

| Dog to Human Bite Hierarchy | |
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| Level Zero | There is either air snapping without contact to the skin or a muzzle punch. Harassment, such as growling or snarling without either an air snap or a muzzle punch does not reach the hierarchy and would simply be categorized as an aggressive incident, but not as a bite. |
| Level One | A bite and release or resting of the teeth on the body with contact to the skin or clothing. There may be slight scratches of the skin or tearing of the clothing. Bruising will be light to medium gray. Wounds will be superficial and estimates would indicate that less than 15% of the dog's canine tooth entered the person's skin. |
| Level Two | A bite and release that results in scratches, punctures, or nicks with light to medium gray bruising. This is similar to Level One but estimates would indicate that between 15-30% of the dog's canine teeth entered the body. Bruising will still be fairly light to medium gray. There will not be deep punctures or gaping lacerations – the wounds are still fairly superficial. |
| Level Three | A bite with pressure but no hold. There is no report of shaking or pathology to indicate shaking or crushing. There are puncture wounds from the canine teeth and estimates would indicate that between 30-50% of the dog's canine teeth entered the victim's body. There may be wounds from the incisors but there should not be wounds from the premolars. Bruising will be darker gray or purple and black. |
| Level Four | A bite that results in a deep, gaping laceration -- or -- a complete avulsion of the skin -- or -- a report of or evidence of shaking. Estimates would indicate that more than 50% of the length of the canine teeth entered the body for lacerations or that the portion of the skin removed in the case of avulsion is greater than 50% of the dog's jaw measurement from top to bottom when open. |
| Level Five | A gripping or crushing bite that is held. Estimates would indicate that at least 50% of the dog's canine teeth entered the body. Bruising will be deep purple or black and may begin to appear immediately. There may be evidence or a report of shaking. There will likely be wounds from the canine teeth, incisors, and premolars. There may be injuries to the bones, tendons, or ligaments or either complete or partial loss of the function of the limbs. |
| Level Six | There are life threatening or serious injuries, including injuries to internal organs of the abdominal or thoracic cavities, potential or actual loss of limb, or, crushing injuries to the head or neck. |
| Level Seven | The victim dies – bites may be single but would more typically be multiple. |

| Dog to Dog Bite Hierarchy | |
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| Level Zero | There is air snapping but no contact to the fur or skin (fur should be dry - if the fur is wet, contact was made and the bite is not a Level Zero). |
| Level One | A bite and release with contact to the fur, superficial scratches or removal of fur, where estimates would indicate that no more than 5% of the dog's canine teeth entered the other dog's body -- or -- a bite where a dog grips another dog's body and does not release but does not inflict external or internal damage. |
| Level Two | A bite and release where estimates would indicate that 5 to 15% of the dog's canine teeth entered the other dog's body. |

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| Level Three | There are lacerations or punctures where estimates would indicate 15 to 30% of the dog's canine teeth entered the other dog's body. There may be tearing of the skin from the underlying musculature or subcutaneous pockets. |
| Level Four | There are deep lacerations where estimates would indicate that 30 to 50% of the dog's canine teeth entered other dog's body --or-- there are no external wounds of any significance but exploratory surgery reveals lacerations, tearing, or puncture wounds to the underlying musculature of the dog -- or -- there was a report or evidence of shaking of the head. There are no crushing injuries or serious internal injuries. |
| Level Five | A bite with holding pressure and possibly shaking of the head – external injuries may or may not be present, but serious internal injuries are present. Internal injuries may be found through exploratory surgery or indicated by shock or vomiting, skin bulging up when breathing, or displacement of the ribs. |
| Level Six | The victim dies - bites may be single or multiple but will frequently be multiple. |

Application notes –

Bite styles defined: There are four styles of bite that are used in this chart. The first, called a bite and release, means the dog came in quickly with its mouth and primarily used the front teeth to bite but then quickly moved away. The dog does not clamp down with the entire mouth. The second is a bite with pressure, typically where the dog uses the entire mouth rather than just the front teeth and the dog bites down with some amount of pressure applied. The dog may either hold the pressure or release immediately. The third bite style occurs where the dog rests its teeth on a person but does not bite down with any amount of pressure at all. The fourth is a bite that involves shaking of the head while biting.

Analysis where the bite style conflicts with the injury inflicted by the bite: In the event of a bite incident where the injury inflicted and the style of the bite are in conflict (in other words, where the style of bite indicates one level of bite but the injury inflicted indicates another level), the injury should trump the style of bite involved in all cases except in a case where the dog shakes its head while biting. In the case of shaking of the head, the style trumps the injury and the bite is automatically raised to a Level Four bite even if the injuries involved are not those described in a Level Four bite. Example One: Your client reports that she lifted her dog up into her arms to help it escape from the attack of another dog. When she did so, her dog bit her on the neck. The bite style was a bite with pressure but no hold. The client is certain that it was a clamp down type of bite with the whole mouth biting down and not a bite and release type of bite with only the front teeth coming in an snapping quickly; however, the injuries were consistent with a Level Two bite (small punctures and medium bruising). The owner estimated that the dog's canine teeth entered the body about 15-30-% of the way. In this case, despite the style of bite, the injury level would trump the style and the bite would be considered a Level Two bite. If; however, the owner reported that the dog bit and shook its head back and forth while biting, the style of bite would trump the injury involved and the bite would be classified as a Level Four bite.