

## Why might my dog be barking?

There are several reasons your dog might be barking...

**ALERTING:** *Dogs bark to alert other pack members to an intruder or strange event.*

→ Try thanking the dog for alerting you, then ask him to "quiet" and call him over to you for a treat. You may have to move closer to the dog to get his attention at first.

**REQUESTING:** *Dogs bark to request something like being let in, being patted, treats, toys, etc. This behavior is very easily reinforced by owners without meaning to – often, giving the dog what it wants makes the dog stop barking. However, by giving into the dog's demand, owners are rewarding the dog for barking!*

→ Make sure that your dog's daily needs are met and ignore barking which demands action from you. Be sure and reward all the quiet time your dog has...

**FEAR:** *Dogs bark because they are uncomfortable and want the scary thing to get away.*

→ Socialize your dog to people and the world in general. It is normal for dogs to feel scared of new things. Many positive experiences with new things build your dog's confidence.

**BOREDOM:** *Dogs bark because they don't get enough physical exercise, mental stimulation and social contact.*

→ A dog's needs can include walks, fetch games, play with other dogs, attention, training and handling from people, and items to chew. They need these things every day.

## Ideas to Control and/or Reduce Barking.

### 1. Reduce or limit the dog's time outside.

Train your dog to behave inside while you're home. You can let your dog drag a leash so you can get a handle on him quickly. Dog proof an area where you can allow him to be with you, and set up an area for safe confinement while you are gone. Leave the dog in his safe spot with a chew toy for very brief times

while you are home, and gradually extend these times. Dog crates can be useful tools for minimizing wild or destructive behavior.

### 2. Provide interesting chew toys, and teach your dog to use them.

There are many toys designed to hold and deliver food treats, and this rewards your dog for chewing his toys. Rotate toys so your dog always has something "new." Praise and pet your dog for appropriate chewing. If there are inappropriate items your dog chews, spray them with a taste deterrent such as "Bitter Apple" or "Scram."

### 3. Start a "Work For Food" program.

Don't feed the dog from a bowl: that's too easy! Teach your dog to take food gently from your hand, and then use his meal to train sit, down and come. You can also reward your dog for accepting handling and grooming. You can toss pieces of food into the yard for him to sniff out, or use it for rewards for running from one family member to another. Working for his meal burns mental and physical energy.

### 4. Take your dog on walks.

Using walks for training provides mental stimulation and socialization opportunities. Many dogs pull on leash, which makes walk time unpleasant or dangerous for their owners. Rewarding your dog for standing on a loose leash, and then for walking on a loose leash teaches your dog polite leash behavior. You can also reward your dog for sitting at curbs and sitting when he meets people. If your dog is a very strong puller, there are "no pull" harnesses, head halters and special collars to help you control him.

### 5. Make a Digging Pit – a special "digging area" with dog treats and toys to discover.

Prepare a pit with sand and load the area with dog biscuits, liver treats, bones, or other surprises. Dogs that are happily hunting are less likely to bark at every leaf that falls.

### 6. Use a visual barrier or a dog run to limit the sight of people, cars and other animals.

Dogs that are over-stimulated by the sights of the outside world may relax more when they can't see everything that's out there. Taking your dog on regular walks and providing appropriate chew toys may reduce your dog's reactivity as well.

## About the use of punishment to control excessive barking...

1. If the dog is barking because it is scared, punishment will make the dog feel even worse. Frightened dogs are a risk for biting.
2. If the dog is barking for your attention, any attention – even scolding – may actually reward the behavior.
3. The dog may learn not to bark when you're there, but continue to bark when you're gone. This is not because the dog is stubborn. This is the way dogs learn.
4. Effective punishment can temporarily stop the barking, but training and rewarding quiet behavior is what teaches the dog to behave appropriately.

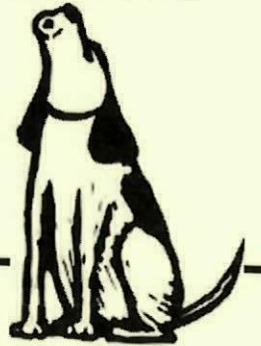
**A note about "outside dogs":** Dogs that spend a lot of time outside seldom run laps and exercise themselves. Outside dogs still have a need for walks and social contact. Dogs that do not have their daily needs met are more likely to engage in excessive barking.

## Rabies Resolution

The County resolution requires that all dogs be inoculated against rabies by four months of age. Animals are required to wear their issued tag at all times.

**COUNTY LAW (EXCERPT):** Every owner within the County shall obtain and maintain a current rabies certificate and tag issued by a licensed veterinarian for each dog that he or she owns after the dog is four months old. Each dog must possess a current certificate and tag by the time the dog is five months old, or within one month of being brought into the County if the dog is over five months old. Every dog required to have a tag shall wear its tag at all times. The tag shall be the County license and no other license is required. [Douglas County Resolution R-999-177 1.05(1)(a)]

## NOTICE OF BARKING DOG COMPLAINT



**DOUGLAS COUNTY**  
**ANIMAL SERVICES**

INTEGRITY • SERVICE • EXCELLENCE

4556 CASTLETON COURT  
CASTLE ROCK, COLORADO 80919

303.660.7529

[HTTP://DCSHERIFF.NET](http://DCSHERIFF.NET)

**MISSION**  
**A COMPASSIONATE SOCIETY WHERE ANIMALS**  
**ARE CARED FOR AND VALUED.**



DEAR PET OWNER:

ADDRESS:\_\_\_\_\_

Douglas County Animal Services enforces county animal control ordinances. A portion of these ordinances deals with barking dogs and other pet animals that are a disturbance to others in the Neighborhood. A copy of the ordinance is included in this notice.

