



11 May 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ATTENTION: CHIEF REPORTERS  
CIVIC REPORTERS

### **Public urged: report dog attacks quickly**

Invercargill City Council Officers are responding to a recent spate of dog attacks by asking people to report any incidents as soon as possible after they happen.

The Council's Director of Environmental Services, William Watt, said "A dog can go a long way in five minutes, let alone several hours or days – so the sooner an incident is reported, the more effective Council's response can be.

"People should phone our Council's Helpdesk 2111-777 as soon as possible after an attack, or if the incident occurs after hours they should phone 2111-679. We need to know what happened, where it happened, and as much about the dog as possible. Often dogs will retreat to their home after aggression – please take down the address if this happens."

Mr Watt indicated today that proven dog attacks will result in prosecutions. No exceptions. "In the past we have been concerned mainly to prevent recurrence of an attack, but the public are sick of badly controlled big dogs and so are we.

"The best advice we can give the owners of these dogs is to make sure they are under control at all times."

The Council's Manager of Environmental Health Debbie Fortuin, who manages the Animal Control Section said, "it all comes back to owners being responsible – or not, and facing the consequences".

Mrs Fortuin said there were some things people could do to minimise the damage if they are attacked.

"Try to stay calm. Avoid eye contact with the dog. Back off slowly and quietly. Try to put something between you and the dog (e.g. a bag, umbrella or better

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*Manager Communications and Secretarial Services, Eirwen Tulett, 211 1678, (027) 293 8680  
Fax: 211 1435 Email: eirwen.tulett@icc.govt.nz*

*Or*

*Communications Officer, Diane Morris, 211 1601, (027) 231 3939  
Fax: 211 1433 Email: diane.morris@icc.govt.nz*

still a fence). If attacked, clench your arms closely over upper chest, neck and face. Shout for help. If assisting someone under attack, distract the dog by giving it something to chew on.”

Further information about dog owners’ responsibilities, dog welfare and control is available from the Animal Control Section 2111-777, or from the Council’s website [www.icc.govt.nz](http://www.icc.govt.nz)

ENDS.

Inquiries, Director of Environmental Services, William Watt, or Manager Environmental Health Debbie Fortuin on (03) 2111-666.

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