

Pit-bull case



Legislation over the long-standing debate regarding the safety of housing Pit Bulls continues between pro Pit-Bull advocates and those fearing for their safety throughout Canada. Today, the issue of housing large, potentially dangerous dogs in the city has reached pivotal concern. A course of action is necessary. The level of concern surrounding Pit Bulls is greater than the concern over other dangerous domesticated dogs. There are, however, people who enjoy having Pit Bulls as pets. Pit Bull owners constitute a smaller percentage of people in comparison to those with concern over a Pit Bull's safety.

It comes down to pure fear over these life-threatening dogs. Yes, the anti-Pit Bull contingency has a voice, and with justifiable concern. Evaluation is in order regarding the pros and cons surrounding this issue. This position paper will clearly show that all breeds of Pit Bulls should not be housed in cities throughout Canada. There are many breeds of Pit Bulls—all of which can be threatening. The various breeds of other dangerous domesticated dogs are even larger. Lawyer Clayton Ruby argues the legislation.

He sites the following: since 1983 there were 23 dog attacks in Canada that led to fatality. Of these 23 attacks, only one involved a Pit Bull. Thus, according to Mr. Ruby, legislation needs to be written governing all dangerous dogs, and not just Pit Bulls. The slant here, however, will be focused on developing legislation that will make it illegal to own a Pit Bull if you reside in a major city in Canada's surrounding Provinces. First, we must consider the levels of all dog aggression in comparison to Pit Bulls' aggression.

The least dangerous level is called the submissive level. It includes dogs that display very little signs of aggression. Dogs of this nature tend to roll over when challenged and they will not respond with aggression. No Pit-Bull, regardless of breed, meets these criteria. The next level of dog aggression is known as the generic level. This level of dog aggression only demonstrates hostility if another angered dog approaches it. At this level, if attacked, a generic dog will respond with just enough tenacity to repel the instigating dog from its assault.

Again, there isn't a single Pit Bull that is calm enough to match this non-threatening level. The next level of aggression meets the characteristics of a Pit Bull Terrier. This Pit Bull, labeled a happy-normal-Pit-Bull-Terrier, is a dog that only displays aggression when challenged. This dog will respond aggressively. The only way to separate an aggressive Pit Bull Terrier is by using a 'break-stick' level of restraint. These restraining traits must be learned from trained specialists. Here in lies our first red flag.

If even the most receptive breed of Pit Bull has a tendency for hostility, it is not feasible to consider Pit Bulls as an environmentally-safe pet, especially in the confines of a city. Pit Bulls at their most obedient level will always attempt to make friends with new dogs. This unreserved level of sociability in a Pit Bull can be the catalyst that leads to aggressiveness and fighting, or even death. When we add a Pit Bull that lives in a crowded city, the situation becomes grave and the opportunity for an unfortunate incident increases.

It's important to point out that even the friendliest Pit Bull will not tolerate aggressive behavior. If, for example, a Pit Bull is led through a small city park

where people take dogs and children to play, there is a greater chance for altercation. Even if leash-restrained Pit Bulls are led through a city, the opportunity for an unfortunate encounter, on any given sidewalk might occur. Dogs, by nature, tend to gravitate toward one another. This curious sniffing can lead to danger if a Pit Bull is involved. The next level of Pit Bull is known as the average Pit Bull.

These dogs will exhibit aggression toward strange dogs of the same sex while acting cautious around dogs of the opposite sex. If an average Pit Bull is challenged, they will counter with aggression. Physical intervention is necessary to separate a fight. Lastly, we come to the dog-aggressive-Pit-Bull. Pits at this level can live with other dogs but will attack any strange dogs (strange refers to any dog unfamiliar to a Pit Bull). Again, the only means of alleviating aggressive encounters between dogs at this level of aggression is by physical intervention. The fights can be very serious.

There are a large number of variables that can occur to a Pit Bull in a city that would lead to aggression. Sometimes it only takes curiosity from neighboring dogs or young children to initiate a Pit Bull's innate sense for violent tendencies. Legislation that does not allow city-dwellers to own a Pit Bull needs to pass. So many people live together in tight quarters in Canadian cities. This makes it an unsafe region for Pit Bulls. This legislation must come to action before another person or animal is maimed or killed by these instinctively dangerous dogs.