

Report: U.S. Dog Bite Fatalities January 2006 to December 2008

by DogsBite.org | April 20, 2009

Summary: Between January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008, DogsBite.org recorded 88 U.S. fatal dog attacks. The data shows that pit bulls are responsible for 59% (52) of these attacks. The data also shows that pit bulls commit the vast majority of off-property attacks that result in death. Only 18% (16) of the attacks occurred off owner property, yet pit bulls were responsible for 81% (13).

Pit bulls are also more likely to kill an adult than a child. In the 3-year period, pit bulls killed more adults (ages 21 and over), 54%, than they did children (ages 11 and younger), 46%. In the age category of 21-54, pit bulls were responsible for 82% (14) of the deaths. Pit bulls do not only kill children and senior citizens, they kill men and women in their prime years: 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s.

Information for this report was gathered through media accounts that were available at the time of the attack or found through Internet archives, including: Google News Archive and AccessMyLibrary. The news source citations for each fatality are located in the "Bite Statistics > Fatality Citations" section of the DogsBite.org website.

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Basic Fatality Statistics

Breed Information

- Of the 88 fatal dog attacks recorded in the 3-year period, pit bull type dogs were responsible for 59% (52). This is equivalent to a pit bull killing a U.S. citizen every 21 days. Pit bulls make up approximately 2-9% of the U.S. dog population.¹
- The combination of pit bulls (52), rottweilers (12) and American bulldogs (4) accounted for 77% of all fatal attacks during this time span.

Property and Related Information

- 18% (16) of the attacks occurred off owner property. Three dogs breeds contributed to the off-property attacks: pit bulls (13), rottweiler (1) and American bulldogs (2). In the instance of the latter, a pack of four bulldog-mixes killed two individuals in a single attack.
- Pit bulls alone committed 81% (13) of the off-property attacks. This indicates that pit bulls are far more likely than any other dog breed to leave owner property and fatally attack. Of the 13 attacks, 15% involved 1 pit bull; 69% involved 2; and 15% involved 3 or more.
- 44% (39) of all fatal attacks involved multiple dogs; 16% (14) involved chained dogs.

Victim Age Information

- 55% (48) of the attacks occurred to children (11 years and younger). Of children, ages 2-4 suffered the most fatalities 22% (19); ages 0-2 suffered the second most 18% (16); and ages 5-9 followed at 11% (10).
- Between the ages of 0-4, 14% (12) of the fatal attacks involved a "watcher," a person such as a grandparent or babysitter watching the child. Of these attacks, 75% (9) involved a grandparent type.²
- 19% (17) of the fatality victims fell into the 21-54 age group. Pit bulls were responsible for 82% (14) of these deaths. The frequency of pit bulls killing adults is unmatched by any other dog breed. In the 3-year period, pit bulls killed more adults (ages 21 and over), 54%, than they did children (ages 11 and younger), 46%.
- Of the six age group categories (ages 2 and younger; 2-4; 5-9; 10-20; 21-54; and 55 and older), the 55 and older group suffered the most fatalities 26% (23).

¹ Alan M. Beck, "Pit Bull Dogs," [Invited Testimony for the Ontario, Canada Pit Bull Ban], 2005

² Breeds of dogs involved in "watcher" attacks include: pit bulls (5), rottweilers (3), American bulldog (1), German shepherd (1), Doberman (1) and chow (1).

Fatality Chart Data

Breeds Involved in Fatal Attacks

Dog Breed	Contributed to Deaths	Percentage of All Deaths
Pit bull	52	59%
Rottweiler	12	14%
American bulldog	4	5%
Husky	4	5%

All other breeds contributed to 3 or fewer deaths. Please see page 4 chart and explanation.

