

Whether or not one believes that dogs should be restrained with a leash on public streets and sidewalks, the City of Los Angeles has already settled the issue - Los Angeles Municipal Code 53.06.02 requires dog owners to keep their dogs on a leash

Before choosing to ignore the leash law, dog owners should be aware that they are strictly liable for injuries caused by their dogs. California Civil Code § 3342. The statute is "designed...to prevent dogs from being a hazard to the community." Davis v. Glaschler (1992) 11 Cal.App.4th 1392, 1399. It unequivocally places the burden of dog bites upon those who choose to have dogs. Because "the owner is virtually an insurer of the dog's conduct" (Massey v. Colaric (1986) 151 Ariz. 65, 725 P.2d 1099, 1100, interpreting Arizona's identically worded dog bite statute), a responsible dog owner is expected to be vigilant in preventing his dog from biting anyone. For those wanting more information, there is an excellent discussion of dog owners' liability to dog bite victims and owners of bitten animals at <http://www.dogbitelaw.com/>