

# Bitten by a Dog in Michigan? Here's What to Do Next



## DOG BITE GUIDE



**Giroux Pappas** TRIAL ATTORNEYS

[GreatMiAttorneys.com](http://GreatMiAttorneys.com)

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# DOG BITES MUST BE REPORTED

## IT'S THE LAW

Under Michigan law, any dog or animal bite where there's a risk of rabies must be reported within 24 hours to the local health department for both the location of the incident and where the victim resides.

This applies whether you're bitten in a public park, on private property, or at someone's home.

### Who Must Report?

- Doctors and healthcare providers
- Veterinarians
- Animal control officers
- Anyone with knowledge of the bite (including the victim or family members)

### Where to Report a Dog Bite in Michigan:

- Local Health Departments: You must report to the public health department in both the county where the bite occurred and where the victim lives.
- In many counties, hospitals and urgent care clinics will automatically file the report if you seek treatment.
- If you do not receive medical care, you may be responsible for contacting the health department directly.

**For example, in Oakland County, call 248-858-1280 or visit [oakgov.com](http://oakgov.com) to report.**





# QUICK TIPS: WHAT TO DO AFTER A DOG BITE IN MICHIGAN

If you've been bitten by a dog in Michigan, time is critical. These steps can protect your health, preserve evidence, and ensure your legal rights are upheld—whether the bite came from a stranger's dog or a pet you know and trust.

## **1. Seek immediate medical attention**

Even minor bites can cause infection or nerve damage. Get checked by a healthcare provider as soon as possible.

## **2. Document the incident**

Take photos of your injuries, the location where the bite happened, and anything else that could be relevant—like broken fencing or lack of leash. If there were any witnesses, get their names and contact information. Try to describe or photograph the dog if safe.

## **3. Report the bite to the local health department within 24 hours**

In Michigan, dog bites must be reported promptly to local health authorities. This helps track potentially dangerous animals and prevent future injuries.

## **4. Call a personal injury lawyer to understand your rights**

You may be entitled to compensation for medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, and other damages. A lawyer familiar with Michigan's strict liability dog bite laws can guide you through the process.

## **5. Don't feel guilty—this is an insurance claim**

If the dog belongs to a friend, neighbor, or family member, remember: you're not suing them personally. You're filing a claim through their homeowner's or renter's insurance policy. It's about covering your costs, not causing harm.





# WHEN SHOULD YOU CONTACT A LAWYER?

You should contact a personal injury attorney as soon as possible after the incident—especially if:

- The bite caused visible injury, infection, or required medical treatment
- You missed work due to the injury
- The bite involved a child or elderly person
- The dog was not properly restrained, or the owner acted negligently
- You're unsure who owns the dog or whether it had its vaccinations

Even if the injury appears minor, complications such as infection, nerve damage, or scarring can develop over time.



# WHAT IF YOU WERE BITTEN AT A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER'S HOUSE?

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Dog bites often occur in familiar settings—with dogs you know and trust. In fact, many victims are bitten while visiting:

- A close friend
- A neighbor
- A relative's home

This can make the situation feel emotionally complicated. You may feel reluctant to take legal action because you care about the dog owner.

## **But here's what many people don't realize:**

When you pursue a dog bite claim, you are not suing your friend or family member personally. You are filing a claim against their homeowners insurance policy, which exists to cover situations like this.

A good attorney will handle this with discretion and compassion, protecting your relationships while still securing the compensation you need for:

- Medical bills
- Pain and suffering
- Lost wages
- Future medical care

# MICHIGAN DOG BITE REPORTING CONTACTS BY COUNTY

## **Oakland County**

 Report by phone: 248-858-1280

 [Oakland County Animal Bite Investigation](#)

## **Macomb County**

 Report by phone: 586-783-0906 or [by form](#)

 Email: [animalcontrol@macombgov.org](mailto:animalcontrol@macombgov.org)

 [Macomb County Animal Control](#)

## **Wayne County**

 Form: City of [Detroit Animal Bite Report Form \(PDF\)](#)

 County-wide Info: [Wayne County Communicable Disease & Bite Reporting](#)

