

Home Health: Nurse Can Sue For Dog Bite.

A home health nurse was bit on the hand while making a visit to two homebound clients who owned a Rhodesian Ridgeback, also known as an “African Lion Dog,” a breed of dogs known to have vicious personalities.

The nurse sued her clients for damages. The laceration from the dog bite severed the digital nerve in her hand, required surgery and left her with residual loss of sensation in her thumb. Her medical bills totaled \$14,040 and were paid by worker’s compensation.

The legal rule is the owner of a breed of dog known to have vicious propensities is legally liable if the dog attacks a visitor who has been invited to visit the home. With more docile breeds of animals, the individual animal must first demonstrate that it has a hostile disposition, and the owner must fail to take appropriate precautions, before the owner can be held liable.

The jury in the Superior Court, St. Joseph County, Indiana awarded \$50,000 of which the nurse must reimburse worker’s compensation for \$17,104 she received as benefits for her injury. **Tidey v. Holmes**, 2007 WL 2640658 (Sup. Ct. St. Joseph Co., Indiana, June 13, 2007).