

Nearly all dogs bark. It is a natural response to many factors in a dog's environment, but excessive barking may become a real neighbourhood nuisance. It may greatly reduce the quality of life of neighbours by disrupting sleep and interfering with daily activities.

Council understands the value of enjoying a peaceful neighbourhood and appreciates that resolving noise nuisance complaints can sometimes be confronting or difficult. The information provided below is to assist in understanding the roles of the aggrieved party, Council and the dog owner.

My dog barks – what can I do as a dog owner?

Barking is a natural behaviour for dogs. It is one way in which they communicate. A dog which barks excessively to cause a nuisance is often one which over reacts to life's perceived threats or worries and where normal 'events of everyday life' causes excessive and prolonged barking that is 'above and beyond the call of duty'.

A dog's barking may become a problem if the dog barks when:

- left alone for extended periods of time
- you leave home
- people enter or pass your property
- the dog seeks attention

You know your dog may be causing a noise nuisance by its barking when:

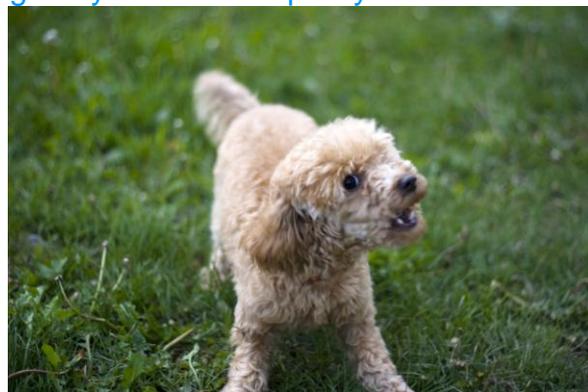
- your neighbour tells you
- a complaint has been made to Council
- it annoys you!

It is not Council's responsibility to resolve the problem for you. As the dog owner you need to firstly accept that your dog may be causing a problem and then take appropriate action to stop your dog barking excessively and these matters are unlikely to be resolved quickly.

Council is obligated to advise you that there are legal ramifications for not abating any noise nuisance.

Assess the problem

If you wish to reduce your dog's barking, you need to understand why he or she is barking. Ongoing barking is often a symptom of another problem, and taking time to understand what makes dogs bark - is the first step towards solving this problem, both for the dog involved and your neighbours.



Why do dogs bark?

Dogs are social animals and often bark when they are lonely,

- Separation from an owner can cause dogs to stress
- Barking may also be the result of boredom and frustration
- Barking is a dog's way of seeking attention from its owner,
- Dogs bark out of fear - this can be fear of people, objects, or other dogs
- Dogs bark when there is a threat to their territory
- Playing with your dog often stimulates barking
- Some breeds have a reputation for barking, and
- Dominant dogs bark until they get what they want.

The most important first step is to work out why your dog is barking. Once you know the symptom, you can find the cure. Utilising a counting collar can give you as the dog owner the opportunity to acknowledge and fix the problem or rule out the allegation. Council may be able to assist with this.

Control the barking

Behavioural problems can be understood if you learn more about your pet's behaviour. Barking can be controlled through several small behavioural changes, some as small as walking your dog twice a day to relieve boredom.

Seek professional help or talk to Council if necessary. Help is available.

For further information on this topic, please contact Council.