

Two dogs put down after girl is bitten

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REDWOOD CITY — Animal Control officers euthanized two adult male dogs Tuesday after one sent a 19-month-old girl to Kaiser Hospital's emergency room with bites to the face and head.

Melissa Williams of San Mateo called Redwood City police Monday night to report what happened to her toddler, according to police reports. The dogs belonged to the victim's grandmother, and this incident marked their first encounter with Animal Control.

Though only one animal apparently bit the child, both were put to sleep at the request of the owners. The dog that bit the child was named Boo, a 6-year-old male neutered Pointer — a kind of sporting dog popular among hunters, said Peninsula Humane Society spokesman Scott Delucchi. PHS provides animal control services for every city in San Mateo County.

Coco, a pit bull-Labrador mix was also put down, though that animal was not involved in the biting. Coco was described as "intact," meaning he had not been neutered.

The dogs' deaths come during a time of acute awareness toward animal attacks, following the fatal mauling of a 12-year-old boy in San Francisco by a pit bull. That attack has prompted calls for stricter regulations on owners of certain breeds and calls for all pit bulls to be spayed or neutered.

Though pit bulls and pit bull mixes have dominated the headlines, Delucchi said they account for a small percentage of the bite cases that come through PHS.

"All breeds bite," Delucchi said.

Between June 1 and June 17, PHS has handled 36 bite cases. Of those, pit bulls were responsible for just 4 percent. Despite the increased attention dog bites have received in the media recently, Delucchi said dog-bite incidents are not on the rise.

The Williams family could not be reached for comment.

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