 City of Wayne Animal Control: 734-721-1643

## **Washtenaw County**

 Online: Report an Animal Bite – Washtenaw County

 Full details: [Washtenaw Disease Reporting & Animal Bites](#)

 Health Department: 734-544-6700

## **Genesee County**

 Downloadable form: [Animal Bite Reporting Form \(PDF\)](#)

 Full instructions: [Genesee County Communicable Disease Program](#)

 Animal Control: 810-732-1660 | Health Dept: 810-257-1017

## **Lapeer County**

 Bite Request Form: [Lapeer Bite Report Form \(PDF\)](#)

 Instructions & contact: [Lapeer County Animal Control – Bite Reporting](#)

 Animal Control: 810-667-0236 | Health Dept: 810-667-0391

## **Livingston County**

 Downloadable Form: [Livingston County Bite Report \(PDF\)](#)

 Bite Reporting Info: [Livingston County Animal Control](#)

 Animal Control: 517-546-2440 | Fax: 517-545-9627



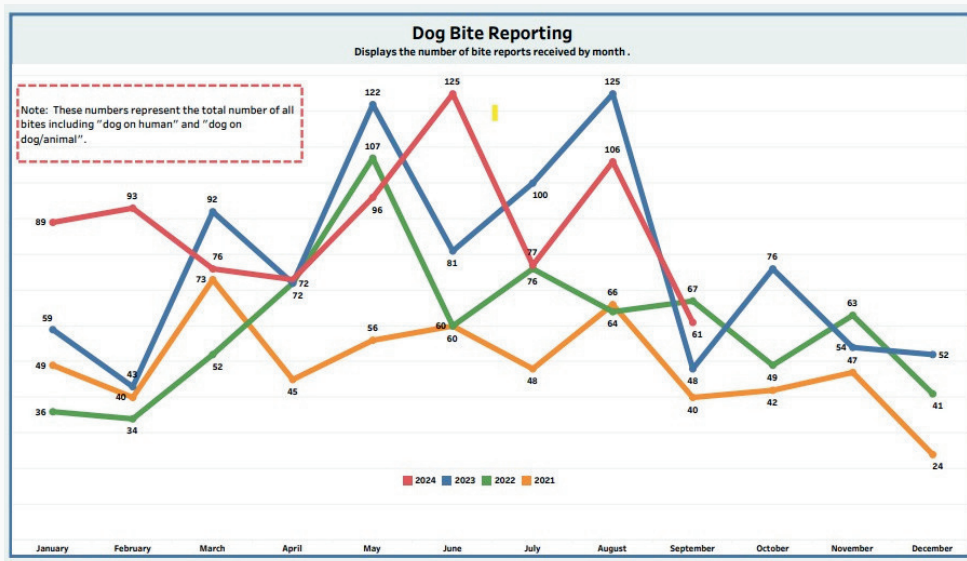


# Dog Bites Happen More Often Than You Think

According to the CDC, approximately **4.5 million people are bitten by dogs each year** in the U.S. — and **nearly 1 in 5 bites require medical attention**. In Michigan, the law holds dog owners **strictly liable** for injuries their dog causes, even if it's the first time the dog has ever bitten someone.

## Detroit Dog Bite Report By Month

The line graph from Detroit Animal Control illustrates reported dog-bite incidents by month over the four-year span from 2021 to 2024 and shows a peak in warmer months of May - August.



Source: Detroit Animal Control, Monthly Report of Dog-Bite Incidents, January 2021–December 2024.



A pronounced seasonal pattern emerges: bites rise noticeably starting in late spring, peaking sharply in May, June, July, and August each year. This summertime surge aligns with increased outdoor activity and public dog interactions during warmer months. As noted in broader Michigan data, spring and summer months consistently show higher bite rates, correlating with greater human-dog exposure.



# How Giroux Pappas Can Help

At Giroux Pappas Trial Attorneys, we help people who have been injured by dog bites and other forms of negligence get the justice and compensation they deserve. We know how delicate these situations can be and are here to support you and answer your questions with empathy, discretion, and strength.

Contact our Dog bite Lawyers  
today for a free consultation.  
**248-531-8665**

We'll listen to your situation,  
explain your options, and  
fight for your recovery if  
needed.

**We fight for justice. We  
fight for you.**



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