

THE UTAH
Dog Bite
&
Attack
HANDBOOK



BY
KENNETH L.
CHRISTENSEN
ATTORNEY AT LAW



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LEGAL DISCLAIMER

I cannot give legal advice in this book. The information in this book does not constitute legal advice. The suggestions and the warnings I provide in this book are not a substitute for consulting with or hiring an attorney. Please remember that I do not represent you, and I cannot give you legal advice unless and until you hire me, and I have agreed in writing to accept your case.

INTRODUCTION

Why Did I Write This Book?

I wrote this book to help you understand your legal rights if you or a loved one has been injured from a dog bite or animal attack. The insurance and legal jargon of any personal injury case is complex. Handling an insurance claim yourself can be one of the most confusing, time-consuming and stressful things you have ever done. Sometimes it may seem like you're reading an entirely different language!

This book breaks down the legal complexities of dog bite claims into plain, easy-to-read English. I hope this book will help create awareness about dog bite attacks and inform the reader of specific Utah laws. I wrote this book to answer common questions you might have and to offer some general advice as you decide how to pursue your case.

I am tired of outrageous lawyer advertising where attorneys snap their fingers or wave huge checks making people think personal injury claims are “easy” or part of a “lawsuit lottery.” The information in this book will help you find the best lawyer for your case.

I am willing to share the information contained in this book because I do not want to see you accept a bad deal or give up on fighting for your rights simply because you do not know how to proceed. This book outlines what you need to know, and what you must avoid in order to preserve your rights and get what you deserve.

Most attorneys require you to make an appointment in order to get some of the information I provide in this book. I believe you should have this information right now, without any pressure. I have put great thought into how to inform and educate you, even if we do not work together. I do not want you to fall victim to the insurance companies or to the deceptive, misleading, and unethical advertising practices of some attorneys.

I truly hope you will find this book beneficial. It may not answer all of your questions and it cannot cover every aspect of Utah dog bite laws. For more information or for a free consultation, please contact the Christensen Law Firm, PLLC.

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Specializing in Utah dog bite and animal attack cases

www.utahpersonalinjurylawfirm.com

FEWER CASES

More Time For You.

We are “different.”

At The Christensen Law Firm, we do not rely on a high volume of cases, and we don't handle every type of case. We don't want to. We don't need to.

Each year, we accept a limited number of injury cases from the hundreds of people who ask us to represent them. We do not operate a "high volume, take anything that comes through the door" type of personal injury practice. We are not a TV advertising personal injury mill. We give personal attention to the few cases we do accept. My attorneys and I personally handle your case. I do not allow paralegals and assistants to negotiate with the insurance company. We personally try the cases that go to court. Fewer cases means more time for you and, we believe, better results overall.

I established The Christensen Law Firm, PLLC because I believe Utah residents deserve more than what the TV law firms offer. If we accept your case, we will aggressively represent you, keep you up to date on what is happening in your case, and give you advice as to whether you should settle or go to trial.

Just because you have been in an accident does not always mean you need an attorney. If we believe you are better off handling the case yourself, we will tell you so. In addition, if we believe you have a claim you cannot win, we will tell you that, as well. However, if your case meets our criteria and we accept it, you can rest assured that you will receive our personal attention. Together, we will decide on the best tactics for your case.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth L. Christensen". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping underline.

Kenneth L. Christensen

CHAPTER 1

Dog Bite Statistics

The Frequency of Dog Bites and Attacks

Many households own dogs as pets. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), over 68 million dogs are kept as pets in the United States. With so many domesticated dogs in the country, dog bites and attacks are relatively frequent. Each year, over one million dog bites are reported. This does not include the number of unreported dog bites, which is estimated to be another one million incidences.

Of these attacks, more than 60% take place in the dog owner's home, and 77% of dog bite victims are members or friends of the dog owner's family. Contrary to popular belief, which assumes that dogs tend to bite and attack unfamiliar people, this statistic suggests that most dogs are familiar with the victims they bite.

Each year, roughly 800,000 people suffer injuries from dog bites that require medical attention. Additionally, twenty people a year die from injuries incurred from dog bite attacks. Children are often the victims of dog bites, with children under the age of 14 accounting for 14% of dog bites. Children younger than 4 are more susceptible to serious injuries, with 64.9% of this age group suffering from attacks to the head and/or neck.

Which Dogs Attack?

