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Free Press

BACK SEND TO A FRIEND FEEDBACK

Dog bites letter carrier

By **Arthur Williams**
Free Press
 May 18 2007

A Prince George mail carrier was hospitalized with serious injuries after being attacked by a large dog Tuesday morning.

The female mail carrier was delivering mail in the downtown area at about 10 a.m. when she approached a house with a large, light brown dog of mixed hound breeds lying on the steps, Canada Post spokeswoman Lillian Au said.

"When she approached the mail receptacle the dog lunged at her and bit her in the left leg. She suffered very deep puncture wounds," Au said. "The dog did not growl or give any sign of being aggressive. It seems likely it was surprised."

Au said the carrier had to pull herself away from the dog, which was on a rope long enough to reach the sidewalk.

"I was told the person inside the house did not come out to assist," she added.

Since the weather has warmed up, there has been an increase in the number of dog attacks on mail carriers in the city, Au said.

"I do know Prince George is a concern. We had one dog that attacked a letter carrier seven times – mail was suspended to that residence," she said. "[Dogs] are territorial and they want to protect their property. That puts our letter carriers at risk. Our letter carriers carry satchels that are quite heavy and can't manoeuvre out of the way."

Carriers who feel they are at risk from dogs at a location are not required to deliver mail until the situation is resolved. Au urged dog owners to secure their pets inside, or if they must be outside, in a secure dog run or on a sturdy leash where they can't reach mail carriers. Canada Post's Prince George depot supervisor Mark Scott said he saw the carrier after the attack. She needed a skin graft to

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repair the damage done to her leg and was heavily sedated, Scott said.

"I saw the puncture wounds. You could've put your finger in them – it's very serious," he said.

The dog owner will not be getting any mail until the danger is resolved to Canada Post's satisfaction, Scott said.

"I wouldn't say Prince George is a problem dog community. But now that it's warming ... when people are off at work, dogs are being left outside," he said. "In the summer we get one or two attacks a week. Serious attacks probably one or two a month. But it's like that everywhere."

Scott said even dogs with no history of aggression need to be properly restrained.

"People say, 'It would never happen with my dog.' Well, guess what, it just did," he said. "It's not just for the letter carriers, it's for everyone."

As of press time, city bylaw services manager Ken Craig said animal control officers had not been able to contact the dog owner.

"We have a witness who saw the attack and took the lady to the hospital," Craig said. "The animal control officer was advised and went to the residence. The dog was inside, the owner was not. I saw the photos of the dog... it's probably 70-80 pounds – that's a big dog."

In some cases owners will willingly surrender a dog to be euthanized, Craig said. If not, animal control will need to present its case to a judge and see if the court will order the dog seized.

"We do, in some cases, seize animals. We need a court-ordered search warrant to enter private property, with police help, and seize the animal."

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