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APRIL 2022

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NATIONAL DOG BITE PREVENTION WEEK

PROTECTING OUR PETS, OURSELVES, AND THE PUBLIC

As a dog owner, I understand the love that many have for their pets — they truly are members of the family. That is why it's so important to protect them *and* safeguard the well-being of others as well.

During the second full week in April every year, we celebrate National Dog Bite Awareness Week, an important time to get educated on preventing dog bites and the repercussions dog owners face if their dog happens to bite someone in the state of Texas.

As an associate attorney at Herrman & Herrman, I'm always advising my clients that if they own a pet, they should check that their homeowners insurance covers their pet. When choosing a policy that best fits their needs, many people forget to check off this important box, and ultimately, if a dog bite were to occur, civil cases always boil down to whether or not the dog owner's homeowners insurance policy covers these kinds of injuries, which can be very devastating.

It's important to know that Texas is a "one bite state" when it comes to liability. This means that in order for a victim of a dog bite to recover damages, it must be proven that the dog owner knew that their dog had acted aggressively or caused harm in the past and that the dog owner was negligent. Negligence can fall under many different circumstances. For example, if the dog wasn't properly restrained or fenced in, even if the fence was broken and in need of repair, this can still count as negligence. Even failing to warn the public about your dog can be deemed negligent. If you own a dog who may have a higher propensity to bite, posting "Beware of Dog" signs on your fence and gate is essential.

Especially in this day and age with the pandemic, many people are working from home and leaving their homes a lot less frequently, and this means dogs are potentially given more freedom to roam the yard more often. On a daily basis, many people may visit your home, such as delivery people, mail carriers, the garbage man, neighbors, or other visitors — and it's important to protect both your pet and people who are visiting your home.

Unfortunately, the law is very clear that if a dog is labeled as vicious and has bitten people in the past, another dog bite case could be brought before a court for the dog to be put down, which is an unfortunate



situation. To avoid this scenario, being taken to court, or risking the welfare of another, it's important to always take extra steps to keep your dog safe and restrained within your yard. When in public, be sure your dog is always on a leash, and if you are aware of any violent tendencies that your dog may have, it's best to keep them out of any public settings.

On the other hand, if you plan to visit someone else's home, be aware of your surroundings to properly protect yourself because not everyone has homeowners insurance. When it comes to trying to collect on damages, it can be very difficult if there isn't any insurance to collect on. The consequences can be serious and devastating for yourself, your pet, your family, and the potential victims if you aren't vigilant in protecting everyone.

For more information on dog bites in Texas, give us a call! We are more than happy to discuss any of this with you!

- Jonathan Garza

PREPARING YOUR A/C UNIT FOR SUMMER

For many people around the country, April is the first month when they might turn on their air conditioning unit. Even if it's still chilly where you are, summer is right around the corner, so you need to make sure your A/C unit is ready to tackle the summer heat.

A central air conditioner has an indoor air handler and an outdoor compressor. The compressor is where you want to spend your time



cleaning and maintaining. More than likely, you didn't use your air conditioner during the cooler winter months, so you'll need to do a few things to ensure your unit is in peak condition before turning it on.

Before doing any work on your unit, make sure you turn off the circuit breaker. You'll need to turn off the power to the condenser at the service panel, but most condensers also have a weatherproof disconnect box that you need to power down. Once your unit is powered down, you can begin cleaning and replacing your furnace or air-handler filters. Ideally, you should do this twice a year. If you fail to change or clean these filters, restricted air flow will reduce the efficiency of your unit.

In addition to cleaning your filter, you also need to clean the condenser coils. If your unit was uncovered during the winter, leaves and other debris likely found their way inside the coils. Make sure the fan is clear before moving inside the box to check if the coils are clogged. If they are, clean them with a soft brush and use a vacuum to clean the coils from the inside.

Once you've cleared away all the debris and excess water, check the coolant lines. These lines are usually covered with foam insulation that can fray and crack. If they're damaged, replace them with new foam insulation sleeves.

Your unit should now be ready for a test, and if everything runs well, your air conditioner should be ready to take on the summer heat. Anyone can clean and complete simple maintenance, but if the system still doesn't work properly, call in a professional to investigate and handle further repairs.



"Amy Schadewald was a great attorney for me. Now that she's at Herrman & Herrman, I will always go there for any personal injury attorney needs — as will my family and friends. What a blessing!"

-Janadel B.

"I was involved in a car accident. Herrman & Herrman South Side Firm did everything to make it as smooth as possible for me and my family. I did not have to worry about anything; my attorney did an amazing job. I highly recommend Herrman & Herrman."

-Angie L.

"Attorney Landry is very knowledgeable and addressed all of my concerns with my personal injury case. I appreciated the honesty and would recommend him to my family and friends."

-L.R.