Any dog, even an unimposing miniature poodle, is capable of attacking a human. Of course, the larger the dog, the more serious the threat. Recent studies have found that certain breeds of dogs are more susceptible to aggressive behavior. The most detailed study, conducted by Merritt Clifton, a researcher and editor for *Animal People*, analyzed dog bite occurrences from 1982 through 2006 and examined cases of canine-inflicted injuries by breed. In his research, Clifton discovered that Pit Bulls, Presa Canarios, and Rottweilers (either pure-bred or mixes) constitute 74% of the attacks sampled in the study. A more in-depth investigation demonstrated that these breeds were responsible for 65% of dog attack fatalities, 82% of attacks on adults, and 68% of attacks on children.

Breaking down the percentages into actual numbers more emphatically portrays the threat of these breeds. In the twenty-four year period, Pit Bull Terriers were responsible for 1,110 of the attacks that resulted in bodily harm. Rottweilers were involved in 409 attacks. German shepherds had the next highest rate of incident, with 63 attacks. As the statistics show, Pit Bulls and Rottweilers seem to be more prone to dangerous and aggressive behavior, with a substantially higher rate of attack than any other breed.

In his analysis of the research, Clifton notes a typical pattern in Pit Bull aggression. Children are normally more at risk to dog bites because they are less adept at reading dog behavior, are less able to defend themselves, and play with dogs more often than adults.

Consequently, most dog breeds attack children statistically more often than adults. Pit Bulls, however, attack adults almost as frequently as they do children. They are much less timid about attacking humans larger than themselves. Furthermore, Clifton asserts that Pit Bulls tend to attack without warning.

Clifton warns against treating Pit Bull Terriers and Rottweilers as average domesticated dogs. While “bad moments” for most dog breeds can result in a dog bite, “bad moments” for these aggressive breeds often result in the maiming and even killing of children and adults. He encourages people to treat Pit Bull Terriers and Rottweilers with extra caution.

CHAPTER 2

Utah Dog Bite Laws

Utah Law and Dog Attacks

Historically, dog bite owners have been allowed one “free bite.” If a dog bit a victim, its owner was simply placed on notice that the dog was violent and was not held liable for its actions until the second attack. Some states continue to follow this One Bite Rule. Fortunately, the Utah Legislature has created a law that holds dog owners accountable for their pets’ actions, even with the first offense. This strict liability statute reads as follows:

Every person owning or keeping a dog shall be liable in damages for injury committed by such dog, and it shall not be necessary in any action brought therefore to allege or prove that such dog was of a vicious or mischievous disposition or that the owner or keeper thereof knew that it was vicious or mischievous. (U.C.A. §18-1-1)

Under this law, every person who owns a dog is liable for any injuries his/her dog inflicts on others. Furthermore, it is unnecessary to prove that the dog had a prior streak of viciousness, or that the owner knew of its predispositions. This means that the owner is still considered liable even if the dog has not previously bitten or shown aggressive behavior.

Utah laws impose a strict timetable on when a victim is eligible to file a dog bite claim. This is known as the statute of limitation. While this statute varies

from state to state, a Utah dog bite victim generally has four years from the date of the injury to settle or file a claim. For children, the statute of limitations does not begin until they reach the age of 18.

Avoiding Liability

Dog owners will not always be held responsible for their dogs' attacks. The amount of liability is determined by comparative fault, that is, the fault of the dog compared to that of the victim. For example, a dog owner may not be held liable if the victim of a dog bite provoked the dog. Generally, if the victim of the bite intentionally hit, kicked, teased, or taunted the dog prior to the attack, the owner of the dog will likely be released from liability. This is a natural and necessary defense to prevent persons from unfairly profiting from dog bite injuries.

The provocation defense may vary in cases involving young children. Children are often unaware that their actions are provoking a dog. For example, a young toddler might playfully pull a dog's tail, completely unaware that the dog will have a vicious reaction. The dog owner or the insurance company may argue that the child's actions were responsible for the attack. However, often times the viciousness of the dog's attack outweighs the minor actions of the child, and such a defense will not stand.

Furthermore, Utah's dog bite laws protect the lawful actions of police dogs. If a police dog has been

properly trained to aid law enforcement, and subsequently injures a person during a reasonable apprehension, arrest, or other instance of public order maintenance, the state is not held liable. When a police dog is used in a lawful manner for the protection of the public, the victim is not entitled to compensation.

