

Noisy Animals Are Nobody's Best Friend

What is a noisy animal?

SECTION 15-7.8, ARLINGTON COUNTY CODE

It shall be unlawful for any person who owns, possesses or harbors any animal or bird to permit that animal or bird to create a frequent or continued noise disturbance across a real property boundary or within a nearby dwelling unit. Any person convicted of this Section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by no more than \$1000.00 fine and/or thirty days in jail maximum.

What is good about a barking dog?

- Alerts owners of potential problems
- Warns owners of a strangers presence
- Alerts neighbors to intruders when you are not home
- Indicates an animal is in distress

What is bad about a barking dog?

- One dog barking usually starts another dog barking
- Excessive barking is extremely annoying and creates neighborhood arguments, resentments, etc.
- Usually indicates a bored or lonely animal
- Unless stopped, barking may develop into a type of hysteria
- Excessive barking can be harmful to dogs

Do you own a nuisance dog?

Determine for yourself whether your dog is a good companion and watchdog or a neighborhood nuisance by asking yourself if your dog barks EXCESSIVELY when...

- Someone rings your doorbell?
- Mail carriers, paper carriers, etc. come to or go by your house?
- Children are playing outside?
- Another animal comes into view?
- You leave or return home?
- Left alone and lonely?

First, determine when and for how long your dog barks, and what's causing him to bark. Ask your neighbors what they see and hear, drive or walk around the block and listen for a while. With a little effort you should be able to figure out which of the common problems mentioned above is causing your dog to bark.

Your dog may be barking because...

Animal Welfare League of Arlington
2650 S Arlington Mill Drive Arlington, Virginia, 22206
<http://www.awla.org> (703) 931-9241

- He's bored and lonely. Recommendations: Walk your dog at least twice daily--it's good exercise physically and mentally. Take an obedience class with your dog. Provide interesting toys to keep your dog busy when you're not home.
- He's guarding his territory. Recommendations: Teach your dog a "quiet" command. Desensitize your dog to the stimulus that triggers the barking.
- Have your dog neutered or spayed to decrease territorial behavior.
- He is afraid of something. Recommendations: Identify what's frightening your dog and desensitize him to it. Mute noise from the outside by leaving your dog in a comfortable area in a basement or windowless bathroom and leave on a television, radio or loud fan. Block off your dogs' access to outdoor views that might be causing a fear response.
- He is suffering from separation anxiety. Your dog may be barking due to separation anxiety if the barking occurs only when you're gone and starts as soon as, or shortly after, you leave. Recommendations: Please ask for our tip sheet on separation anxiety.

The Responsibility Is Yours

As a dog owner, you know the companionship, loyalty, love and fun that your dog adds to your life, but you must also realize your responsibility toward your neighbors. Dog owners can be insensitive, at times, to their own barking dog. Put yourself in your neighbor's position to see how your dog's habits effect them. Excessive barking can be extremely annoying to neighbors as well as those who have to live with a noisy dog. The security of knowing you have a real watchdog, as well as enjoying a peaceful and quiet neighborhood, is well worth the effort.

What can you do about a neighbor's barking dog?

- First, try to contact the owner and work out a solution.
- If you are unsuccessful in working out a solution with a dog owner, contact the Department of Animal Control at 703-931-9241. An Officer will respond to the dog owner's address and attempt to discuss the problem. If the dog owner is not home, a copy of this information will be posted along with a notice that a noise ordinance complaint has been received.
- The complaining party will receive a copy of this information with confirmation that the dog owner has received notification of a possible noise ordinance violation.
- Between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. please contact the Arlington County Police Department at the non-emergency number, 703-558-2222.
- If the warning notice / brochure from Animal Control fails to resolve the problem (because the noise ordinance doesn't fall under animal control, the Animal Control Officers do not have the legal authority to issue citations for barking dogs) the complainant is advised to visit or call the magistrate at the Arlington County Police Department located at 1435 N. Courthouse Road, (703) 228-3960.

Notification Certification

A warning notice and/or barking brochure has been given, posted or mailed to the address of the alleged violator.

Animal Control Representative: _____

Date: _____