

INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESPONSIBLE PERSON OF EXCESSIVELY BARKING DOG

RESPONSIBLE PERSON (owner of the dog)

Barking dogs

All dogs bark, but in some circumstances barking dogs can become a real nuisance in the neighbourhood. This can greatly reduce the quality of life in the neighbourhood and increase tension. You may not be aware that your dog is excessively barking in your absence and it is disturbing your neighbours.

Dogs can bark for a number of reasons:

- Continual barking is often a symptom of another problem.
- When they are lonely (dogs are a social animal).
- Separation anxiety from their owner.
- Boredom and frustration.
- Dogs will bark to seek their owner's attention.
- They fear or are concerned about other people, objects, loud noises or other dogs.
- There is a threat to their territory.
- Some breeds have a reputation for barking.



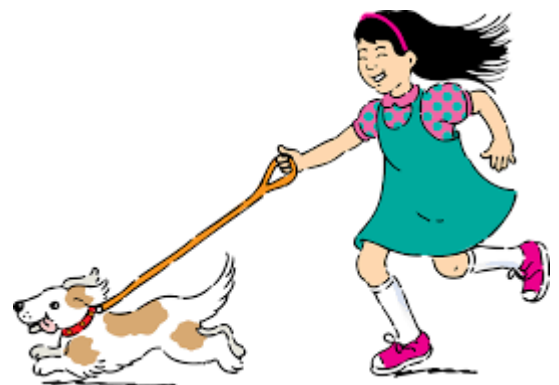
Do not shout at or chase the dog in an attempt to stop it barking as this may encourage the dog to bark more.

What you can do about your dog's barking?

The first thing to do is to look at the situation and why your dog is barking! There are a few different reasons why dogs bark and some hints and tips that may assist with a barking dog. However, it is not a simple fix and it does require commitment and time to change the situation. Council recommends you seek the expertise of a dog trainer to help rectify the issue.

Lack of physical and mental stimulation:

- Increasing the dogs physical exercise, regularly walk your dog and change the route you walk. Running the dog until it is exhausted is not mentally stimulating for a dog. Try breaking up your walk by telling your dog to sit, drop and stay a couple of times as you walk along.
- Providing your dog with interactive food toys that require manipulation to obtain the food treat, can entertain them during their alone time.
- Create a treasure hunt by hiding food around the yard for your dog to search for while you are out, rather than putting it all in a bowl.
- Spend fun times with your dog. Play with your dog especially during times it may usually bark, distracting from a source of disturbance or anxiety (example; when the postman drives past).
- Provide meaty bones or rawhide treat occasionally to entertain your dog. In the hot weather you can provide your dog with a frozen ice block with some meat or treats frozen inside.



- Dogs can get bored with the same thing; provide a couple of new distractions every day. Have a selection of toys that you alternate between on different days/weeks.

Territorial behaviour

- Try moving the dog away from the point of aggression. For example, if the dog is getting upset at the dogs walking past the front yard, make a fenced off enclosure at the back of your house away from the problem. Try to prevent the line of sight by covering the fence, removing the source of excitement.



Separation anxiety

- If your dog has separation anxiety you can help to prevent anxiety by not spending every minute with your dog when you are at home. Put your dog outside or prevent them from following you everywhere when you are home. Don't make a big deal about you leaving or returning it becomes a big deal for your pet. Ignore the dog prior to leaving the house, if you pay the dog attention and talk to it like a human, you're actually making the dog more anxious and they don't understand what you are saying, it is not putting them at ease. Also ignore the dog when you come home, wait until the dog has become calm and relaxed before acknowledging it.
- Dogs pick up on patterns very quickly and can anticipate your movements. Try to vary your routine so you don't trigger the anxiety.
- You can also try turning the radio on and leaving some clothes with your scent on it to ease anxiety.
- Dog Appeasing Pheromone (DAP) can be worn as a collar or plugs into a wall socket. Can be helpful with some dogs. Most vets can assist.

Other options you can try

- Crate training can be a useful tool as it teaches the dog to be still and calm and helps prevent an aroused state of mind where the dog is more likely to bark, can prevent the dog from practising and reinforcing the behaviour that causes it to bark, also keeps dog safe and prevents other bad behaviours. Please follow RSPCA recommendations on crate training your dog.
- **Barking collars:** Council offers a free service of lending dog barking collars to owners of dogs that excessively bark. These are lent on a 2-week basis as a training tool to stop the dog from excessively barking, not to stop the dog from barking altogether. The reason for the dog barking still needs to be dealt with and corrected.

If you need any more information, please call Douglas Shire Council on 4099 9444.

Thank you for your assistance.