Proving Damages in Utah Dog Bite Cases

As with any personal injury case, there is no set formula for determining the value of a dog bite claim. With so many different factors influencing each particular claim, it is impossible to establish a guideline for predicting the compensation you will receive. However, general observations can be made pertaining to the value of certain cases. For example, most cases which involve injuries to the face or neck will receive higher compensation than those involving injuries to an extremity. In addition, injuries that leave permanent scarring or physical disfigurement will usually result in greater compensation.

The dog owner's homeowners or renters insurance almost always covers the cost of damages. This is particularly beneficial for cases in which the dog owner is a close friend or family member, as the victim will not have to worry about financially burdening a loved one.

While every case will result in different outcomes, typical damages for which dog bite victims can receive compensation include:

• MEDICAL EXPENSES

Many dog bite victims will have to receive some form of medical treatment. These bills can quickly add up. The dog owner may be liable to pay for any medical expenses incurred from the attack. This typically includes the basic costs for medical treatment, emergency room charges, pharmaceutical expenses, and rehabilitation.

• DISFIGUREMENT

Dog bites can cause permanent scarring or disfigurement, often in very visible parts of the body. This can naturally lead to a psychological impact on a victim's self-consciousness. If a victim has suffered some form of scarring, he/she is entitled to damages for the disfigurement.

Children are more often victims of disfigurement. Because of their short height, they are often bitten in the neck or face. For safety reasons, many surgeons will refrain from performing surgical revisions until the child is more fully grown. (At the Christensen Law Firm, if the dog bite resulted in permanent scarring, we will arrange for a plastic surgeon to evaluate the need of future medical care to reduce visible scarring.) While the victim will be able to receive plastic surgery later in life, he/she must go through

the difficult years of adolescence with the scar or disfigurement, leading to embarrassment and humiliation that can severely affect the child emotionally. In many child dog bite claims, such emotional and psychological damages will be taken into consideration.

• LOSS OF EARNINGS

Depending on the severity of the attack, a dog bite victim may be unable to work for a period of time. Recovery and rehabilitation after surgery can temporarily force the victim out of work. In such cases, the victim may be reimbursed for the loss of earnings incurred from the attack. This includes the victim's normal wages, commissions, bonuses, and other fringe benefits.

• LOSS OF FUTURE EARNINGS

In serious attacks, the victim may lose the ability to work and earn income in the future. In such cases, the victim is entitled to recover damages for the value of reduction in earning capacity which will occur in the future.

• PAIN AND SUFFERING

Apart from the damages previously discussed, a victim has the right to claim compensation for present and future physical pain and mental anguish incurred from the dog attack.

CHAPTER 3

*Eight Common Mistakes
Dog Bite Victims
Should Avoid*

A victim of a dog bite has a legal right to full compensation as long as the dog owner is proven liable. As stated earlier, insurance companies are obligated to compensate the victim. This means that the insurance company will go to great lengths to deny the claim or reduce the damages it has to pay. It is simply better for their business to settle claims for as little as possible. Therefore, it is imperative that you follow certain steps to help battle the insurance companies and receive just compensation. In my experience as a personal injury attorney, I have seen eight common mistakes dog bite victims make which can have detrimental consequences on their case.

Of course, avoiding these mistakes does not necessarily guarantee the best possible outcome for every case. Victims who pursue nonsensical or unsubstantiated claims or who are seeking an unjustifiable amount of compensation for a minor injury will often be outmaneuvered by the insurance companies, no matter what steps they take.

That being said, if you have been bitten or attacked by a dog, here are eight of the most common mistakes to avoid that can ruin your legal claim:

1 *FAILING TO SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL TREATMENT*

If you suffer a serious injury from the attack, it is important to receive medical attention promptly. Consult with your doctor or check

yourself into a local emergency room. Not only is this a necessary step to your recovery, it could save some frustration when dealing with the insurance company. If you fail to seek medical treatment for your injury, the dog owner's insurance company may refuse to believe that your injury is serious and may claim that you were not injured in the attack. By visiting the doctor, your medical charts will document the magnitude of your injury and will become a permanent record in the case.

2 FAILING TO OBTAIN THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF WITNESSES AND THE DOG OWNER

You should do this immediately, as it can be difficult to track down witnesses or the dog owner at a later time. Dog bite cases can last several months or more, during which time the owners and witnesses might relocate. As such, it is important to retrieve reliable contact information as soon as you possibly can.

