

OAK HARBOR
POLICE DEPARTMENT

Animal Control



Barking

What dog owners
need to know

To report an animal issue:
Call I-COM: (360) 679-9567
Fax (360) 279-4609

Barking Complaints



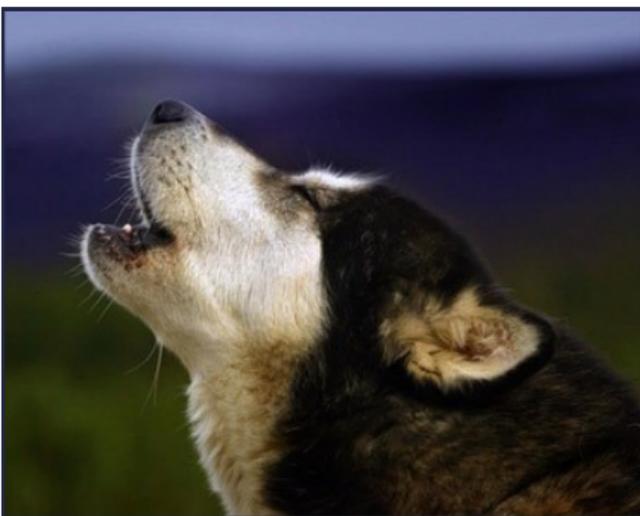
Barking complaints are bad news for everyone. For you, the dog owner, because people are usually startled (and unhappy) to find an Animal Control or Police Officer at their door—for the

complainant, because they probably lost sleep last night; and for us, because we are trying to deal with people with seriously frayed tempers.

Sometimes solutions are not simple. We usually don't take the dog and we can't magically offer a single solution to make the problem go away. A citation could be filed against the owner, but that requires several steps and the owner has ample warning that it will occur. An infraction is based on complaints by those the dog is disturbing with the noise and a officer witness to the violation. If a dog owner is willing to work on the problem, and with the neighbors, a citation is usually not necessary.

City Of Oak Harbor: OHMC 7.04.070, (5)

“It is unlawful for any person to cause or allow an animal to bark, whine or howl in a excessive, continuous of untimely fashion.”



What does having a “Barking Complaint” filed against me mean?

When a neighbor is bothered by non-stop, frequent or habitual barking, they call us. An Officer will contact you. This is the first step in solving the problem. We know that most people want to be good neighbors. Many times the owner is not aware that the dog is barking or is aware of the problem but does not know how to remedy it. The Officer is letting you know there may be a problem in the neighborhood that you can do something about.



What if my dog isn't barking?

If another dog in the area is responsible, help the officer locate the correct dog.

Why does my dog bark?

Dogs are social animals. They can easily become bored. When dogs are bored or lonely, they bark or howl. Dogs kept on chains or in small outside kennels are more apt to bark than those kept in the house. If the only attention a dog gets is the punishment it receives for barking, the behavior continues. Chew toys, plenty of attention and exercise are the best ways to keep your dog from barking.

The neighbors' dogs run loose and cause my dog to bark. What can I do?

No one has to tolerate loose dogs in their neighborhood. Talk with the owners of the dogs that run loose and tell them that you are interested in keeping the neighborhood peaceful. You can confine the dogs if they continue to run, and call Animal Control. If you know where the dog lives, jot down the address and call it in to Animal Control.

I want my dog to be a watch dog, I have to let him bark, don't I?

A good watch or guard dog quickly learns to bark only at persons entering its property. A dog that barks at every person walking by is useless as a watch dog. Once your dog has alerted you that someone is on the property, praise him and tell him "quiet" or "that's enough." The best place for a guard dog is inside the house with the family it protects.

I heard that my dog can bark all he wants until 10:00pm. Is this correct?

NO! There is no time of day that a dog can legally create a nuisance. A dog barking at 2 pm is just as annoying to a day-sleeper as a dog barking at 2 am is to you. The ordinance refers to frequent, repetitive, or continuous howling, barking or other noises made by any animal. It does not note the time it occurs, nor whether it is inside or outside of the house.

Should I get a second dog to keep my dog company? Will that help?

Remember, dogs are social animals by nature. They become bored and frustrated when left alone. A second dog can help because it keeps both dogs from getting bored. *Keep in mind though, if*



your dog barks because he has not been trained to be a good canine citizen, you may just wind up with two barking dogs! The best answer is to keep your dog actively involved with your family, exercised and provided with chew toys to keep him from becoming bored.

I've heard about some new things like shock collars and high frequency tone producers that are supposed to work. What about these devices?

These devices may have part in a broader training regimen but rarely work all by themselves. Ask a reputable trainer for information about how they work.



What about surgical debarking?

A drastic measure but available. Ask your veterinarian.

What else can I do?

- Determine why the dog barks and treat the problem.
- Exercise him vigorously before you leave him. Expend his energy.
- Leave the radio on at a moderate level in the house to “entertain” him while you are out.
- Create a visual block, like a solid fence or hedge.
- Don't leave him out alone for long periods of time. Don't use leaving him out as punishment for bad habits.
- Be consistent by acting as soon as possible to correct the problem.
- If you're near the dog and he begins unwanted barking, place your hands around his muzzle, hold the jaws together lightly and say “NO” in a firm tone.
- Have something noisy available to throw at the ground near the dog, this breaks the barking action. Praise the dog when he is quiet.
- If leashed, jerk the leash and say “NO!”.



Oak Harbor Police Department

860 SE Barrington Drive

Oak Harbor WA 98277

(360) 279-4600

Open Monday-Friday, 9 am-4 pm

To report a barking problem or other animal related complaint or to speak with the Animal Control Officer, please call the non-emergency I-COM Dispatch line at (360) 679-9567. Complaints are handled 24 hours a day.