

A dog attacked my horse – what are my rights?



Dog attacks on horses are dangerous and distressing. They can cause injury to both riders and horses and even death in extreme cases. But what are the rights of horse riders and penalties for dog owners in this situation?

Both horse riders and dog owners are expected to behave responsibly when out in public spaces. If they don't, there are laws which victims of bad behaviour can turn to for redress. In the case of dog attacks, the main laws are:

- **Section 3 Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (Updated 2014).**

This Act makes it a criminal offence to allow any dog to be dangerously out of control in any place, and legal action can be taken against the owner and/or the person in charge of the dog at the time.

- **Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953.**

This Act makes it an offence for a person to knowingly or unknowingly allow a dog to worry horses and other livestock, on any agricultural land. The owner of the dog, and the person in charge of the dog at the time, would be guilty of an offence.

- **Section 8 Animal Welfare Act 2006.**

This Act makes it an offence for someone to deliberately set a dog onto your horse, as the act creates several offences related to the fighting or baiting of animals, the organisation of animal fights and its associated activities.

If you and your horse have been attacked by a dog, you should inform your council's dog warden service or local police immediately. If possible, make a note of (or video) the details surrounding the attack to help support your case should it be taken further.

If the dog was proven to be out of control, the penalty for the dog owner can be severe. They may be disqualified from owning dogs, fined £5000 or even sent to prison for two years. In extreme cases, the dog will be put down.

If you've experienced a dog attack and want to know your rights, just call the Harry Hall legal helpline? Its available to all Gold members with an active policy.