

Barking dog complaints

What you need to do

1. Make sure you can positively identify the dog, and where it's located. Barking dog noise can travel a long distance. Positive identification is most important in an investigation.

2. If you feel comfortable speaking to the dog owner, approach them to have a discussion. A short conversation may be enough to resolve the problem. They may not be aware there is a problem or they may find it difficult to believe that their dog is causing a nuisance when they are not home. Tell the owner:

- Date, time and duration of the barking;
- If known, the reason for the barking;
- Where the dog is barking (front or back yard);
- The effect the barking is having on your life;
- Anything else relevant that will help the owner deal with the barking.

Remember, when it comes to barking dogs, be patient and try to help and support your neighbour's efforts to train and quieten their dog.

3. If you do not feel comfortable speaking to the dog owner, if the noise persists after the owner is made aware of the problem or if the owner is uncooperative, report the matter to our Customer Service team by calling 4221 6111.

Our Rangers will require your assistance in investigating the complaint. When lodging your complaint and to ensure it is handled quickly and efficiently:

- Give your name, address and telephone number. We will keep these details in strict confidence;
- Positively identify the offending animal's residence;
- Indicate what times of day the barking takes place, and how long it lasts;
- Keep a barking dog diary. This will help not only Council Rangers in establishing times and duration of the nuisance, but will help the owner in their efforts to control the animal

What happens next?

Our Regulation Officers will attend the residence of the dog owner to confirm the animal details and suggest ways to minimise the issue.

We will allow up to 2 weeks for the dog owner to work with their dog (or 4 weeks if a private company is acquired).

Please advise our Regulation Officers after this time if the barking has been minimised. If you are satisfied, we will close the complaint.

If the barking persists and there is no change after the time period lapses, we will attempt to obtain corroborating evidence via survey letters to neighbouring properties, seeking their assistance in identifying any barking dogs in the area over a 2 week period. Our Regulation Officers will also monitor the area over this period.

If the returned surveys from other residents report the same issue is affecting them, and it can be ascertained the dog is the one being investigated, the Regulation Officer will

- Study the survey information for patterns and most likely times the dog barks and possible causes
- Advise the dog owner other reports have been forthcoming
- Submit a report recommending a Nuisance Order be issued to the owner of the dog

The nuisance order is in force for six months and requires the dog owner to stop the dog from continually barking. If the owner fails to stop the noise nuisance they can be subject to substantial fines for breaching the order.

All informants must be prepared to attend court and give evidence prior to an order being issued.