

Ohio reports thousands of dog attacks a year

What to know about the state's dog laws

Aggressive dogs fall into three categories, and their behavior must be unprovoked and documented. Here's how it breaks down:

- Nuisance: have acted in menacing way toward someone, such as chasing, growling or snapping.
- Dangerous: have been convicted three times for running loose or have caused a non-serious injury to a person or killed another dog.
- Vicious: have caused serious injury, permanent incapacity, disfigurement, maiming or killed someone.



In unprovoked attacks, the owner can face minor misdemeanor charges for failure to confine the dog and or failure to register the dog. The owner may face a fourth-degree felony charge if their dog kills a second person.

Owning a dangerous dog

Owners of dangerous or vicious dogs face extra requirements, including:

- keeping them locked in enclosures with tops while at home.
- muzzling and keeping them on a short, chain-link leash when outside the home.
- post a warning sign, though the law is silent on what it must say, how big it is or where must be posted.
- microchipping, vaccinating and spaying or neutering the dog.
- buying an annual dangerous dog tag from the county auditor for \$50.

A judge may order the owner of a dangerous dog to buy liability insurance. Extra insurance is required for owners of vicious dogs.

What are the fines?

Fines for failure to register a dog or failure to confine or control a dog start at \$25. Fines for subsequent offenses start at \$75. Fines are higher once a dog is deemed dangerous or vicious and the owner fails to confine it.

When are vicious dogs put down?

Often putting a dog down after a serious injury is left up to the owner. Sometimes police officers responding to an attack will shoot the dog if they can't stop it another way.

Under Ohio law, judges may order euthanasia after a dog kills a person. If the dog already deemed vicious, gets out and kills a second person, the judge must order euthanasia.

Can dog owners get sued in civil court?

Dog owners can face civil lawsuits too. Dog bite cases in Ohio fall under the "strict liability" rule, making the owner liable for injuries caused by their dog, regardless of whether the dog had a history of aggressive behavior.

Homeowner and renters' insurance policies often cap how much they'll pay out for dog bite incidents. That can make it difficult for victims to recover enough to pay their medical bills and lost wages.

Follow this link to read the full Ohio Revised Code for Dog Bites: [Section 955.261 | Duties after dog bites person](#)