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Postal carriers' plight more than a cliché

Worker reports she has been bitten twice by same dog

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Mary Ann Allen fell victim to one of the most common clichés: Dog bites mail carrier.

And it has happened more than once.

But getting bit by the dog en route to delivering the mail isn't as cliché as it might seem. In the past few years, dog bites were one of the top three causes of accidents to letter carriers, said Keith Reid, postmaster for the U.S. Postal Service in Fort Collins.

"Animals are territorial and they need to be placed in a backyard or restrained during the hours of 9 to 5," Reid said.

In the previous postal year, which ran from October 2006 to October 2007, Fort Collins postal carriers had been bitten 11 times by dogs, Reid said.

Allen, a letter carrier for 15 years, has been bitten twice by the same dog within in the past month.

The first time, she was bitten on her finger; the second time, she was bitten on her hip.

"I heard him barking, so I turned around and he jumped up and bit me on the hip," Allen said.

Reid said animal control was called, but because the dog bite did not break her skin, there was no action taken.

"It's something we're always thinking about," Allen said. "It makes me nervous when we deliver a certified letter and have to go up to the door."

Because of the situation, Reid said the post office planned on installing cluster boxes, making it safer for his mail carrier. But it's also expensive.

"It would cost the postal service about \$1,000, but that's well worth the cost of having the employee attacked with medical expenses and replacements and that stuff," he said.