3 FAILING TO NOTIFY THE POLICE OR OTHER PROPER AUTHORITIES

If you have been bitten, immediately notify the police, the fire department, or the animal control agency in your city or county. This provides more credibility to your case, as it legally documents that the event took place.

An investigation by the proper authorities could also yield critical information and witness statements that will help establish liability against the dog's owner. Such information may go unnoticed if you do not contact the authorities.

Some victims refrain from reporting the incident to the authorities because they do not want anything to happen to the dog or because the owner is a friend or relative. While the city may choose to take action against the owner if the dog has a vicious history, it could prove detrimental to your case if you do not make a report.

4 FAILING TO TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS OF YOUR INJURIES IMMEDIATELY

The value of your case is often dependent on the severity of your injury. It is extremely important that you take pictures of your injury throughout the healing process. Do not wait to take pictures of the injury, as the wounds could heal more quickly than you realize. The insurance company may dispute the severity of your injury if you do not have photographic evidence. Be sure to take frequent photographs throughout the healing process to document any scarring or disfigurement. These pictures could have a large impact on the amount of compensation you receive.

5 PROVIDING THE INSURANCE COMPANY WITH A RECORDED STATEMENT

Most dog owners have some sort of insurance policy that will be responsible for paying damages. The insurance company will usually ask you for a recorded statement. You should avoid doing this until you have spoken with an attorney. Rehashing a traumatic incident can often lead to minor errors or inconsistencies. The insurance company will comb through your recorded statement looking for such discrepancies in your story. They will use them to minimize your claim or deny it entirely. In most instances, a recorded statement will only help the insurance company. Be sure to contact an experienced dog bite attorney before giving a recorded statement.

6 FAILING TO DOCUMENT EVERYTHING

As stated, your dog bite claim could take several months or even years to completely resolve. We all know how unreliable our memories can be. That is why it is important to write a detailed account of the dog attack shortly after it happens while your memory of the events is still fresh. Furthermore, you should create a file to store and organize the important documents of your case.

Be sure to save photographs, medical records, correspondence with the insurance companies, contact information of witnesses, investigative reports from the authorities, etc. If you come across a document that you are not sure you need to save, hang on to it just in case. These documents can be extremely beneficial to your case.

7 ACCEPTING A QUICK SETTLEMENT

It is in the insurance company's best interest to settle your case quickly, and before you contact a lawyer. Quick settlements often result in much lower pay-outs. This is especially dangerous if you have suffered from any sort of scarring or disfigurement. It can take a long time before doctors are able to determine if scarring is permanent. Permanent disfigurement can greatly increase the value of your claim, making it important to avoid settling right away. Do not sign away your rights until you know the full extent of your injuries.

Along this same line, do not appear too eager to settle your claim. Insurance adjustors are expert negotiators and will use any sign of weakness to bolster their position. For example, if you are in debt and need the settlement money quickly, the insurance company will use this against you by making a lower settlement offer.

The insurance company knows that a person who needs the money quickly is in a negative position to demand a higher settlement. Be patient with the negotiation and be willing to work the settlement over a period of days or weeks. This could very well result in a higher pay-out.

8 *FAILING TO HIRE AN EXPERIENCED LAWYER IF YOUR INJURIES ARE SERIOUS*

Insurance companies will do anything to avoid high settlements. They have trained adjustors who are experts at minimizing claims. These adjustors handle countless claims every year and are expert negotiators. If your injuries are permanent or serious, you will likely need to hire a lawyer to help obtain the best possible outcome in your claim.

It is also important to hire an experienced attorney. Insurance companies will often assign a dog bite case to an adjustor who is experienced in these types of claims and well-versed in such legal matters. You could hurt your chances in receiving proper compensation if you hire an inexperienced attorney or one who does not focus solely on personal injury claims.

CHAPTER 4

Children and Dog Bites

Most children love the companionship dogs offer. Domesticated dogs can indeed be wonderful playmates for young children. However, young children run a higher risk than adults of being victims of dog bites and attacks. This is because children are less adept at handling animals. A child may incite a dog to violence with actions that the child intends as playful, but the dog interprets as provocative. A dog attack at a young age can permanently scar a child both mentally and physically.

Dog Bite Prevention

While parents cannot control every event, there are measures and precautions you can take to help your child avoid being bitten by a dog. Teaching your child prevention techniques may save him/her from a traumatic attack. For example, children often become excited and rambunctious around dogs, running around and hugging the animal. This can make dogs nervous and result in a bite. Teach your child to behave in a more subdued and calm manner around dogs, as this will help calm the animal's nerves and instinctual responses.