Douglas County Animal Services has received a complaint that a dog(s) kept at your residence have been barking, howling or creating some other utterance for periods of time that is causing a disturbance.

Days and times barking (or other noise) has occurred:\_\_\_\_\_

Reported description of dogs:\_\_\_\_\_

We realize it is always disconcerting to receive a notice such as this. We offer the complainant this letter as a courtesy to you as we realize that often people are not aware that their pets are disturbing the peace and quiet of others and appreciate having the situation brought to their attention first rather than having a formal complaint issued.

We also realize that information given to us may not be entirely correct. If you would like to contact us on this matter please call 303-660-7529 to speak with an officer.

Refer to Activity #\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you,

Douglas County Animal Services

Consequences of a Noisy Pet Ticket

No one likes getting any kind of ticket, and many people find it especially painful to get a ticket related to a beloved pet. Many people feel that it is the nature of dogs to bark, do not see the barking as something they can control, and do not think the barking hurts anyone. However, excessive barking is something you **can** control, and it can greatly disrupt the peace and quiet in the neighborhood. Allowing your dog to bark excessively is a crime, and can have serious consequences in court.

1. What Can Happen If You Don't Stop the Noise?

With most tickets, the more often you get in trouble the higher the penalty will be each time. Noisy Pet tickets are no exception. While the first ticket usually only carries a small fine The fine on additional tickets could be up to \$500. A Judge can even order you to make your dog stop barking (called an "Order of Abatement"). Disobeying a Judge can carry a penalty of up to \$500 **and** 90 days in jail. After thousands of dollars in fines, some people find that they simply can't afford to keep their dog. No one wants a noisy pet problem to go this far, and you, as the dog owner, are in the best position to stop it. The law makes it your responsibility to prevent your dog from being a nuisance to the neighborhood, regardless of the reason why. Preventing excessive barking is simply one of the things dog owners **must** do if dogs and people are going to be able to live together in Douglas County.

2. How Barking Dogs Hurt Your Neighborhood

Different people have different habits. Your neighbor may work the night shift, may be prone to migraine headaches, or may enjoy activities that are easily disrupted by noise. Times of the day during which a bit of noise is not particularly bothersome to you may be just the time of day in which noise is most irritating

to your neighbor. It's sometimes hard to tell how your dog acts when you are not there – many dogs bark only when they are lonely. An otherwise friendly neighbor can easily become very angry if awakened from a sound sleep or if they hear your dog barking for extended periods of time. Sometimes, this can change a peaceful neighborhood into a bitter and hostile place - an outcome everyone wants to avoid.

3. What You Can Do

One of the wonderful things about dogs is that they are intelligent and trainable animals. Unfortunately, sometimes people train their dogs to do the exact opposite of what they want, especially in regard to making noise. If a dog is barking because it wants attention, it may see being yelled at as a reward – bad attention can be better than no attention at all. You might benefit from a professional dog trainer, or you might want to read books on ways to train your dog. You may be able to solve the problem with a bark collar, or by simply bringing your dog inside. You may even be able to figure out what it is that your dog is barking at, and simply avoid letting your dog out at some very specific times. For example, if your dog always barks when the neighborhood children are waiting for the school bus, you may be able to prevent the noise by putting your dog out only after the school bus has been by.

Many people have been successful in training their dogs not to bark. It's far from impossible and can make your experience as a dog owner much more enjoyable. No one benefits from angry neighbors, and no one wants to have to go to court on a noisy pet ticket.

**Please help us keep your neighborhood a peaceful and happy place to live! Acting quickly to quiet a noisy pet is better for the entire neighborhood. Failing to prevent your dog from barking excessively is a crime.**

Noisy Pet Ordinances

Incessant barking can be very disturbing to the peace and quiet of a neighborhood. In addition, it violates both city and County ordinances to harbor such a disturbance.

COUNTY LAW (EXCERPT): No household pet individually, or in combination with another household pet or pets, shall disturb the peace of another by making any noise audible from an adjacent or nearby property for a 10-minute period that is relatively continuous and uninterrupted.  
[ Douglas County Resolution No .R-019-029 1.07]

Tips on Approaching Your Neighbor

Please keep in mind that most Barking Dog complaints are some form of separation anxiety and many owners are not be aware of the extent of the problem. Often pet owners have no idea that their pet may be stressed while left alone, or there may be patterns to the behavior of the dog (i.e. kids getting off bus).

**If comfortable**, approach your neighbors in a proactive and friendly manner. Your neighbors may appreciate you showing sincere interest in solving the problem together and they may have valuable information to help you resolve the reasons for your dogs behavior. They may be nervous in approaching you and may have had this notice mailed to you as an attempt to resolve the issue without having to resort to filing formal criminal charges.

**\*\*NOTE\*\* When contacting your neighbor, hostile attitudes can and do lead to more serious criminal charges. If you are unable to approach your neighbor in a civil manner or they are unreasonable, do NOT attempt to contact them.**