



## **YOU BOUGHT A PUPPY FOR YOUR PROTECTION; NOW WHAT DO YOU DO?**

If the puppy is between 8 – 16 weeks old, enroll it immediately in an organized “puppy kindergarten” program. All puppies require early socialization and training, even those destined to be guard dogs.

At the age of approximately six months, enroll your dog in an obedience class for some basic training. A protection dog without thorough obedience training is a dangerous dog and a liability.

Any dog (even guard dogs) destined to be a family dog should be well socialized, encouraged and trained to tolerate the approach and handling by responsible people, such as a veterinarian, groomer, guests invited in the house, and any friendly person while the dog is on lead and in public.

No dog, including guard dogs, should ever be allowed to show unwarranted aggression towards either people or other animals. If a person approaches in a friendly or non-threatening manner, the dog should act in a friendly or tolerant way in response. This shows a stable and safe dog to own.

Do not expect a puppy to be a serious guard dog. Trying to force a puppy to be too serious at an early age can make it vicious or a fear biter, both types are extremely dangerous to have around a household. Dogs become emotionally ready to guard seriously anywhere from 8 to 24 months of age, depending on the breed and individual development.

There are things you can do to stimulate the guarding instinct in young dogs. Encourage the puppy to be alert to people coming up to the house and car by showing lots of interest yourself and exciting talk like, “who’s coming?”. Praise the puppy if it barks when someone comes to the door; then teach the puppy to be quiet on command before you open the door. Use a command like “watch!” for the bark and “that’s enough” for stopping the bark. Always praise the dog for responding correctly to each command. Do not allow the dog to continue barking once a friendly person is invited in the house. Do allow the dog to socialize with friendly people after they have entered the property.

Most dogs will naturally protect what they consider within their territory without any additional guard-type training. What they do need is an owner that provides the necessary foundation of good socialization and obedience training.