

Road Traffic Accident

The following advice is a guideline and may not apply to your circumstances. Always consult a Vet where possible.

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This must be every pet owner's worst fear, to see their own or in fact someone else's pet involved in a road accident. It is a desperate situation, requiring desperate measures. (The following could apply to other animals).

Information: Consulting with a Vet, the RSPCA and the Police, all have different ideas as to the correct procedure to follow. Consequently it is advisable that you read the following information.

The Vet: suggests that either the Police or Dog Warden should be contacted in the case of a 'stray' dog injured. They have facilities to collect a dog from the scene of the accident. Legally if you bring a dog into a Surgery, or call a Vet to the scene of the accident, you are responsible for the costs. Some practices are lenient regarding costs if the owner cannot be found, i.e. no identification, no publication of reported dog lost.

The RSPCA: suggests that the Police will go out to an accident and they have lists of Vets that they can call on. Also the RSPCA have the facility to attend an accident – on call 24 hrs. If the owner cannot be found, they will put the first £50 towards a Vet bill.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT www.rspca.org.uk

The Police: On speaking with an Officer in the Justice Department at Headquarters, a whole different light was put on the situation!

Data: If you are unfortunate enough to hurt a dog whilst in a public place and the owner is present, **you do not report the incident to the police.**

Do not admit to liability just exchange personal details, address and Insurance Company, and that's all. (Consider what you say/admit too, though the dog's owner may appear to appreciate it was an accident, their Solicitor may not).

If you are unable to afford full Insurance cover on your dog i.e. Vet bills and Third Party Liability, it is advisable to at least purchase the latter.

If the owner is **not** present and cannot be immediately found, **then it is your duty** to report the accident to the Police. (Incidentally if you injure or kill the

following, you must also report to the Police; goat, horse, cattle, ass, mule, sheep and pig. Badgers, you can voluntarily report their injury or death to the Police or RSPCA and they will remove them).

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT www.askthe.police.uk

However! There are 46 Police Forces in this Country, each have their own policies on handling accidents involving dogs. Some may have a list of Vets that can be called upon, some Police may come out and assist, the overall impression given, was you're on your own!

Regarding the payment of the Vet bill; possibly the RSPCA may pay the first £50 but what about the balance of the outstanding bill? If the dog has no Indentichip and the owner cannot be found, you foot the bill! The Veterinary Surgery you end up in may look on the situation 'kindly'.

Rules must apply now you have decided to help the injured animal, **never put yourself at risk!** No one wants to be calling an ambulance as well as a Vet, and **only intervene if you know what to do!**

Familiarise yourself **now** with the following information:

First Aid Knowledge is best learnt before an incident, when there's no time to refer to a book!

WHAT TO DO

If a pet has been involved in a road accident it may be bleeding, unconscious, in shock, nursing broken bones or in respiratory distress.

First... in a town or village situation, ask a sensible person to direct the traffic. If you are alone in the countryside, find something that could act as a warning to oncoming traffic, that you are stationary and there is a hazard in the road; a shopping bag, cushion, coat, opened umbrella, tree branch and put it in the middle of the road. (**Also switch on your hazard lights**).

Now... Call the police – 999, tell them what animal is injured and the location of the incident. Also ask for the telephone number of the nearest Vet. (If you hit a wild animal i.e. a Badger or Deer etc., the Police can send out a Gamekeeper to attend).

If the police are unable to help, call the RSPCA for help or ask them for the nearest Veterinary surgery.

24 hour service, Direct line - 0300 1234 999

(This is also their cruelty line).

If you have called the Police and/or the RSPCA and you realise that their response may be too late, then attempt the following advice only if you have familiarised yourself prior.

- Approach the animal with caution; even your own pet may bite if it is in pain or shock.
- Talk to the animal, reassure it.
- If the animal is **not** having breathing difficulties, then you could muzzle an aggressive patient. A scarf will do for this, but remember to approach from behind the animal's head to avoid a nasty nip.
- If it is necessary to move the animal; use a blanket or a coat as a stretcher to carefully move the animal to safety.
- Assess the situation and take the ABC approach, as in human First Aid.

Airway... Check that the airway is clear and the tongue is forward.

Breathing... If the airway is clear but you can hear a 'sucking' noise, air is coming in and out of the wound. Apply a moistened pad to the wound and gently press on the area to prevent air entering and the lung collapsing.

Circulation... If the heart has stopped beating, attempt gentle heart massage.

Shock... is inevitable. Try to keep the animal warm and talk reassuringly.

Bleeding... Cover open wounds. If the blood is bright red coming in spurts, a major artery may have been severed.

Do not apply a tourniquet! Cover with a pad, **do not remove soaked cloths**, add layers to the pressure pad, and maintain firm pressure until you get to the surgery or the Vet arrives.

There are some important do's and don'ts when dealing with something as serious as a road traffic accident.

- **Don't panic!**
- **Don't** move the patient unless you have to!
- **Don't** give the animal anything to eat or drink!

- **Don't** raise the animal's head or prop it up, even if it is unconscious, as saliva, blood or vomit may run down and block the airway!
- **Do** gently talk to the animal all the time!
- **Do** carry a pet first aid box and your Vet's telephone number with you at all times! Please read our page **First Aid Kit**

In general, being equipped with a 'pet' first aid kit at home and in the car is essential, but it is only useful if you have familiarised yourself with the basic procedures in advance of anything happening, by then, there's no time to refer to a book!

Overcoming panic and keeping the animal calm are vital steps in any emergency situation. Once you have control, even the basic pet first aid skills will help anyone deal confidently with the patient.

SO BE CONFIDENT AND BE PREPARED.

However, as previously stated, only intervene if you know what to do!

And remember to ensure the animal is scanned for an Identification chip.

FACTS...

- **Call 999 and they will divert you to the correct department.**
- **A road traffic accident if involving a stray dog must always be reported to the police.**
- **A stray dog is no longer the responsibility of the police.**

For more information...
www.askthe.police.uk