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Two dogs attack Tiverton letter carrier

TIVERTON — A Tiverton letter carrier was attacked by two dogs on Tucker Avenue in town on Thursday, May 4.

The incident occurred at 2:30 p.m. in a neighborhood not far from the Sakonnet River Bridge while the carrier, whose name was not released, was walking on the street between deliveries. One dog ran toward him and he fended it off with his mail satchel while reaching for his dog spray, an approved Postal Service product.

A yellow lab mix rushed him from behind at the same time and bit the back of his left thigh. The attack left a deep puncture wound. The carrier was taken to Memorial Hospital for treatment.

"The Tiverton animal control officer quickly quarantined the dog and verified that it had the required shots," said Tiverton Postmaster Karin Aukerman. "The letter carrier took the appropriate steps to protect himself from injury. More than a week later, the puncture wound still causes him pain," she said, though he has been able to return to work.

Both dogs were owned by the same person. Ms. Aukerman said it is Postal Service policy to seek restitution for medical expenses from the dog owner's insurance company.

This is the first dog bite injury to a letter carrier in Tiverton in three years, the postmaster said.

"We work closely with the Tiverton animal control officer to identify the dogs in town and to place dog-warning cards at the carriers' cases.

National statistics indicate that for every carrier who is bitten, about 30 children are injured in dog attacks each year," said Ms. Aukerman. "In Tiverton, we have a chance to reduce that number if owners continue to take responsible care of their pets. For the most part, they do, and I thank them for that."

"Customers appear increasingly aware of the financial liability involved. They're increasingly aware, too, that even nice dogs bite," Ms. Aukerman said.

She said Tiverton residents can prevent dog bite injuries by taking the following steps:

- * Keep your dog in the house or leashed in the yard away from the mail receptacle.
- * Don't have your dog at your side when your letter carrier hands you mail.
- * Teach your children to refrain from giving or receiving mail from a letter carrier when your dog is nearby.
- * If you are at home and come to the door to meet the carrier, restrain your dog.
- * If you have an invisible fence, relocate your mailbox to a point outside that area.



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