HOME INSPECTORS & ANIMAL ATTACKS

NUMBER OF PETS IN THE U.S. BY RANKING

1. 171.7M
2. 93.6M
3. 79.5M
4. 15.9M
5. 15M

Dogs are the third most popular pet in the U.S.
Over 36 percent of households own at least one dog.

BIGGEST THREAT TO HOME INSPECTORS: DOGS

While many dogs are friendly, intelligent, and obedient, some dogs can be aggressive due to irresponsible pet ownership, lack of education and training, and irresponsible breeding. While pit bulls cause most fatal dog bites, all dogs can be dangerous.

NEARLY 1 IN 5 people bitten by a dog requires medical attention.

Dog bites can lead to pain, injury, nerve damage, infection, and, in rare cases, **DEATH**

18% OF DOG BITES become infected with bacteria.

OVER 60 kinds of bacteria live in dogs' mouths.

> "Dogs are the largest, most aggressive, most territorial animals that you're likely to see in somebody's house."
> AARON MILLER, TEXAS INSPECTOR

> "You don't want to fight with a racoon, particularly if they've got young ones around. They're very vicious and will stand their ground."
> EMERSON TREFFER, PRO HOME INSPECTION SERVICES, INC.

OTHER POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS ANIMALS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER DURING A HOME INSPECTION:

raccoons, snakes, rodents, bats, spiders, skunks, opossums, bees, fire ants, alligators, mountain lions, bobcats, bulls, bears, and coyotes.

ANIMAL ATTACK PREVENTION

ASK THAT ANY PETS BE REMOVED FROM THE INSPECTION SITE.

Asking that pets be removed rather than simply secured behind a fence or in another room is the best way to keep both you and the animals safe. A pet-free property also allows you to perform a full inspection rather than one limited to animal-free zones.

> "In the last 30 days, two of my inspectors have been chased out of a house where a dog was initially contained in a cage or on a patio and the dog broke out."
> STEVEN RINEHART, RINEHART REAL ESTATE INSPECTION SERVICE

A bonus: Even if the pet isn't dangerous, having no pets onsite absolves you of any responsibility the homeowner tries to put upon you to look after their pet.

Q: What if a homeowner refuses to remove their pet?
A: Try getting the home buyers and real estate agents involved in explaining that the inspection cannot take place until the property is pet-free.

KNOW WHAT WILDLIFE IS COMMON IN YOUR INSPECTION AREA.

What animals you may encounter onsite often depends on your location. While Florida inspectors may encounter alligators in backyards regularly, California inspectors are more likely to stumble upon snakes. Look up what types of wild animals are prevalent in your inspection territory. Then, learn what signs—like footprints or feces—may indicate such animals are nearby.

> "Be aware of your surroundings. Familiarize yourself with what is there and what signs to look for."
> JESSE NEWTON, ALL TYPES OF HOME INSPECTIONS

WEAR THE PROPER CLOTHING.

Protective gear—such as pants, boots, gloves, and masks—can protect you from surprise critters.

> "I do not allow my guys to wear shorts. You have to cover yourself as much as possible."
> NICK CALERO, CR PRO HOME INSPECTIONS

> "Before I enter a space where there's potential for animals, I look really closely. I use an ultra-bright flashlight and I make sure the area I'm inspecting appears to be clear before I venture in there."
> JEFF GORUM, SOUTHWEST HOME INSPECTIONS

PROCEED WITH CAUTION.

> "If it's an exterior crawlspace hatch, we'll open the crawlspace during the inspection as we're walking on the floor and hope to scare [out] anything that's in there." "
> JAMES SZCZESNY, 4 SEASONS HOME INSPECTIONS

Before inspecting the intricate details of the property, get an overview of your inspection site. Do not enter a new area without scanning it for animals first. Before inspecting the crawlspace or attic, where wild animals are more likely to reside, you may consider giving potential critters the opportunity to leave by making noise before you enter. Once you have established that the area is safe, continue to inspect defensively just in case there are animals present that you were unable to see in your initial search.

IF YOU DO ENCOUNTER AN ANIMAL, PROTECT YOURSELF AND LEAVE.

If you do encounter an animal, do not approach it and do not continue inspecting that area. Even if there is quite a distance between you and the animal, it is not worth risking your safety to complete that area of the inspection. It's better to disclaim the area in your report and offer to return to re-inspect the area once it's clear.

If an unfamiliar dog approaches you:

- Stand still and remain calm with the side of your body facing the dog
- Don't panic or make loud noises
- Avoid direct eye contact with the dog
- Slowly raise your hands to your neck with your elbows in

> "I ring the doorbell and I hear a dog on the other side. It sounds like a shih tzu or it sounds like a rottweiler—it doesn't matter to me. I'm not going in the house." "
> STEVEN RINEHART, RINEHART REAL ESTATE INSPECTION SERVICE

If a dog attacks you:

- Create a barrier between you and the dog with your jacket, bag, or other available items
- If bitten, resist the urge to pull away from the bite, which can make the injury worse
- If you're knocked down, curl into a ball with your head tucked in and your hands over your ears and neck
- Once the dog loses interest, slowly back away to safety

For tips on how to protect yourself from other animals specific to your area, we recommend doing research online and conversing with other inspectors in your area.

LEARN MORE

InspectorPro INSURANCE PROGRAM

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "Preventing Dog Bites." Department of Health and Human Services, April 8, 2019. https://www.cdc.gov/features/dog-bite-prevention/.

Junior, Vic Langlet. "The Most Popular Pets in the US." WorldAtlas, Updated November 1, 2018. http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-most-popular-pets-in-the-us.html.