

Missouri Dog Bite Law

1. Generally speaking, Missouri imposes liability on dog owners for dog bites, whether or not their dogs ever bit anyone in the past. The State enacted statutory strict liability on August 29, 2009, in the form of section 273.036 of Missouri Revised Statutes:

273.036. 1. The owner or possessor of any dog that bites, without provocation, any person while such person is on public property, or lawfully on private property, including the property of the owner or possessor of the dog, is strictly liable for damages suffered by persons bitten, regardless of the former viciousness of the dog or the owner's or possessor's knowledge of such viciousness. Owners and possessors of dogs shall also be strictly liable for any damage to property or livestock proximately caused by their dogs. If it is determined that the damaged party had fault in the incident, any damages owed by the owner or possessor of the biting dog shall be reduced by the same percentage that the damaged party's fault contributed to the incident. The provisions of this section shall not apply to dogs killing or maiming sheep or other domestic animals under section 273.020.

2. Any person who is held liable under the provisions of subsection 1 of this section shall pay a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars. The remedies provided by this section are in addition to and cumulative with any other remedy provided by statute or common law.