



The Seeing Eye

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE & DIGNITY

To Whom It May Concern:

During training, Seeing Eye dogs are taught to ignore other dogs and animals. Instinctively they feel compelled to be attentive to these distractions, but their attention could prove dangerous to the blind person. Because of their training, Seeing Eye dogs often feel conflict when challenged by aggressive dogs as they know they cannot protect themselves, and may feel vulnerable because of this. This conflict can usually be overcome with support and encouragement from the master.

When a dog attacks a Seeing Eye dog, the results can often be quite negative. The Seeing Eye dog often will be fearful of other dogs as his feeling of vulnerability has been confirmed. This will translate into refusal to go by other dogs on routes and refusal to go near the area where the attack took place. It usually takes quite a while for this fear to diminish and, during this time, this may limit the travels of the blind person. Another negative symptom is aggressive behavior from The Seeing Eye dog. In this case, The Seeing Eye dog will attempt to attack other dogs on the theory that "if I attack first, he can't attack me". This behavior obviously also infringes on a blind person's ability to travel without incident and is also difficult to desensitize because it is caused by fear.

In these times when so many people have pets, the chances of aggressive attacks are higher than in the past. Thankfully, not all dogs attack unprovoked, as these are the most dangerous types. The obvious answer is dog control and enforcement of leash laws.

The replacement cost to the organizations supplying a guide dog ranges from \$30,000 to \$50,000 a piece.

Sincerely yours,

Douglas S. Roberts
Director of Programs

DSR/ncn

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