

## A Collection of Excerpts From:

### Dos and Don'ts Concerning Vicious Dogs

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### Dos Before You Encounter a Vicious Dog

#### b.) Know How Aggressive or Vicious Canids Behave

*"A dog treated in this way gives in and retreats or submits. The attacking dog does not attack vulnerable parts of the body such as the feet or belly. No such inhibitions are present in pit bull terriers. These dogs have a very high pain threshold. They will attack any part of the body and will not let go, not matter how much they are punished."*

**Page 3**

*"Uniquely, pit bulls do not show any threatening signs of aggression. Studies on aggression in dogs lead one to conclude that chaining a dog makes the animal more aggressive toward people."*

**Page 3**

*"Carl Semencic's books<sup>25-26</sup> are useful in identifying guard dogs and fighting dogs which are the most dangerous groups. Richard Stratton's books have many illustrations of American Pit Bull Terriers/American Staffordshire Terriers, which comprise the majority of the Stafforshires or pit bull group and are unquestionably the most dangerous and unpredictable. One should remember that cross-bred dogs with pit bull in their bloodline, i.e., American Pit Bull Terrier and Rhodesian Ridgeback, are equally dangerous and unpredictable."*

**Page 4**

#### d.) Remember that noises, odors, food and certain activities such as running or scuffling may excite, stimulate or trigger some dogs to attack.

*"The presence of food also may induce a dog to attack. A small girl was killed by a pit bull after pieces of a cookie were given to the dog and the girl. The dog attacked the girl<sup>30</sup> for her part of the cookie."*

**Page 4**

g.) Support laws and ordinances that require vicious dogs to be controlled.

*"The Ohio legislature passed a law that requires vicious dogs and pit bulls to be 1) muzzled, 2) controlled by a chain leash not exceed six feet in length, 3) confined in a secure enclosure, and 4) insured against claims for personal injury resulting from a potential attack fro \$50,000."<sup>35</sup>*

**Page 6**

j.) Carry defensive equipment

*"Letter carriers, meter readers, police officers and other groups carry Mace(R), or repellents such as Halt(R) which are effective against many dogs.<sup>14</sup> These sprays are not uniformly effective against pit bulls and other vicious dogs, however. A pit bull's reactions can be compared to an attacking person who has used alcohol, crack cocaine, is extremely angry or mentally disturbed.<sup>40-41</sup> Animal control officers have reported that pit bulls have bent their snare poles, ignored Mace(R), chewed cattle prods in spite of the electric shock and have not been controlled by tranquilizers."<sup>42-32</sup>*

**Page 8**

k.) Consider defensive strategies

*"...Entering a car or climbing on the hood or roof of a car, truck or construction equipment are effective escape means against most dogs. Louise Johnson, a letter carrier in Florida, was attacked by a pit bull that climbed into her jeep and inflicted severe bite wounds to her arm and leg."<sup>49</sup>*

**Page 9**

i.) Report vicious dogs, stray dogs and incidence to animal control personnel

*"...For example, Betty Lou Stidham, a 57-year old teacher, lived beside a police officer, Edwin Hill, whose two pit bulls had attacked his aging mother.<sup>50</sup> Mrs. Hill was hospitalized. One of the pit bulls attacked Ms. Stidham's pug dog through the fence which resulted in the amputation of the dog's front leg. The attacks on Mrs. Hill and Ms. Stidham's pug were not reported to the local health department or the animal control authorities. Subsequently, the two pit bulls broke loose and mauled Ms. Stidham as she walked to her mailbox. She died four hours later."<sup>50</sup>*

**Page 9**

## **Dos When You Encounter a Vicious Dog**

c.) Climb out of reach such as onto the roof of a car<sup>57</sup> or on playground equipment<sup>53</sup>

*"...Two repairmen were pulling away after repairing a stereo when a two-year old pit bull broke loose and attacked and flattened all four tires.<sup>60</sup> Attacking the tires*

*of a car is a form of redirected aggression, similar to an attack on a person who tries to break-up a dog fight. Most old-time dogfighters eliminated pit bulls that attacked a handler or referee, but this trait has surfaced with irresponsible breeders and owners.<sup>161</sup>*

**Page 13**

g.) Speak to vicious dogs with words such as "no", "go," "go home," sit," "down," "lie down," "stay" or "halt" in a low stern voice<sup>57</sup>

*"...Some people reinforce oral commands by clapping their hands. This will get the dog's attention, but it may excite the animal. It may be risky to clap the hands when approached by a pit bull."*

**Page 15**

## **Dos When a Person Has Been Bitten by a Vicious Dog**

a.) Capture and remove the dog as soon as possible

*"...In Newport News, Virginia, one pit bull was killed by a police officer and another was shot in the shoulder.<sup>81</sup> The dogs had first attacked and bit a boy who was pushing a lawn mower, The remaining injured dog then went after a woman who was riding a bicycle with her husband. An observer watering his lawn clapped his hands to attract the dog's attention. He was attacked."*

**Page 18**

c.) Transport a victim gently and quickly to a clinic or hospital

*"Pit bull bites are associated with much greater damage to underlying vessels, nerves, muscles and other tissues. Emergency personnel were held at for at least 25 minutes in Dayton, Ohio, by two pit bulls before the owner arrived. The victim died after he was transported to the hospital.<sup>84</sup>*

*Pit bull bites should be considered to be more serious than other dog bites since these animals inflict damage to underlying vessels, nerves and other tissues.<sup>85-88</sup> An insight into the damage produced by pit bulls is provided by Jack London's use of the term "clinging death"<sup>87</sup> to describe these animals. In an account of dog and cat confrontations with pit bulls, it was noted that after the skin over the puncture wounds was incised, one would find large black masses of devascularized muscle which had to be removed to promote healing.<sup>168</sup>*

**Page 19**

## Dos for Veterinarians, Veterinary Technicians, Trainers, Animal Control Officers and Others:

[Author notes the following as "suggestions" offered for veterinarians, animal technicians, animal control officers, obedience trainers and "others who must deal with these animals."]

a.) Attempt to separate vicious dogs from other animals and clients in the office, waiting room or other setting.

*"...In one veterinarian hospital, a pit bull attacked another dog in the waiting room and the owner of the attacked dog had a heart attack.*

**Page 20**

c.) Place a vicious dog in an end run next to an empty adjacent run if there are no solid partitions between runs.

*"...Fighting dogs will damage doors, floors, food containers and other fixtures and equipment by scratching, biting or jumping against them.<sup>90-91</sup> Secondary barriers (fencing or doors) may be helpful in keeping pit bulls, wolves and wolf-hybrids from escaping. These secondary barriers also may be effective in preventing dogfighters and thieves from gaining access to a hospital or facility."*

**Page 21-22**

g.) Use security locks on doors and runs.

*"Pit bulls, wolves and wolf-hybrids are very capable in opening kennel doors.<sup>89</sup> There are double latches or locks that help prevent dogs from jumping against such devices and opening them. These animals are also able to climb cyclone fencing and scale other enclosures."<sup>20,31</sup>*

**Page 23**

i.) Make sure that two people are present for cage and run cleaning and treatments on weekends and holidays when vicious dogs are present.

*"...Pit bulls, however, may not display obvious threatening behavior toward other animals or people.<sup>89</sup> A large vicious dog, pit bull or wolf may be extremely dangerous and it would be difficult to justify such a risk in court. Two veterinarians were sued when a pit bull attacked a 16-year old student who was working as a kennel man. The lawsuit asked \$15 million in compensatory damages and \$32 million for punitive and other damages."<sup>93</sup>*

**Page 24**

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