

Barking Dogs

July 2024

Dogs bark. It's a natural behaviour, it's how they communicate. Some barking is acceptable and normal, e.g. the dog barks to let you know someone is at your front door. Barking becomes a nuisance when the barking is persistent, continuous or repetitive. If your dog is barking excessively, it's important to find out why.

Dogs bark for many reasons, including:

- boredom, loneliness, lack of enrichment;
- unsuitable yards, enclosures or kennel locations;
- noises like fireworks, thunderstorms, sirens;
- lack of food, water, exercise or training;
- neighbourhood disturbances like garbage trucks, post officers, delivery drivers, people passing by;
- need to protect property or their owner's family.

Barking is very normal behaviour for a dog, however there are times that barking can be increased by the environment the dog is kept in.

Excess dogs can also lead to excess barking. Local Laws guide how many dogs you can keep on your property refer *Subordinate Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011* Schedule 2 Requirement for approval to keep animal.

What is considered excessive barking?

Council's Local Law states the minimum standards for keeping animals generally are that a person who keeps an animal on premises must take all reasonable steps to prevent the animal from making a noise or disturbance that causes a nuisance or disturbance to the occupiers of:

- adjoining premises; or

- premises in vicinity of the land on which the animal is ordinarily kept.

How can I tell if my dog is a nuisance barker?

You may have been unaware that your dogs' barking is causing a nuisance, especially if you are not at home. If you don't know why or when your dog is barking, think about ways to identify why your dog may be barking when you are not home.

You could achieve this by:

- Noting possible triggers that may cause your dog to bark when you are home, the times they occur and how long your dog barks for. Removing the causes could help when you aren't there.
- Pretend that you are going out. Follow your normal routine when leaving but park your car down the street and quietly walk home. Listen from outside your property to see if your dog starts barking.
- Use a barking monitoring app on a mobile device that you can leave at home to help capture any potential nuisance barking that may occur when you are not there.
- Ask your neighbour/s if they have noticed any excessive barking, when and for how long and if they wouldn't mind keeping records for you.

What can I do to help stop my dog from barking?

Some things you might like to try include:

- using enrichment, exercise and training to reduce barking behaviour;
- don't yell at or punish your dog as this may cause other behavioural problems;

- talk to your neighbours to find out when and how long your dog is barking and if they might have noticed what causes your dog to bark;
- walk your dog every day, especially before you leave in the morning, consistent exercise may reduce your dogs need for barking. A tired or content dog is less likely to bark;
- try training activities like sit or drop at regular intervals during your walk. This will exercise your dog's mind, increase obedience and help tire out your dog.

If your dog is barking at people walking past:

- modify your yard to stop your dog from accessing the front fence so it can't see people or other animals walking past;
- erect a sight screen so the dog can't see through the fence, this could be as simple as attaching material to your fence, like weed matting.

If your dog is bored try:

- using chew toys. Some of these toys can have food added to keep your dog distracted, you can give it to them before you leave home;
- scattering food around your dog's yard will also help keep your dog busy;
- give your dog a chew toy in a comfortable single room like a laundry or garage;
- leave the television or a radio on.

Changing your dog's environment can also help reduce barking:

- restricting access to areas where they would usually bark;
- using visual barriers;
- allowing your dog inside the house;
- creating 'chill out' zones;
- crate training, safe space;
- exercising your dog in the morning including brain training, lots of sniffing can be calming and tiring.

Council can offer suggestions and provide information to reduce barking but as the dog owner, it is your responsibility to find a resolution that will work for you and your dog.

There are also many other professionals who may be able to help.

- Vets, dog trainers or animal behaviourists are a wealth of knowledge; and
- [RSPCA](#) or [Animal Welfare League](#) are a great source of information.

What do I do if I receive a barking allegation about my dog?

Council encourages neighbours to talk to each other to resolve barking dog issues.

You may be approached by a neighbour about your dog barking. Please ask your neighbour for more information like when the dog is barking and for how long. This may help you understand when and why your dog is barking so you can take action to reduce barking.

If Council contacts you about your dog barking, please don't jump to the conclusion that Council will remove your dog. Council will do a lengthy and thorough investigation before any enforcement takes place. Council understands that you love your pet and we will work with you to try to resolve the issue.

It can be helpful for you to find out what is triggering your dogs barking. If you can take immediate action to remove or reduce what is causing your dog to bark, this may help to improve the situation. If the barking continues, your local vet may be able to offer some guidance. The issue could be due to a behavioural or health concern.

What can I do if I am affected by a dog that barks excessively?

Many owners don't know their dogs bark when they're not home. Council encourages you to speak with the dog's owner first to let them know what is happening and how it is affecting you. If you don't feel comfortable talking with the owner, why not write a friendly note and put it in their letterbox to let them know about the issue.

In most situations the cause of barking may be easily identified, but there are times where it isn't as easy. Sometimes, the wrong dog may be identified, the complaint may be due to a neighbourhood dispute or sometimes one neighbour may be overly sensitive to barking while other neighbours hardly notice at all. It's important to understand that each situation is unique.

If you can't resolve the problem yourself, you can contact Council to make a barking dog request.

How to report nuisance barking

To report nuisance barking, please contact Council on 07 5540 5111 or email mail@scenicrim.qld.gov.au.

You will need to provide Council with the following information:

- your name, address and phone number;
- the address of the property where the dog lives;
- a description of the barking dog;
- the days/times the dog barks and for how long.

What happens after a report is made about excessive barking?

When Council receives a barking dog request, we will:

- contact the owner of the dog and advise them Council has received a barking dog request and give them information that may help reduce nuisance barking; and
- contact you to confirm Council has received your request. If the dog is still nuisance barking after 21 days you can contact Council to lodge a follow up request.

Following a second complaint, the investigation process may include noise monitoring using barking logs, a neighbourhood survey or in some cases barking recording devices.

If noise monitoring confirms:

- no excessive barking, the investigation will be finalised.

- excessive barking, Council will issue a compliance notice advising the owner to take action to reduce the dog barking.

If the dog owner fails to reduce the barking and Rangers identify further breaches, Council may:

- take further enforcement action, including issuing a fine; and/or
- remove the dog/s from the property.

Council may not be able to solve every barking complaint, as the evidence Rangers collect may not reflect a breach in the law. Council will continue to support and educate pet owners.