

Dog attack threatens chief's job

Brecknock's Karcher may need arm surgery

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LANCASTER COUNTY, PA - A dog attack Friday on Brecknock Township police Chief Edward Karcher might force him to end his 26-year police career.

The 50-year-old suffered muscle and bone damage to his left arm and right hand during the mauling and might need to undergo surgery.

"I have a burning sensation in my arm that won't quit. I think there also could be some nerve damage," Karcher said Monday.

"Right now I can't use my left arm. If it doesn't get back to full strength, then I can't do my job."

An orthopedic specialist is scheduled to examine his injuries Wednesday.

Karcher was treated at Ephrata Community Hospital after the 100-pound Akita attacked him about 5 p.m. Friday in the 900 block of Reading Road, Brecknock Township.

Karcher was patrolling when he encountered the dog in the road. He stopped his police cruiser and approached the animal, which was dragging a chain linked to its collar.

Karcher initially attempted to get the dog into the back seat of the cruiser. The dog resisted and briefly returned to the shoulder of the road. As Karcher was preparing to leave, the dog walked back into the road.

Karcher planned to lead the animal off the road by its chain, but when he moved toward the dog, it lunged at him.

"I threw my left arm up to block the animal, and it clamped its jaws down on me," said Karcher, who is left-handed.

"It knocked me off my feet like a paperweight."

Karcher dropped his radio during the struggle. He managed to fire two rounds from his pistol to frighten the dog.

Neither bullet struck the dog, but one slug hit the windshield of his cruiser.

A motorist stopped and yelled for the dog to release Karcher. The man then helped Karcher off the ground and called for an ambulance.

"I truly believe if that guy hadn't got out of his car, that dog may not have stopped," Karcher said.

State dog warden Travis Hess is investigating the attack.

Hess interviewed Karcher Monday.

He also planned to visit the dog's owner, who has agreed to quarantine the animal for 10 days to make sure it does not have rabies.

The dog apparently broke its chain and wandered out of its owner's yard.

It's not clear if charges will be filed against the owner.

Karcher has been police chief in Brecknock Township since 1998.

He previously was an officer with Penn Ridge Regional Police Department and chief of the Silverdale and Sellersville borough police departments, all in Bucks County.