How Pit Bulls Compare

Victims Ages	All Deaths	Pit Bull Deaths	Pit Bull % of All Deaths
Ages 2 (and <)	16	5	31%
Ages 2-4	19	10	53%
Ages 5-9	10	7	70%
Ages 10-20	3	2	67%
Ages 21-54	17	14	82%
Ages 55 (and >)	23	14	61%
Total	88	52	NA

The fourth column shows the percentage of deaths pit bulls contributed to within the given age group of the total 88 deaths. In the 2 (and <) group, for instance, there were 16 total deaths and pit bulls contributed to 31% (5).

Additional Age Data Views

All Victim Data (88)

Ages 2 (and <)	16	18%
Ages 2-4	19	22%
Ages 5-9	10	11%
Ages 10-20	3	3%
Ages 21-54	17	19%
Ages 55 (and >)	23	26%
Total	88	99%

Pit Bull Victim Data (52)

Ages 2 (and <)	5	10%
Ages 2-4	10	19%
Ages 5-9	7	13%
Ages 10-20	2	4%
Ages 21-54	14	27%
Ages 55 (and >)	14	27%
Total	52	100%

All NON Pit Bull Victim Data (36)

Ages 2 (and <)	11	31%
Ages 2-4	9	25%
Ages 5-9	3	8%
Ages 10-20	1	3%
Ages 21-54	3	8%
Ages 55 (and >)	9	25%
Total	36	100%

Pit Bull Victim Data (52)

Ages 2 (and <)	5	10%
Ages 2-4	10	19%
Ages 5-9	7	13%
Ages 10-20	2	4%
Ages 21-54	14	27%
Ages 55 (and >)	14	27%
Total	52	100%

In each of the above four views, the percentage amount is based on the number in parenthesis. For instance, the All Victim Data (top left) is based on 88. The 99% (instead of 100%) is due to how the values rounded up and down.

About the Data

Information for this report was gathered through media accounts that were available at the time of the attack or found through Internet archives, including: Google News Archive and AccessMyLibrary. The history of each fatality studied for this report (a copy of each news article) is available in the "Bite Statistics > Fatality Citations" section of the DogsBite.org website.

5 Deaths Involved Multiple Breeds

19 different dog breeds contributed to the 88 recorded deaths. In five instances, multiple dog breeds contributed to the same death. Therefore, the number of dog breeds that contributed to deaths (center column) is 93 instead of 88, and the percentage of all deaths (right column) is 104% instead of 100%. These five instances include:

- In 2006, the fatality of Diana Acklen involved a pair of Great pyrenees and a mixed-breed, and the death of Mireya Davila involved a pit bull and a labrador.
- In 2007, the fatality of Robynn Bradley involved a pit bull and a mastiff, and the death of Magdalena Silva involved a Doberman pinscher and a German shepherd.
- The 2008 fatality of Lorraine May involved an Australian shepherd and a golden retriever.

Complete Breed Chart

Dog Breed	Contributed to Deaths	Percentage of all Deaths
Pit bull	52	59%
Rottweiler	12	14%
American bulldog	4	5%
Husky	4	5%
German shepherd	3	3%
Doberman pinscher	2	2%
Chow chow	2	2%
Wolf-hybrid	2	2%
Labrador	2	2%
Australian shepherd	1	1%
Golden retriever	1	1%
Boxer	1	1%
Bullmastiff	1	1%
Great pyrenees	1	1%
Mixed breed (undetermined)	1	1%
Jack Russell terrier	1	1%
Old English sheepdog	1	1%
Mastiff	1	1%
Presa canario	1	1%
Total	93	104%

For purposes of clarity, this report depicts "mixes" as the predominant breed. For example, a boxer-mix is depicted as a "boxer," a husky-mix is depicted as a "husky" and a pit bull-mix is depicted as a "pit bull."

About Us

DogsBite.org is a national dog bite victims' group dedicated to reducing serious dog attacks. Through our work, we hope to protect both people and pets from future attacks. Our website contains a wide collection of data to help policymakers and citizens learn about dangerous dogs. Our research focuses on pit bull type dogs. Due to selective breeding practices that emphasize aggression and tenacity, this class of dogs negatively impacts communities the most.

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