

# Fearful Communication<sup>i</sup>

When a dog is frightened, he most likely will react to the fearful stimulus with his whole body. The body language may show up as a combination of several signals and/or may appear as a progression through these signals as the dog's response intensifies. He may lick his lips (though he is not hungry) or yawn (though he is not tired). He may keep his mouth tightly closed. He may cower or lower his body, lower or tuck his tail, or put his ears back. He may also tremble or shake, look away to avoid eye contact, or lean back to avoid the stimulus that is perceived as frightening. Sometimes, the absence of active signals can communicate as much as the active signals. For example, a dog that is not eating food/treats, is avoiding people when they approach his kennel, or freezes when reached toward, appearing "shut down" is demonstrating fearful communication signals. Note: There is a potential for a fearful dog to switch to aggressive body language if the presence of the fearful stimulus continues or becomes more threatening.



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