# contact with ANIMALS: REFUSE collection

When we think of aggressive animals that solid waste management may have to deal with, dogs usually come to mind. Dogs as well as other wild animals can be a notable risk to refuse collection employees. Brushing up on how to handle these situations can help workers to be prepared when they occur.

Trash collection sites can attract many animals including dogs, cats and other wild animals such as rodents, raccoons, skunks, opossums, squirrels, insects, snakes and more.

*Assess the situation:*

* Stay alert to what can be seen; when approaching the site, look for scattered debris or garbage that has been rummaged through
* Note whether bin lids have been left open exposing the waste and therefore inviting in animals
* If a dog or other domestic animal is near the collection site, see if there is someone nearby that can be communicated with through the window to assist with control of the animal
* Skip that site if the animal seems aggressive and will not leave the area; call a supervisor to discuss next steps

*Stay alert:*

* Look for aggressive or fearful posture including stiff or tense with ears up and alert or slumped posture with tail down trying to avoid attention
* Just because an animal seems friendly doesn’t mean it is; always avoid contact
* Keep a safe distance from shrubs or spots where an animal may sleep or hide
* Wear appropriate personal protective equipment such as long pants, boots, and gloves as an added layer of protection
* If approached by an animal grab any item nearby to use as a distraction and shield; slowly back to the truck facing the animal
* Move slowly and calmly; avoid jerky or quick movements
* Never run or turn your back or make loud or threatening noises
* Avoid looking into the animals eyes, looking just over their head

If bitten still protect the face and neck with a shield. Wash the wound with soap and water and contact a supervisor.