Make sure your child always asks the dog's guardian for permission before petting the animal. Teach your child to then approach the dog slowly and let the animal sniff him/her before petting it. In addition, teach your child how to properly pet a dog. Most dogs prefer to be petted gently on their backs

and sides and can become anxious or angry when a child is petting wildly.

It is important to know the behavioral instincts of dogs to help prevent attacks. Dogs are naturally protective of property and their owners. Therefore, teach your child not to pet a dog that is playing with a toy, as the dog may think the child is trying to take it. Likewise, your child should know not to pet a dog behind a fence because the dog may become protective of its property and lash out. Dogs can also become protective of their space when riding in vehicles, so children should also be careful about petting them in a car.

While children most often interact with family's and neighbors' pet dogs, they may encounter stray dogs. As such, it is important to teach them a few basic techniques to avoid an attack. First, they should know to never make direct eye contact with the animal. Teach your child to come to a standstill if a strange dog approaches. Never run away from a dog! Rather, teach your child to back away slowly from the animal and avoid sudden movements.

Of course, not all dog bites and attacks can be avoided. Even if you and your children take every precaution around dogs, some animals will still attack. In the event of an animal attack, seek medical attention immediately, especially if the dog is a stray. Even wounds that seem minor can easily become infected if not properly treated.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

A child victim of a dog attack can sustain substantial psychological damage resulting from the mental fear and anxiety from the attack itself. There may also be emotional stresses that accompany any lasting physical disfigurements. A recent study published in the academic journal *Pediatrics* found that 11% of children attacked by dogs reported enduring emotional distress. The sustained mental anguish included nightmares and a persistent and prolonged fear of dogs. According to the study, the unreported cases of emotional distress are likely “much higher than reported.”¹

While both children and adults often suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after a dog attack, young adults and children are especially susceptible to the effects of this disorder. Along with recurring nightmares, children may have daytime flashbacks of the attack. Additionally, a victim’s concentration level may diminish, and the child may also suffer from irritability and anxiety. In order to alleviate these symptoms, parents may have to seek psychological treatment for their children. Depending on the severity of the victim’s condition, symptoms can ease within a few sessions or may require long-term psychological therapy.

1 Schalamon et al. “Analysis of Dog Bites in Children Who Are Younger Than 17 Years.” *Pediatrics* 117.3 (2006): 374-379

Psychological Implications of Childhood Disfigurement

Along with the lasting emotional effects of a dog attack comes the chance of another serious mental risk. Facial injuries are common among child dog bite victims and can leave permanent scarring and disfigurement. The psychological and social ramifications of such disfigurement can have prolonged effects on a child's overall mental development.

A study published in *Psychology, Health & Medicine* notes the impact facial disfigurement can have on child development. The main challenges are in social interactions, as disfigured children are often subjected to pointing, laughing, and ridicule from peers. The reaction of mature adults, although not malicious in intent, can also be detrimental. Outright stares, startled reactions, and looks of pity can leave a child feeling ostracized and repugnant. These feelings of loneliness can manifest and grow into long-term social and behavioral problems.²

Psychologists have found that children with facial disfigurements struggle with short and long-term social growth. They are less likely to voluntarily place themselves in social settings and may avoid

² Clarke, A. "Psychosocial Aspects of Facial Disfigurement: Problems, Management and the Role of a Lay-led Organization." *Psychology, Health & Medicine* 4.2 (1999)

meeting peers for the first time. Furthermore, they have difficulties forming lasting friendships. This can lead to symptoms of social anxiety and low self-esteem. Worse, psychologists have found that children disfigured by dog attacks often manifest low expectations about their life prospects.

As can be expected, child victims of disfigurement carry these social difficulties and mental hindrances with them throughout much of their life. Issues of insecurity can plague the victim through the vulnerable and impressionable teenage years, and feelings of low self-worth can hinder their ambitions as they transition to the independence of their young adult years. It is crucially important to be aware of the psychological implications of scarring and disfigurement after a dog bite, rather than focusing solely on the physical symptoms. If your child demonstrates signs of social isolation, depression, or anxiety, you should consider seeking immediate psychological counseling to help alleviate the short and long-term mental effects.

Resources

Working through the repercussions of a child dog bite and attack can be emotionally and physically stressful for children and their parents. It is important to know that you are not alone. There are several helpful resources you can utilize to help ease the burden you and your family are shouldering.

