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Pet Expert Favors Restraint Over Breed-Specific Ban

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OMAHA, Neb. -- Animal experts said a breed-specific ban might not be the best way to protect people from dangerous dogs.

After a series of reported dog bites in the past week, Omaha city leaders are considering several options, including mandatory obedience training, muzzle requirements or an outright ban on pit bulls.

The Nebraska Humane Society said there'd be a big improvement if people followed current laws requiring people to restrain their animals.

"This is prime dog bite season," said Pam Wiese of the Nebraska Humane Society "There are more people out. It's warmer weather. We've had a lot of storms, and it's the Fourth of July."

Wiese said her organization doesn't usually support breed-specific bans. She said there was a common thread in all of last week's dog attacks, including one that seriously injured a 15-month-old girl.

"In every single case, the owner did not have the dog properly restrained," she said.

Wiese said it's easier to control large dogs with special collars that hold the dog at the chest. She said if people want to muzzle their dogs, they should get one that lets the animal eat and drink.

Spaying and neutering your pet can also make the animals less aggressive. At least one of the dogs in last week's attacks had not been neutered.

"And if you keep your dog under control, with obedience, with bonding, with socialization and equipment, you should be able to keep him safe," Wiese said. "And if you keep him safe, you're going to keep the community safe."

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