

NUISANCE BARKING DOGS

All dogs bark, but some barking dogs become a nuisance. Excessive barking is one of the most disruptive neighbourhood issues and requires immediate attention.

Why do dogs bark?

It is important to try and determine why your dog is barking.

Dogs may bark because they are:

- hungry or thirsty;
- cold, hot or uncomfortable;
- sick or injured;
- bored or seeking attention;
- anxious or frightened; or
- threatened or feeling protective about their territory.

To minimise barking, check to see if your dog:

- has access to clean fresh water and adequate shelter;
- has daily exercise and is not sick or injured; and
- is provided with bones or other chewing treats.

Attention seeking behaviour

Dogs are social animals and they may resort to inappropriate behaviour as a means of seeking attention. Ensure that you spend time each day communicating and playing with your dog. If possible, allow the dog to rest beside you when you are present in the home.



Protecting property

Many dogs will bark if a person or animal is near their territory. To help prevent your dog barking at things it can see beyond the fence, you may like to:

- cover the fence or gate in a way that obstructs the dog's vision, or
- prevent the dog from having access to areas on the premises where the dog tends to see things and bark at them.

Boredom

Excessive barking is more common with some breeds than others.

Some breeds – such as cattle dogs, kelpies, border collies and German shepherds – were originally bred to work on farms and may have difficulty living in a suburban backyard or indoors.

You should carefully select a breed that is suitable for your lifestyle. Long walks on a lead may not be enough to keep some dogs occupied. They may become barkers due to boredom or frustration.

You may like to leave:

- your absence with a positive reaction.
- a radio or television playing where the dog can hear, so that it will feel that the property is occupied.

To help ensure that your dog does not become bored, make sure it has plenty to do when left alone. For example:

- If your dog likes water, place water in a child's pool or garden pool so the dog can play in it.
- Provide a variety of toys for your dog to chew or play with.

Give your dog a bone when you leave the house, as this will teach your dog to associate your departure with a positive experience.

What do I do if my dog is a nuisance barker?

There is no quick fix or easy solution to problem barking. Don't hit or yell at the dog as this may cause other behaviour problems. Instead:

- Consult your local vet, dog obedience club or animal behaviour specialist for advice on how to approach the situation.
- Consider specific treatment or behaviour training if your dog has behaviour problems such as separation anxiety.



What can I do if I live near a dog that barks excessively?

Dog owners are often not aware their dog is barking, as it usually happens when the owner is not on the property.

- Firstly, the owner should be approached directly and the problem explained to them calmly and politely. It may help to provide them with times that the dog is barking.
- Secondly, if your neighbours are unapproachable or do not agree with your assessment, a formal complaint should be made to our Rangers.

What will Rangers do when I make a complaint?

Local governments are responsible for enforcing the nuisance provisions of the *Dog Act 1976* and each local government may take a different approach to dealing with complaints.

In the first instance, Rangers need to be satisfied that a nuisance is being created.

They can do this by talking to neighbours, observing behaviour, using a count collar or asking you to keep records.

What if the barking continues?

If the barking continues and further complaints are lodged, the Ranger may issue a noise abatement notice which requires the owner to take action to abate the noise. The notice has effect for six months.

If the owner does not comply with the notice, they may be issued an infringement notice of \$200 or be prosecuted in court for up to \$5,000.

Higher penalties may be applicable if the dog is a dangerous dog.

What happens if a false complaint is made about my dog?

If a false report is made for whatever reason, you can take civil action against the complainant in court for making a false declaration.

For more information

Please contact the Town on: 9339 9339

Email: admin@eastfremantle.wa.gov.au

We will be able to forward you the Nuisance barking dog pack that offers advice in overcoming this issue.