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

The Humane Society is a great resource for dog bite prevention tips, advice on dog training, and other helpful information for dog owners. In order to make the pet-owning experience enjoyable for everyone, the Humane Society provides a lot of helpful information on their website to educate people on dog attack prevention. Visit *www.nodogbites.org* for more information.

DOGGONE SAFE

This is a nonprofit organization that seeks to reduce dog bites and attacks through education. Their informative website contains articles about dog safety, links to attack prevention programs, and helpful educational tools to teach your child how to prevent dog attacks. For more information, visit their website at *www.doggonesafe.com*.

ANGEL FACES

A nonprofit organization established in 2003, Angel Faces is dedicated to offering support for adolescent girls with facial disfigurements. This organization provides a five-day residential retreat to help young girls cope with grief and trauma, as well as self-esteem and social issues. Angel Faces helps with the healing process, providing girls with the skills they need to help overcome the challenges of facial disfigurement. For more information, visit *<http://angelfacesretreat.org>*.

ABOUT FACE

This organization seeks to help people with facial disfigurements by providing peer connections, information, and emotional support. About Face offers educational programs, camps, and adult workshops to change attitudes and provide strong community and familial support to those with facial differences. Visit *www.aboutfaceusa.org* for more information.

NATIONAL PAIN FOUNDATION

Some dog attacks can leave children in a state of chronic pain. The National Pain Foundation is a valuable resource for parents whose children suffer symptoms of chronic pain. This organization provides community information, pain journals, pain therapy techniques, and lists of local pain care providers in your area. For more details, visit *www.nationalpainfoundation.org*.

CHAPTER 5

*Finding the
Right Attorney*

The Great Debate: Should I Hire a Lawyer?

If you have suffered injuries from a dog bite or attack, you may consider hiring an expert attorney to represent you and protect your interests. Fighting the insurance company alone can be challenging and result in an unfair settlement. Having superlative legal representation can easily make or break your dog bite claim.

Of course, every dog bite case is different, and it can be difficult to determine if you need a lawyer to represent you. If your injury is serious and requires several thousands of dollars in current and future medical expenses, you will want to give heavy consideration to hiring an attorney. Additionally, if you have suffered permanent scarring or disfigurement, a lawyer can help you obtain a settlement, even if the medical costs are low.

Proper legal representation is extremely beneficial to dog bite claims. A good lawyer brings a wide range of useful and necessary services to his/her client. My law firm is dedicated to providing quality representation to all our clients. Here are just a few of the services we provide our clients:

- Conduct an initial interview with the client where we evaluate the client's claim, educate the client regarding the legal process for personal injury cases, and determine any deadlines that apply.

- Analyze the client's insurance policy to see whether there are any coverages which the client has that may pay all or a portion of the medical bills while the claim is pending.
- Gather records and documents that will support the claim, including medical charts, police reports, and photographs.
- Gather witness statements and perform an investigation of the client's claim.
- Help clients see a plastic surgeon for a consultation regarding future scar revision surgery if the dog attack resulted in permanent scarring.
- Confer with the client's medical doctors to fully understand the client's injuries and conditions.
- Help the client locate resources that will assist with his/her recovery, such as local, state, and federal assistance programs.
- Conduct negotiations with the insurance adjustor to settle the claim.
- If the case goes to court, we will prepare and draft the summons and Complaint to file in court.
- Prepare the client for deposition.
- Hire experts that will support the claim.
- Prepare the client and witnesses for trial.
- Try the case in court before a judge or jury.

This is only a general list of services that we can provide to the client. Of course, there may be additional services required, depending on the case and on the needs of the client. Hopefully, this list has given you a general idea of the tasks we will perform in pursuit of a successful legal claim.

Who Should I Hire?

Utah is the home to dozens of personal injury attorneys. You see their ads in the Yellow Pages and on television, promising to make you the next millionaire from your personal injury claim. However, just because a lawyer advertises such promises does not mean he/she is the most qualified candidate to represent your case.

You want to make sure you do your research before choosing an attorney. It is important to find a lawyer who is experienced in dog bite and attack cases and has a proper understanding of state and federal laws pertaining to such claims. Hiring an attorney without the proper legal knowledge and expertise could cause you to lose your case or receive a settlement that is lower than you rightly deserve.

