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## Dangerous dogs are a growing threat

Attention all dog owners: Camden County is changing its regulations regarding dangerous dogs. The change is in response to a new Georgia law, "Mercedes Law," that is named after a girl who has undergone more than a dozen reconstructive surgeries after being attacked by a vicious dog.

And if you think your dog doesn't qualify as dangerous, you may need to think again: any dog can be provoked to bite, but there are certain situations you'd be well advised to avoid.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- It does not matter what breed of dog you have; any animal can be provoked to bite.
- Dogs can get aggressive defending just about anything: territory, people, puppies, food or possessions.
- How your dogs acts, even when you are not around, is your responsibility.
- Letting your dog roam is dangerous on many levels: it could be hit by a vehicle, be dognapped or worse still, bite or otherwise attack an unwitting passerby.
- Dogs that are chained tend to be more anxious and can be easily agitated into biting.


Training your dog is vital. Every dog can be trained to be a sweet, non-aggressive pet that would not harm a fly, but it takes work. It is never too late to train a dog, either. No matter your pet's age, it can learn new tricks, including how to react calmly to strangers. Think it is not possible? Talk to a qualified dog trainer and you will be amazed what can happen with a little bit of hard work. The rewards - for both you and your pet - will be without measure.

A few things to keep in mind should you come across an aggressive dog; teach them to your children and keep them at the back of your mind:


- Do not run.
- Do not scream.
- Do not turn your back on the animal.
- Walk away slowly and get into the nearest building or vehicle.
- If attacked, use whatever you have for defense, backpack, bicycle, shoes, whatever you can give the dog to bite that isn't part of you.
- If the attack is serious, call 9-1-1.

The new law makes it easier for dogs to be defined as dangerous or vicious and for owners to be sanctioned for failing to properly control or contain their pet.

For further information still, call Camden County Animal Control at 576-7395.

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