

Preventing Pet Bites When GHI Staff are in Your Home or Yard: Tips to Consider before Completing the Request for Maintenance Form

It is important to consider the safety of the GHI staff members who will enter your home or yard to perform maintenance, as well as the safety of your pet(s). Consider the following before you complete your GHI Request for Maintenance form, and before you decide whether staff should be allowed to enter your home when you are not there.

All pets can and will bite given the right circumstances. Cats will bite when they are stressed or injured or ill. Dogs bite for many reasons, including:

- Dogs bite as a reaction to something. If the dog finds itself in a stressful situation, it may bite to defend itself or its territory.
- Dogs can bite because they are scared or have been startled. They can bite because they feel threatened. They can bite to protect something that is valuable to them, like their puppies, their food or a toy.
- Dogs might bite because they aren't feeling well. They could be sick or sore due to injury or illness and might want to be left alone.

Although we tend to think of dogs when talking about animal bites, a cat's bite may be as severe as a dog bite in the long run. Cat bites often result in small but deep puncture wounds. This type of bite tends to push bacteria deep into the tissues where the bacteria is harder to get rid of and can lead to an infection.

Refer to the Companion Animal Committee webpage for the article, or the section of the Guide for Members with Companion Animals, entitled, WHAT HAPPENS IF MY ANIMAL BITES A HUMAN OR ANOTHER ANIMAL to learn more about what happens in the event of a bite.

Pets who are home alone are often more stressed than they would be if you were home with them. Even when you are home, someone unfamiliar entering your home or yard may be extremely stressful for your pets. As a result, they may act in ways that surprise you.

Remember your pets don't understand why a GHI staff member is entering their home or yard. They may not be comfortable with a stranger working in your home in ways that other guests do not. Pets have keener ears and smaller lungs than humans, so they're especially sensitive to loud noises and noxious fumes.

If you are at home, you are more likely to prevent situations that might cause your pet to escalate. You also can stop an employee from approaching or trying to interact with your pets to begin with.

You should have your pet under control the entire time maintenance is being performed. Also your pet should not have access to your yard when GHI staff members are working in your yard. In your home, your pet should be on leash, contained in their crate (assuming your pet is crate trained), or contained in a room staff will not have to enter to perform maintenance.

In addition, it may be wise to ask the GHI staff member not to stop and not to look or stare directly at your pet upon entering your yard or home. Staff should be asked not to approach or interact with your pet, especially if the pet is contained in a crate or in another room.

Whether you are home or not, have a plan for your pets to ensure that both the GHI staff member and your pets are safe. While GHI staff members are working in your yard, do not allow your pets to have access to that part of your yard. Always be sure that staff members are actually where you think they are. Finally, always check to ensure that GHI staff have left your yard and have closed your gate(s) before you let your pets into the yard. Sometimes staff members will go to their trucks to complete a

form but will return to your yard to give it to you.

When you complete your Request For Maintenance Form, consider arranging to be home when GHI staff members come to your home to perform maintenance. That way if something unexpected happens that would cause your pet to react, you can ensure that your pet doesn't have an opportunity to bite. After all, the best bite prevention is for you to be there with your pet.