



DOG ATTACKS MOTHER AND CHILD

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Do you feel safe walking down the street? In just the past two weeks, at least three people in East Idaho have been seriously injured in attacks by dogs running at large. What's surprising is that there is little the law can do. **Jeremy Johnson** spoke with a woman who was attacked while walking with her toddler.

Jenny Wixom just wanted to take her daughter on a short walk down their residential street, but when she passed by one yard, their nice little stroll came to an end.

"My little girl stopped and pointed at the dog and yelled, 'Doggie, doggie.' The dog just ran and jumped and grabbed me and threw me down on the ground and then started biting my arm."

Jenny was holding her 18-month-old daughter when she was attacked, sending the child through the air - landing on her head, fracturing her skull from ear to ear. Jenny also found herself on the ground.

"I've got some really deep puncture wounds on my arm. I'm bruised. When I fell, my teeth hit the pavement. It chipped a tooth and my teeth have cracks in them now."

As Jenny begins to heal, the question is, 'What happens to the animal that attacked her?' Chubbuck Animal Control Officer T. Hancock explains.

"We impound the dog until we find out exactly what happened. We do an in-depth investigation."

That investigation includes interviewing witnesses and the owners of the animal, an on-site investigation, monitoring the animal at the city shelter, and a rabies test. But at the end of that investigation, who will be held accountable?

"We will bring the dog in, as I said, then we'll hold the animal and have a vicious dog hearing, not to convict the owners, but it's to determine whether the animal's safe to put back out in society."

If a animal is determined to be vicious, the owners have three options: 1) Surrender the animal to be euthanized. 2) Keep the dog, buy a \$500,000 liability insurance policy, have the owner's Social Security number tattooed on the dog, and display a sign that states a vicious animal is on the property. 3) Move the dog outside the county.

Jenny probably won't have a say in what happens to the dog who attacked her, but she wants to spread this message to all dog owners.

"If they know their dog's aggressive, that if they're going to have them out of the fence to have it on a leash."

Chubbuck Animal Control says in most cases like Jenny's, the owners would be cited for an animal at large and the rest would have to be taken care of in civil court.

