

Do You Have to Report a Dog Bite in Maine? What Victims Need to Know

Why reporting helps your case and how a Maine dog bite lawyer can help

Dog bites are painful – and the steps you take next matter. What a victim does after an attack often determines whether they receive fair compensation or are left to handle the consequences alone. In Maine, the decision to report a dog bite may affect the outcome of any future insurance claim or legal case.

Larger, stronger dogs are more often involved in serious injury claims because of the force they can exert during an attack. When dogs are not properly trained, restrained, or supervised, the risk of severe injury increases. While breed alone does not determine behavior, a [Maine dog bite lawyer](#) may examine factors such as the dog's size, history, training, and the owner's precautions when evaluating liability.

Some people are reluctant to report a bite, particularly when the dog belongs to a friend or neighbor. Others may assume the injury is too minor to matter. But failing to report a bite can create problems later. Without an official record, it becomes easier for the owner or insurer to dispute what happened. Reporting the attack helps preserve the facts and gives legal professionals a starting point to hold the right party accountable.

Maine's dog bite laws favor victims, but you still need a strong case

Maine follows a strict liability rule for most dog bite injuries. That means the dog's owner is responsible for the harm their animal causes, even if the dog had never shown aggression before. The law applies as long as the victim was not trespassing, provoking the animal, or acting illegally at the time of the attack.

However, strict liability does not mean automatic payment. Victims still have to prove that the dog caused the injury and that they were lawfully present. If there is no police or animal control report, no witnesses, and no medical records created at the time, insurance companies will often push back or argue the injury came from something else.

Maine law also allows claims based on negligence. For example, if a dog owner violated local leash laws or failed to warn about known aggression, they may be considered negligent in addition to strictly liable. This can increase the value of a claim, but it also requires more detailed proof, something that becomes easier when the attack is officially reported.

What kinds of injuries justify a legal claim?

Dog bite claims in Maine do not have to involve extreme or permanent injuries, but there must be some form of damage that can be documented and valued. Medical records, photographs, and witness statements help establish the severity of the injury and its impact on the victim's life. These are some of the most common injuries that result in successful claims:

- **Puncture wounds and lacerations:** These injuries often leave scars and carry a high risk of infection. Deep bites may also damage nerves and tissue.
- **Facial trauma and disfigurement:** Bites to the face, especially in children, frequently require surgery and can result in permanent scarring or emotional trauma.
- **Broken bones or soft tissue injuries:** Large or aggressive dogs can knock a person down, leading to fractures, torn ligaments, or head injuries.
- **Psychological injuries:** Post-traumatic stress, especially in young children, is common after an attack and may require ongoing therapy.
- **Infections and rabies concerns:** If the dog was not vaccinated or the bite was not properly treated, infections can lead to complications that prolong recovery.

Even seemingly minor injuries can become more serious over time. That is why it is important to take all bites seriously and to consult with a medical professional and legal team to fully assess the situation.

Why reporting can be difficult and why it still matters

In the immediate aftermath of an attack, victims are often overwhelmed. Some hesitate to file a report because they are afraid of causing tension with a friend, neighbor, or family member. Others assume that because the dog was leashed or the injury seemed small, it is not worth involving authorities.

There are also practical obstacles. The dog owner may flee the scene or refuse to provide contact or insurance information. The local animal control department may be understaffed or slow to respond. In rural parts of Maine, there may not be a clear process for filing a report outside of calling the local police.

Even when these issues arise, reporting is still important. A delayed report is better than none. Documentation gives your case weight and can reveal patterns of dangerous behavior. If the same dog has attacked before, or if the owner is known for ignoring leash laws, those facts can strengthen your claim significantly.

How to report a dog bite in Maine

Maine does not have a single statewide agency for dog bite reports. Instead, the appropriate authority depends on where the attack occurred. Reporting ensures the event is officially documented and can be referenced during any legal or insurance proceedings.

- **Animal control:** In most cities and towns, animal control is responsible for investigating dog bites, checking rabies vaccination records, and enforcing leash laws.
- **Local police:** In areas without designated animal control officers, or if the bite was serious or involved an ongoing threat, local police departments will handle the report.
- **Your medical provider:** Healthcare professionals may be required, in certain circumstances, to report animal bites to the Maine Center for Disease Control, particularly when rabies is a concern.

Filing a report helps establish the facts while also starting a public record that may be critical to your case. If you are unsure where to report, a lawyer can assist by contacting the appropriate agencies and obtaining the documents needed to support your claim.

What damages are available in a Maine dog bite case?

A personal injury claim is not just about proving the bite happened. It is about demonstrating the impact it has had on your life. In Maine, victims may be eligible to recover damages for both economic and non-economic losses. These include:

- **Medical expenses:** Emergency care, surgery, physical therapy, and follow-up treatment can all be claimed.
- **Lost income:** Time away from work due to injury or recovery may be compensable, including future lost earning potential.
- **Pain and suffering:** Physical pain, anxiety, and emotional distress are all considered in the value of a claim.
- **Scarring and disfigurement:** Visible scars, especially on the face or hands, can significantly increase the value of a case.
- **Psychological trauma:** Counseling or therapy for PTSD, particularly for children, can be part of the damages.

The true value of a case is rarely obvious at first. It takes time to understand how an injury will affect a victim's future. A lawyer can help calculate those damages and make sure they are properly documented.

How to know if you have a case

Not every bite leads to a viable legal claim, but many do. Understanding whether you have a case often comes down to the following questions:

- Was the dog's owner identifiable and in control of the animal?
- Were you lawfully present at the time of the attack?
- Did you suffer a physical or psychological injury?

- Is there documentation, such as medical records or a police report?
- Did the owner violate any local laws, such as leash or dangerous dog ordinances?

Even if the answer to some of these questions is unclear, it is worth having the situation reviewed. An experienced Maine dog bite lawyer can analyze the facts, gather the necessary evidence, and determine whether compensation is possible. Many strong cases begin with just one conversation.

Get help from a Maine dog bite lawyer who knows how to win

Pursuing compensation after a dog bite is rarely easy. Even with Maine's strict liability law in place, victims often run into resistance from insurers, uncooperative dog owners, or claims adjusters who try to minimize the injury. Some victims are blamed for provoking the dog. Others are pressured into accepting low settlements before they understand the long-term costs of their injuries.

[Romanow Law Group](#) helps dog bite victims navigate these challenges with experience, strategy, and persistence. Their team investigates each case thoroughly, obtains police and animal control records, identifies insurance coverage, and builds a strong claim backed by clear evidence. Whether negotiating a settlement or preparing for trial, they focus on securing full compensation for medical bills, scarring, lost wages, and emotional trauma.

Victims should not be left handling the legal system alone. We offer [free consultations](#) to help injured Mainers understand their options and get answers. There is no cost to speak with a Maine dog bite lawyer, and no fee unless the case is won. If you or a loved one has been hurt in a preventable attack, learn about your rights and legal options. [Contact us](#) for a free consultation today.