

ABCs for When Police or Rescue are Called



We know how stressing an emergency is, but we understand the purpose of the strangers, the equipment and commotion. Our dogs may view this as a threat.

What if Rover decides to get rid of the intruders? What could happen if a rescuer cannot get to your loved one or an officer feels someone is at risk because of your dog? Even an officer interviewing you after an incident at a neighbor's could be threatening for Rover. What if he is friendly but gets in the way while saying "Hi"? What if his friendliness is a flurry of barking, jumping, mouthing and he appears aggressive? An officer may act. Safety for emergency personnel begins with you! Therefore, follow the ABCs.

A - Alert dispatch to any dogs in your home.

B - Before police or emergency crews arrive, get your dog to a safe, secure place where he cannot escape.

C - Call someone to get your dog if needed.

As part of being prepared for emergencies, train Rover to go to a safe spot for confinement. He should love this secure room or crate. He should go there fast, happily, and willingly with any family member or emergency contact should you live alone. Practice the emergency drill with increasingly stressed tones while always making sure Rover associates it with fun! If Rover learns a stressed tone means good things, he will be more likely to follow protocol when you are in a panic. Do not forget to periodically refresh the lessons.

Karen Peak is the owner of West Wind Dog Training in Virginia and the creator of The Safe Kids/Safe Dogs Project. This may be reproduced with credit for educational use.