

# DOES YOUR DOG HAVE A BARKING PROBLEM?

All dogs bark. Unfortunately some dogs bark so much that it becomes a nuisance to neighbours.

## WHY DO DOGS BARK?

Dogs bark for many reasons. Some possible causes are:

- Lack of exercise
- Loneliness and boredom
- Lack of a suitable sleeping area and shelter
- Flies, fleas, worms or some other ailment
- Hunger or thirst
- Attention seeking
- Protecting territory
- Continual barking or crying may be a cry for help
- Isolation
- Chained or tied up for long periods of time

## WHAT CAN BE DONE TO STOP EXCESSIVE BARKING?

- Exercise your dog regularly. Dogs are pack animals and would much prefer to go for a walk or have a game with you than be left by themselves. If you can exercise your dog at the same time every day it will learn to expect its walk and is more likely to wait quietly for this time to arrive.
- Socialise your dog. When you walk your dog let it meet other people and other dogs. Take it to an exercise area and let it play with other dogs. Introduce the dog to your neighbours. By socialising your dog it will be less likely to bark at neighbours and people or other dogs passing by your property.
- If your dog comes inside at night and is then shut out of a day it may bark because it has been separated from an area it wants to protect. Try fitting a dog door so the dog can go inside as it pleases. By simply closing internal doors you can control which rooms the dog has access to while you are away.
- Don't allow your dog to mark territory that it does not normally have access to. For example, if your dog does not normally have access to your front yard do not allow it to mark this area as territory as it may well bark through frustration by not being able to gain access to this area on a regular basis. Similarly don't let the dog mark territory close to your property. When you walk to the dog wait until your property is out of sight before you allow the dog to start marking.
- Provide your dog with a warm comfortable kennel in the winter and a cool shady place in the summer. Make sure the dog has fresh water available. Give it a bone.
- Give your dog something that has your scent on it. This will reassure the dog that you are coming back.
- Feed your dog before you leave in the morning. A lot of dogs will lie quietly while their meal digests.
- Check your dog for fleas regularly and ensure it is kept free of worms.

## YOU SHOULD NOT

Yell at or hit the dog when it barks. By yelling at the dog you are telling it that loud is okay. If you hit the animal it is still getting the attention that it wants even if this attention is unpleasant.

## WHAT CAN COUNCIL DO ABOUT EXCESSIVE BARKING?

Council will contact you and let you know that a complaint has been received. Hopefully any barking problems can be fixed at this time.

Before Council can take any formal action it requires a reasonable level of proof that your dog is a problem. Council will require the person complaining about the dog to lodge a formal "Notice of Complaint" in accordance with the *Dog Control Act 2000*.

Council Officers will have asked for a detailed list of dates, times and possible causes for the dogs barking. Council need this information so that Officers may carry out a fair and impartial investigation. This information can also help you understand and fix any problems that may be contributing to excessive barking.

## WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS IF A PROBLEM DOES EXIST?

You have a few:

- Do nothing
- Try and solve the problem yourself
- Get professional help

### Do Nothing

If you do nothing and Council is satisfied that the dog is causing a nuisance you may be served with an "Abatement Notice" (a legal document) requiring you to abate the nuisance within a specified timeframe.

If you do not comply with this notice Council may prosecute you. If convicted, Council will ask the court to impose a fine for each day that the nuisance continues.

**To do nothing is not advisable.**

### Try and solve the problem yourself

You can try some of the suggestions already mentioned in this brochure. Animal Control Staff can provide further information to assist you.

Check with Council to hire you an anti-barking collar.

### Get professional help

You can seek assistance from your vet who can give you advice about specific treatments or refer you to people that specialise in correcting behavioural problems.

## NEED MORE INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE?

Contact Dorset Council on 6352 6500 to speak with Council's Animal Management Officer.



This brochure prepared by Dorset Council in the interest of responsible dog ownership

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