

SECTION 2: SAFETY AT WORK

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST DOG ATTACKS

If you are showing a property and find yourself in the home or the yard with canine company, what do you do? Remember, even if you are a dog-lover and comfortable around these areas, you are intruding on the animal's territory and may be seen as a threat.

Your best defense is to always ask clients if they own dogs and if so, what they plan to do with the dog or dogs during showings. Discuss how friendly the pets are with strangers, including children. If your clients have reason to believe their dog will react to strangers entering the home, ask that they lock the dog in a certain room or make arrangements to keep it off site if they cannot be present to control the dog.

Even with these precautions, you may occasionally find yourself face-to-face with a strange dog. Here are some tips on how to handle this situation:

- Try to leave the home as quickly as you can do so safely.
- Never approach an unfamiliar dog. If the dog approaches you, stand still. If the dog appears friendly—head and ears up, tail wagging—let it sniff you and speak to it in a soothing voice.
- Don't look any unfamiliar dog in the eye; dogs see this as aggressive behavior. Don't run or scream; you should know that you cannot outrun a dog—even a big, heavy dog like a Rottweiler.
- If the dog is growling, has bared its teeth and otherwise gives you reason to believe it is aggressive, try to place something between yourself and the dog, such as a briefcase or coat. Slowly back away. If the dog starts to circle you, turn with it rather than letting it get behind you.
- Don't disturb a dog that is sleeping, eating or caring for puppies. And never play with a dog without allowing it to see and sniff you first.
- If a dog knocks you over, your best defense is to roll into a ball, cover your face or neck and stay still.

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