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Mean squirrel attacks Pa. letter carrier



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Letter carriers occasionally have to deal with angry dogs or maybe even a spider's nest in a mailbox, but a mean squirrel? Barb Dougherty, a 30-year Postal Service employee, said she was attacked and bitten Monday by a squirrel while delivering mail in Oil City, about 75 miles north of Pittsburgh.

"It was a freak thing. It was traumatic," Dougherty told The Derrick in Oil City. "I saw it there on the porch, put the mail in the box and turned to walk away and it jumped on me."

The animal ran up her leg and onto her back, she said.

"I eventually got a hold of the tail and pulled it off me," Dougherty said. "No one was home at the house where I was delivering the mail, but the neighbor lady heard me screaming and came over."

An ambulance took Dougherty to the hospital, where she was treated for cuts and scratches. The squirrel was killed with a BB gun and sent to a lab to be tested for rabies. Dougherty was given the first series of rabies shots as a precaution.

Postal officials said the attack is extraordinary.

"In about 230 years of postal history, I bet it is not the first, but I've personally never heard of another squirrel biting," said Steve Kochersperger, spokesman for the Erie district.

Squirrels do not frequently bite people, said Regis Senko, who works for the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Steve Jolley, a Postal Service manager in Oil City, said, "We are not issuing a squirrel alert, but everyone is aware of the incident."

Information from: The Derrick, <http://www.thederrick.com>

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