insurers. Your lawyer will aggressively defend you against this bad behavior, and protect your financial and legal rights. When you hire an attorney, your lawyer will lead all negotiations with insurers, fight for the maximum compensation, and defend you against the aggressive behavior of attorneys as well.

After a dog bite attack, the last thing you want to worry about is insurance claims and getting the compensation you deserve. An attorney can help you move forward confidently and protect you from drawn-out and stressful legal fights.





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS | TEXAS DOG BITE GUIDE

How Do I Pick an Attorney?

In my mind, experience is the key. You need a lawyer who understands dog bite law. You need a lawyer who understands municipal ordinances. You don't need a lawyer to help you with something quick and simple. This is a serious matter, and you need a serious dog bite lawyer, someone who's handled dog bite cases all across Texas.

How Do I Avoid Mistakes After a Dog Bite?

If you've suffered a dog bite in Texas, you probably need to get medical attention, and you need to identify where that dog came from. Let say you were out jogging, and a dog came darting out a door. The gate was open, and they attacked you. You need to get that house address. You need to try and identify who did it. How can you do that? Call the police; they will find out who that dog belongs to. That dog might have tags. There are any number of ways of identifying it. If you have been bitten and attacked by a dog here in Texas, call the police, get medical attention, and identify who the responsible party is.

Does a Beware of Dog Sign Matter?

The other day, a client told me, "I think I have a case. I got attacked by a dog, but there was a Beware of Dog sign, so I was afraid to even call a lawyer. What does that Beware of Dog sign mean?" If you hopped over the fence and said, "Let me see how tough this dog is," you may have some problems. If that homeowner put a Beware of Dog sign up, they know that dog is there for protection. Perhaps if they didn't close their gate, if they left holes in their fence, or if they didn't make sure that dog was leashed and contained, that Beware of Dog sign doesn't prevent you from making a claim. It just points out that that homeowner knew better.

Do I Have a Dog Bite Claim?

If you've suffered a dog bite or been attacked by a dog, two of the first questions you have is, "Do I even have a case? How do I know if I have a case?" You hire an experienced lawyer, a lawyer who understands dog bite law in Texas. There are leash laws, and fence enclosure laws, and they're different from city to city. Some neighborhood associations have policies in place that their homeowners are supposed to follow. If a dog violently attacks you and you've suffered injuries, the only way you can know if you have a case is to hire a lawyer experienced in dog bite cases.



What are Common Dog Bite Injuries?

It's not uncommon, after a dog bite incident in Texas, for people to suffer pretty significant injuries. Not only do you have those bites, but you've got to worry about infections, scarring, nerve damage, and muscle tearing. There are lots of things that can happen when a dog attacks. If you've been attacked by a dog here in Texas, you need an attorney experi-

enced, not only in the law, but who understands the medicine, the injuries, and what you're going through.

Does Homeowner's Insurance Cover Dog Bites?

One of the questions we get asked frequently after a dog bite is, "Who's supposed to pay for my injuries? Will it be the dog owner?" The reality is, if you've suffered a dog bite attack here in Texas, homeowner's insurance will cover that claim. Those who have insurance on their home can be held accountable, and their insurance company is responsible for your medical bills, and for anything else that goes along with that claim. The insurance company pays.

How Long Will My Dog Bite Case Take?

The most common question we get is about the length of time that it takes to conclude a case. That doesn't matter where you're at in Texas; the law is the

same. It takes a while. It's not a quick fix. You can't make good decisions if you're making them with insufficient information. Your case is going to take long enough to know what the full extent of your injury is. How long are you going to need medical care? How is this going to affect you tomorrow? How is this going to affect you six months from now? Once your doctors can tell you that, and you have an understanding of how this is going to impact your life, then an experienced dog bite lawyer can tell you what a reasonable value of your case is.

Who I Liable for the Bite?

The owner of that dog is responsible if they were careless in letting that dog loose, in not putting a leash on while they go for a walk, or not having their fence closed. If you were walking down the street, minding your own business, and got attacked by a dog, hire an experienced lawyer who understands how to hold that homeowner accountable.

How Does Investigation Work?

Following a dog bite, if you identify who the owner is, and their homeowner's insurance company calls you, you need to be careful. Insurance companies like taking statements because statements help them and hurt you. Insurance companies want to get you to say things that probably don't sound as good as you think they do once it's all typed up on that written form, and it hurts your case. Don't talk to the insurance company following a dog bite. If you've been attacked by a dog here in Texas and you've been injured, talk to an experienced lawyer that's representing you, not an insurance company that doesn't care about you.

What Questions Should I Ask the Dog Owner After a Bite?

If you've suffered a dog bite or attack and the owner is there, after calling the police, the first question to ask them is "where's the rabies paperwork?" You need to protect yourself first and foremost. Find out if that dog is vaccinated like they're supposed to be. Then you find out why that dog wasn't on a leash. Or why that owner let that dog out of the fenced yard. You'd be surprised what

people will say. “Oh, I wasn’t paying attention,” “Oh, I didn’t realize he was going to attack you.” You must call the police and find out if the dog got their rabies shots. Anything else you can find out from the owner of that dog is going to help you. It’s only going to help you if you have an experienced lawyer on your side who understands dog bite law and who knows how to get you full compensation for what you’re going through.

REQUEST A FREE CASE EVALUATION

Texas has complex dog bite laws. That’s why legal experience matters. Our Texas dog bite lawyers understand our state’s laws, and we’re experienced in filing dog bite insurance claims, settlements and lawsuits. Our team can help you estimate your costs, build a strong case, and fight for the compensation you deserve.

If you’ve been bitten by a dog, don’t hesitate to call. We want to help. We offer free consultations and are happy to provide no-obligation advice for your case.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Rush founded Rush & Gransee, L.C. in 1994. Mr. Rush started his legal career at a large, San Antonio based insurance defense firm. He was involved in representing doctors, product manufacturers, insurance companies and drivers of automobiles in cases involving catastrophic injuries.

Robert’s current practice is primarily devoted to individuals who have been harmed by negligent drivers, doctors, and corporations. Robert and the firm have rightfully gained a reputation of fighting aggressively to obtain every available dollar to compensate the harms suffered by our clients. Unlike other firms that try to settle cases quickly for less money Rush & Gransee, L.C. has the reputation of pushing cases so that our client’s recovery is maximized.

Robert L. Rush has been voted by his peers as one of San Antonio's Best Lawyers, every year from 2005-present in the annual legal poll published in the monthly magazine "Scene in SA". Mr. Rush is identified as one of San Antonio's best lawyers in Personal Inquiry and Malpractice Law.

Additionally, Mr. Rush has been recognized as a Texas SuperLawyer every year from 2010-present. He is also honored to be rated AV-Preeminent – Peer Rated for the Highest Level of Professional Excellence, as listed in Martindale-Hubble. Mr. Rush has been awarded the distinction of being listed in Best Lawyers, and Best Law Firms – US News & World Report in 2016 and again in 2017. Mr. Rush is privileged to be a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates, and is Board Certified by the National Board of Trial Advocacy.

Our firm has represented clients and fought cases against wrongdoers involving medical malpractice, medical products liability, insurance disputes, brain injuries, automobile and 18-wheeler trucking wrecks. Mr. Rush has handled State and Federal cases across Texas and in Federal District Courts in several other States. Mr. Rush has developed a broad reaching network with other top attorneys across the United States and can assist clients no matter their locale.

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