

**Level 1**

- Dog appears relaxed and is eager for person to approach for attention.
- Will generally eagerly disengage from food or other resource to engage with person in a relaxed, friendly, “happy” manner.

**Level 2**

- Dog remains relaxed as person approaches but does not disengage from food or resource item.
- With a resource item, when given, they will most commonly just lay down where they are given the item (verses trying to hide it or take it someplace else).

**Level 3**

- Dog becomes “aware” and a bit tense as person approaches and begins to eat somewhat faster.
- There are no other aggressive or distance increasing signals given.
- With a resource item at this level, the dog may take the item and move away from the person.

**Level 4**

- Dog becomes aware and quite tense at approach.
- Dog will not only eat fast, but take large mouthfuls of food as if trying to finish the resource before it can be removed.
- With a resource item, the dog may move away with the item or attempt to put the item under his body, commonly between the front legs just under chest.

**Level 5**

- Dog stiffens on approach and exhibits one or more of the following: freeze, whale-eye, low growl, piloerection, exaggerated guarding posture (rear-end up high and front end low, covering resource in a very stiff and still manner).

**Level 6**

- Dog shows one or more of the criteria for level 5.
- Also shows: Aggressive tooth display, which may be directed at the intruder or while engaged with the resource.
- Additionally the dog disengages from the food bowl or resource for a snap or bite at the intruder, then goes immediately back to the resource.
- There are no punctures but may be slight contact.
- Note: with a resource item, often dogs at this level won't release the object, but will appear to try to bite the intruder with the resource in their mouth.

**Level 7**

- Dog shows one or more of the criteria for Level 6, and disengages from the resource to bite.
- Contact is made, punctures are likely. Usually many signals are seen (freezing, whale eye, tooth display). With a resource item, usually a dog at this level will drop the item in order to bite and then return to the item.
- It is at this level and above that you begin to see dogs that will spread food all over, spill the bowl, etc.

**Level 8**

- Dog disengages from the resource quickly (fast trigger) and sometimes does not even show any of the precursor signals but goes immediately for the bite OR Dog disengages from the resource and bites multiple times, hard enough to puncture and or tear.
- The bites are often of a longer duration (for example, 1 second vs. instant bite and release)

**Level 9**

- Some or all of the previous criteria are met with the addition of the following:
- Dog disengages from the resource and bites, holds and shakes their head.
- Dog bites multiple times in a row.
- Dog moves away from bowl and guards the area surrounding the resource while in full agonistic display.
- Dog may guard an empty bowl.

**Level 10**

- At this level the dog would do serious, life-threatening damage if not restrained.
- They will guard the area, the empty bowl, or crumbs of a finished resource.
- Often instead of directing their aggression toward the intruding object (plastic hand) they will make direct and threatening eye contact with the person.