Here are a few questions you will want to ask the lawyer or law firm representative before you hire the attorney for your case:

- What percentage of your practice is dedicated to personal injury and dog bite cases?
- Have you ever taken a case to litigation and won a verdict for your client?
- Are you experienced in negotiation and out-of-court settlement?
- Do you have a website with information on personal injury and dog bite cases?
- What results have you achieved for your clients?

Why Should I Hire Christensen Law Firm?

As I said at the beginning of this book, “we are different.” Rather than run around trying to manage hundreds of cases at a time, we carefully select the cases we will accept at any one time.

There are many attorneys who advertise for personal injury cases. Unfortunately, some of these attorneys have so many small cases in their offices that no case gets their personal attention. Others have no real intention of trying your case themselves, and if the case cannot be settled with the insurance company, they will refer the case out to a new attorney for trial. There are good experienced attorneys in this field, but it can be very difficult for a consumer to separate the good from the bad.

Our clients receive personal attention because we are very selective in the cases we take. We decline numerous cases each year in order to devote personal, careful attention to those we accept. We take the time to meet with your doctors and discuss with them how they can assist in your case. (I recently met with a client’s doctor and discovered information that wasn’t in the medical records that added \$65,000 in value to her case). If we do not accept your case, we will be glad to provide you with additional information and refer you to another attorney who may be able to help you.

At the Christensen Law Firm, we are dedicated to providing our clients with the personal attention they deserve. Our knowledge of the law allows us to offer the best representation for our clients. Dog bites and attacks can have severe physical and psychological implications that permanently affect the victim. Our attorney's approach each case with tact and concern for our clients' needs as they recover from their injuries. We will work with you to ensure you receive the just compensation you deserve.

CHAPTER 6

Testimonials

What Our Clients Have To Say

“We have used the Christensen Law Firm for two separate legal matters, and both times we were very impressed with the service we were provided. Our second experience with them occurred after our son was attacked by a dog while riding on his bicycle. The legal service they provided was just as amazing as our first experience with them. The attention to our case was very professional, and yet we felt we also received personal consideration with regard to the emotional nature of enduring the settlement procedures. Our questions and phone calls were always responded to quickly and thoughtfully. Kenneth was masterful at procuring a successful settlement and took the time to make sure procedures were followed carefully and thoroughly so we were fully prepared to present our claim. We would highly recommend the Christensen Law Firm to any of our friends and family. Please accept our highest recommendation!”

-KeriLynn and Lance Lenhart

"I am so grateful Kenneth Christensen was recommended to me. The part that amazed me most was his personal service. I never had to wait for him to respond; anytime I called he either talked to me right then or called back within minutes. With every problem that came up, he jumped right on it; even if it was something he wasn't obligated to do. In a bad

situation, Kenneth Christensen made things a lot easier to deal with and was very thorough in explaining the entire process to me. I would have been lost without him. He did a spectacular job!!"

-Amy Kerbs, South Jordan, UT

"I was so impressed by your legal expertise and the personal attention I received throughout this whole process. I received calls on a regular basis informing me of where things stood. You made it possible for me to focus on getting the treatment I needed without worrying about my claim. There is nothing better than personally working with your attorney and not a legal assistant. Thank you. I am extremely happy with my settlement."

-Shad Warren, Sandy, UT

"I enjoyed working with Kenneth Christensen. He got me in quickly and started working on my case. He was kind, courteous, and very understanding. His office is clean and very well decorated -- it was a warm and friendly environment. Even my children were treated well. He got a positive settlement for my claim, and I was extremely happy with his services. If I were to recommend a lawyer, it would be Kenneth Christensen."

-J. Gilmore, West Valley City, UT

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kenneth L. Christensen is the founder of The Christensen Law Firm, PLLC. He is an attorney at law duly sworn in the State of Utah and is authorized by the Supreme Court to practice law in all courts in the State of Utah.

Kenneth's legal expertise comes from years of study and practice in law. After earning a Bachelor of Science from Purdue University, Kenneth received his Juris Doctor from California Western School of Law. Since graduating, he has gained extensive legal experience and specialization in personal injury law involving brain injuries, car, truck and motorcycle accident claims, aviation accident claims, and dog bite and attack claims.

Kenneth has also authored the book *“Seven Biggest Mistakes That Can Wreck Your Utah Accident Case.”* This book provides detailed information to help answer common questions for accident victims and is free to all Utah residents. Visit www.utahaccidentbook.com to obtain your free copy.