

BARKING DOGS

Dog barking in associations and complaints by the surrounding owners are a common problem in community associations. Police report barking dogs rank as one of the highest number of complaints they receive.

TYPICAL CAUSES OF DOG BARKING

According to experts, determining why the dog barks is the first step in training the dog not to bark. The typical causes for barking dogs are the following:

- Boredom;
- Children or others teasing the dog;
- Hostile neighbors;
- Separation anxiety;
- Changes to a dog's life or lifestyle;
- Possible health issues (such as irritations or discomforts);
- Distractions;
- Lack of shade, food or water; and
- Breeding.

TIPS AND IDEAS TO QUIET THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Set forth below are tips and ideas that might help quiet the neighborhood:

1. Contact Dog Owner: The complaining parties should contact the dog's owner to make them aware of the problem. Discussing the situation calmly with your neighbor can be the fastest and most effective way to resolve the problem. In many instances, a dog is barking when the owner is away from the home and the owner may not be aware of the problem. Owners tell animal control officers that they wished someone had talked to them before calling animal control. If you are hesitant about contacting the dog's owner in person, animal control suggests that you leave a polite note on the door with your name and number to discuss the problem.

2. Contact the Association: If speaking with the owner does not work, contact the association and request that the association intervene. The association may have a nuisance provision in its documents or a rule prohibiting dog barking and can send the owner a warning letter regarding the barking dog, thereby notifying the owner that the barking dog is creating a nuisance in the association. If the dog owner fails to comply with the warning letter and the association's CC&Rs have a nuisance provision, the association has the right to impose a reasonable fine for a violation of its CC&Rs, bylaws and/or rules and regulations after notice of the violation and an opportunity to be heard is given to the owner.

3. Contact City/Town: Some owners/associations have contacted their city/town code enforcement or have resolved dog-barking conflicts through the use of city/town mediation programs. In addition, in extreme circumstances after repeated problems, some owners have called the police regarding the barking dogs.

SUGGESTIONS FOR LIMITING DOG BARKING

Owners and associations have successfully used some of the following ideas and techniques to stop or limit dog barking in their association:

1. Owners may not know how to handle a barking dog situation and would welcome education. The association may create or secure a special pamphlet regarding barking dogs (see address below) that they can send to offending residents.

2. The owners inserted a dog door and "dog proofed" a section of the house providing dog toys and enticements. The dog chose the option of being comfy inside rather than bark at noises and neighbors;

3. Ask a professional to speak on the subject at a board meeting;

4. The complaining party, also a dog owner, offered to walk the offending dog while the owners were at work – a tired dog barks less;

5. The owners limited the dog's stimulation by restricting its line of sight; they covered the area at the bottom of the gate and fence;

6. Dog daycare two or three times a week helps prevent boredom;

7. Hire and work with a professional dog trainer;

8. Citronella anti-bark collar (the collar sprays a light mist of citronella in front of the dog's nose when the dog barks—dogs do not like the hissing sound or the smell of the citronella);

9. Anti-barking shock collars;

10. Electric devices such as "Bark Free" (this system responds to a barking dog up to 50 feet away by emitting a high pitched tone that humans cannot hear and that dogs do not like); and

11. Debarking surgery (dogs have a fold of tissue on each side of the larynx which must tighten and vibrate to bark)—debarking surgery removes this tissue. After the operation, the dog only has a whispery bark. However, this procedure is *controversial* and some experts claim that some or all of the barking returns over time. Since the surgery can be unsatisfactory and because many people consider it cruel, veterinarians seldom suggest debarking as a solution to barking problems.

Arizona Humane Society PDF, "Understanding the Barking Dog" can be downloaded by going to:
www.azhumane.org,
click on "Pet Tips", "Behavior Tip Sheet", "Dogs",
scroll to "Understanding the Barking Dog" - *OR*
<http://www.azhumane.org/PDFs/behavior/dogs/barkingdog.pdf>