THE SHOCKING REALITY

SQUATTERS ARE PROTECTED BY CERTAIN LAWS

As a landlord or property owner in Texas, squatters can be your worst nightmare because squatters actually have rights. A squatter is known as an individual occupying uninhabited property that belongs to another person. Squatters do not legally own or possess a title to the property, yet there are ways that they can acquire this at some point. But, how?

In the state of Texas, “squatters rights,” also known as adverse possession, allows a squatter to gain and eventually claim legal possession of your property. However, there are certain criteria that must be met for this to happen. They must occupy the property for a certain period of time and meet the conditions put in place by Texas law. It should be noted that if these conditions are met and the squatter is able to claim legal possession of a property, they are able to do so without paying!

To ensure that you are never faced with a situation like this, it’s important that you understand Texas laws surrounding squatters and their rights. According to Texas’ squatter law, a squatter is able to file for legal ownership of a property by making an adverse possession claim after they have possessed a property consistently for 10 years or more. Once the 10-year time period is up, the squatter is no longer considered to be breaking the law and trespassing. Instead, they are able to gain legal permission to remain there for free.

This is why failing to file for eviction can be so detrimental! In the event that you have a squatter on your property, contact the authorities and start the eviction process immediately. It should be noted that self-eviction is not legal in Texas and the correct eviction process must be performed. At no point can you try to evict a tenant on your own!



ONE-PAN CHICKEN TACOS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb chicken breasts, sliced into 1-inch pieces
- 2 tbsp garlic powder
- 2 tbsp cumin
- 2 tbsp chipotle powder
- Canola oil (for frying)
- Corn tortillas
- Grated cheddar cheese
- Pico de gallo and guacamole salsa (to taste)

DIRECTIONS

1. In a mixing bowl, combine the chicken pieces, garlic powder, cumin, and chipotle powder. Mix until the chicken is coated.
2. In a frying pan, heat the oil. When the oil is hot, add the chicken mixture. Cook on medium heat for 5–8 minutes.
3. Remove the chicken from the pan, and add the corn tortillas (avoid overlapping) so they soak up the juices. Flip the tortillas and repeat. Then, add chicken and grated cheddar to each tortilla and fold it over the filling — in the pan.
4. Cook the tacos for 3 minutes per side until the tortillas are crispy and the cheese is melted.
5. Top with pico and guacamole salsa, and serve!

Inspired by TasteOfHome.com

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**1201 3RD ST.
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX 78404**

SHE SAVED HER HUMAN!

MEET TINSLEY, A CAR CRASH SURVIVOR

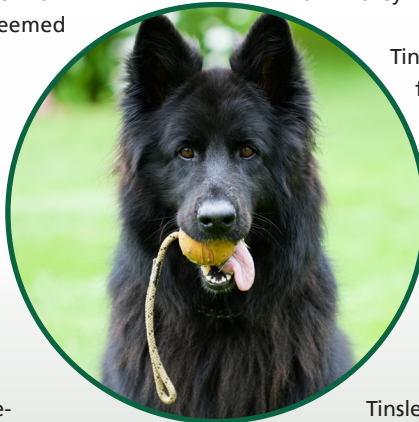
On Jan. 3, 2022, New Hampshire State Police responded to a call about a lone dog wandering around on the interstate near Veterans Memorial Bridge. When they got there, the pup — a Shiloh shepherd named Tinsley — led the officers on what seemed to be a wild goose chase.

"When Trooper Sandberg and the Lebanon police officers attempted to get close to the canine, it continued to run northbound on Interstate 89, crossing into Vermont," the police department wrote in a Facebook post. "A short time later, Trooper Sandberg and the Lebanon police officers located a damaged section of guardrail near the Interstate 91 and Interstate 89 junction."

It turns out Tinsley had a destination in mind: an upside-down pickup truck that had crashed through that very guardrail.

The truck had rolled off the highway, and the people who were inside — including Tinsley's owner, Cam Laundry — were on the ground, badly hurt and hypothermic! Thanks to Tinsley's bravery, the cops called an ambulance that rushed them to the hospital.

"This was almost like a real-life Lassie situation," one lieutenant told CNN. "It's really quite remarkable. This dog definitely saved their lives. I don't think they would have survived the night given the temperatures."



Tinsley is a real hero on four legs, just like Lassie, a fictional pup who saved two little boys from dying of hypothermia in the snow. Fortunately, Tinsley's grateful owner, Cam, made a full recovery. He also knows just how special his pup is.

"She gets spoiled all the time," he told the WPTZ news station. "She'll get some venison, probably [a] burger tonight, and probably some back scratches with it."

Tinsley is not the only dog who has saved a human from the cold. In the winter of 2017, a rescue pooch named Peanut saved the life of a 3-year-old girl in Michigan who had wandered away from home, and a golden retriever named Kelsey saved her owner after he slipped in the snow and broke his neck. She kept him warm for 19 hours and barked until help came. To read the full story of Tinsley's roadside rescue, visit CNN.com and search "real-life Lassie."