

Barking dogs

Advice to owners:



St Albans
City & District Council

**Environmental
Services 2021**

Constant barking:

Barking comes naturally to dogs, but the constant barking or whining of a dog can be very disturbing or annoying to your neighbours.

This problem often arises when you are out of the house and so you do not realise that your dog is barking. In law, a barking dog can be classed as a statutory noise nuisance. You could be taken to court if you do nothing to stop the nuisance.



Why dogs bark:

Dogs need the security of a family group. Pet dogs consider their owners to be their family and can soon become distressed when they are left alone for a long time.

Some of the reasons why dogs may bark:



- Loneliness
- Boredom or frustration
- Seeking attention
- Medical problems
- Defending their territory
- Alarm/fear: Some dogs bark at any noise or object that catches their attention or startles them.
- Separation Anxiety/Compulsive Barking: Dogs with separation anxiety often bark excessively when left alone.

Commonly they also exhibit other symptoms such as pacing, destructiveness, depression and inappropriate elimination. Compulsive barkers seem to bark just to hear the sound of their voices. They also often make repetitive movements as well, such as running in circles or along a fence.

Training

Training is important so that your dog does not bark at anything that moves. A well trained dog should be able to distinguish between intruders and visitors who are allowed into the house. Good training is essential at an early age. This combined with affection and companionship, should mean that your dog will not develop these bad habits. Always start as you mean to go on. Here are a few tips to remember as you start your efforts to control your dog's barking.

- Shouting stimulates your dog to bark more because they think you're joining in. So the first rule is to speak calmly and firmly, but don't yell.
- Most dogs don't know what you want when you're yelling at them to "shut up." So train your dog to understand the word "Quiet!"

Some simple things to try:

Some dogs just do not want you to go out. Get your dog used to the idea using some of the following suggestions:

- Leave at different times during the day. That way it may not be so concerned each time you leave. Do not make a fuss of your dog when you leave it.
- Try putting the dog on their own in another room for a few minutes, then gradually build up the time you leave your dog alone. Do not return to the dog until it is quiet for a period, then praise it when you do return.
- Some dogs bark because they want to join in with what's going on outside. If this is the problem, try leaving your dog where he cannot see outside.
- Some dogs will settle only if they can hear a human voice. Leaving the radio or television on at a low volume may help.
- Try not to leave your dog for long periods. If you have to go out, see if there is someone who can look in during that time. Maybe that person could take the dog for a walk or let it out into the garden (if you have one). A dog door is very useful to let the dog use the garden when you are not there.

If you do have to leave your dog for a long time:

- Feed and exercise your dog before you go out and leave it fresh water to drink.
- Make sure its bed or basket is comfortable and not in a draught or direct sunlight.
- Leave it a large marrow bone to chew and some of its favourite toys to play with.
- Make sure that the room is not too hot or too cold and that there is good ventilation.



If you are not returning until after dark, either leave alight on or use a night light that comes on automatically when it gets dark.

Constant barking can be avoided.

If you leave your dog outside all day, follow the simple rules below:

- Do not put the kennel near a neighbour's fence.
- Make sure your garden is completely secure, to prevent your dog from straying and causing problems to neighbours.
- Do not blame the dog and think that you will solve the problem by replacing the dog with another. All dogs bark and unless you change your lifestyle at the same time, the problem will still be there.
- Considering a second dog for company may help. But think about this carefully. Do you have the space and can you afford it? A second dog could result in more, not fewer problems.



If nothing you have tried works:

- Old dogs can be taught new tricks. Contact your vet for advice.
- Visit the association of pet behaviour councillors website at www.apbc.org.uk