



Living Safely With Dogs: Tips for Community

Keep Yourself and Others Safe

- (1) **Spot aggression:** Know dog behavior warning signs.
- (2) **React appropriately,** if you feel threatened by a dog.
- (3) **Report aggression and cruelty:** Report aggressive dogs, tethered and loose dogs in public areas, and the cruel treatment of dogs.
- (4) **Expect enforcement:** Expect consistent and thorough enforcement of animal and public safety laws.
- (5) **Expect prosecution:** Be a willing witness and expect diligent prosecution and meaningful sentencing of people who break the law.
- (6) **Support Animal Control:** Support animal care and control agencies so they have the resources necessary to keep our community and animals safe.

The Coalition for Living Safely with Dogs is a group of Colorado animal health, care, and control professionals that exists to promote understanding of the human and animal behaviors that impact community safety and to reframe the civic conversation about dangerous dogs.

- All Breed Rescue Network (ABRN)
- Animal Assistance Foundation (AAF)
- Colorado Association of Animal Control Officers (CAACO)
- Colorado Association of Certified Veterinary Technicians (CACVT)
- Colorado Federation of Animal Welfare Agencies (CFAWA)
- Colorado Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA)
- Denver Area Veterinary Medical Society (DAVMS)
- Metro Denver Shelter Alliance (MDSA)
- Summerlee Foundation

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Living Safely With Dogs: Expanded Tips

FOR COMMUNITY

Keep Yourself and Others Safe

(1) Spot aggression. Know the warning signs.

- “Dogs communicate aggression through vocalization (growling, barking) OR body language (stiffened posture, raised hackles, bared teeth, snapping, or staring).” (Delise K. *Fatal Dog Attacks: The Stories Behind the Statistics*, 2002:17)
- Do not approach an unfamiliar dog, especially if the dog is tied up or is resting.
- Ask the owner for permission to pet or play with a dog.
- Never bother a dog that is sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies.

(2) React appropriately if you feel threatened.

- Stand straight and still. Be a post.
- Do not stare at the dog; instead, focus your eyes just over its head.
- Do not scream and do not run.
- To protect your neck and head, place your hands up under your jaw and remain very still. The majority of dogs will simply approach, sniff, and walk away.

(3) Report aggressive dogs, tethered and loose dogs in public areas, and the cruel treatment of dogs to animal control/law enforcement.

- Report dangerous behavior even if the dog is enclosed behind a fence.
- Report dogs that chase kids or passers-by.
- Report dogs that are not properly confined to their property.
- Report dog bites.
- A dog running at large is at risk for its own safety and the safety of others.
- Cruelty and neglect include lack of proper care and shelter, physical abuse, and dog fighting.
- By not reporting aggressive or mistreated dogs, others may be at risk.

(4) Expect consistent and thorough enforcement of animal and public safety laws.

- Every community needs officials to respond promptly to animal issues from dogs running at large to a bite. Enforcement can consist of education, writing warnings and tickets, and impoundment of animals.
- Support animal care and control and code enforcement officers
- Ensure that your community has enforceable, strong dog laws.
- Vote to allocate the financial resources needed to run a quality animal care and control agency to keep our community and animals safe.

(5) Be a willing witness and expect diligent prosecution and meaningful sentencing of people who break the law.

- Contact prosecutors and judges with your expectations in dangerous dog cases.
- Enforcement must be backed up by a judicial system that takes animal laws seriously. Does the judge impose penalties on violators or dismiss tickets? Is there an education system in place to have violators and pets evaluated?