

Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment,

The other day, I was returning to my parked car located in the local hospital parking lot. I was given a rude surprise by a dog located in the car parked next to mine. I realize that many dogs protect what they consider their territory and I have great respect for the animals but I think that the owner could have shown a bit more respect for those people parked in the vicinity of his vehicle. All four windows were completely down with no type of restraints on the dog. A large dog, he would lunge across the seats and come dangerously close to falling out as he let everyone know he was there. Not wanting to directly confront the animal, I let myself in on the passenger's side with the thought of easing myself across the console and into the driver's seat. Old age did not allow the maneuver so I took a big breath, walked around to the driver's side and opened my door as quickly as possible with the dog leaning over toward me and continually barking in my face. As soon as I entered and closed the door, he backed off but it was a very uncomfortable moment. All the dog owner had to do to avoid this type of confrontation was to lower the window or windows enough for the animal to receive the necessary amount of cool air and to prevent the dog from extending itself outside the car. Dogs restrained in an open bed pickup can be a little unnerving but at least you have the option of approaching the vehicles from the front and sometimes out of reach of the animal. I do like animals and have had pets over the years. What I don't like is the thoughtlessness of some dog owners. Please, if you are a dog owner, secure your pet so he or she is not a threat to others in crowded parking lots. A person with a babe in arms could be passing close by and if attacked could lead to injury and possible law suits. I worked for the U.S. Postal Service for forty years and have had a lot of experience with dogs and their owners. As a letter carrier for ten years, I was attacked by dogs a number of times as I approached the front door of a home but was only bitten once. The most unnerving type of incident was approaching a front door when, usually without warning, the door would open and a dog would come silently charging out from behind. The dog was either happy to get a little freedom or was hell bent in attacking me, the intruder, or was the friendliest dog in town wanting to lick you to death. Those few seconds, until you learned of the dog's intent, were long ones. To you many dog owners: enjoy your pets by being a responsible owner.

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