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News

Girl, 5, undergoes surgery after dog bite

Thursday, October 8, 2009

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PLYMOUTH — A 5-year-old Conshohocken girl could spend an extended amount of time in a hospital after being bitten by a dog and suffering severe injuries to her throat.

The girl was bitten at Maple Acre Farms on Narcissa Road, while at the establishment with her mother Oct. 5.

According to police reports, a German shepherd, belonging to the proprietor of Maple Farms, was unleashed and roaming the property freely during the victim's visit. The mother reported to police that she and her daughter had pet the dog several times because there was no signage posted saying not to. She said she believed that because the dog had been walking freely around the area it was not dangerous.

As the pair was getting ready to leave, the girl apparently intended to hug the dog and that is when the animal bit her neck.

The girl and her mother were flown to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, where the victim underwent a five-hour surgery to treat a severely damaged vocal cord and a punctured larynx, according to a statement given to police by the girl's grandfather. She also had a tracheotomy and is currently on a ventilator, and could remain in the hospital's care for up to a month, the report said.

Police say that while interviewing the dog's owner, the man said that his dog had bitten someone before. A subsequent investigation showed that the dog has had three previous incidents involving bites, according to the Montgomery County Health Department, with the most recent bite nearly ripping off the ear of the victim.

Due to the previous incidents, there is a department order that the dog must be in a secured enclosure and must be muzzled and leashed under the control of someone 18 years or older if taken off of the property.

It was also ordered that the dog be taken into custody for a period of 10 days, with the dog's veterinary hospital agreeing to do so.

Police are continuing to look into the incident, with the possibility of charges to follow.

"The dog must be quarantined. Right now there are no plans to destroy the dog's life," said Plymouth Deputy Chief John Myrsiades. "We are currently doing an investigation and we are working with the District Attorney's Office."

Phone calls to the Montgomery County Health Department were not returned.

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