

# Barking Dogs are Easy Targets

Barking is the most common complaint about dogs. The quiet enjoyment of one's home is typically protected by nuisance laws. Although barking is not illegal and not all barking dogs are a nuisance, barking dogs can be a problem that quickly leads to more problems. Preventing any call to report a nuisance is an easy first step to avoiding further issues. When law enforcement or animal control visit, it's natural they may look for other items of concern, leading to potentially more serious issues.

In some places, barking dogs are addressed by a specific state or local ordinance that describes circumstances when barking is excessive and unreasonable and therefore amount to a significant interference. Examples include barking for prolonged periods, frequent excessive barking, and barking at unreasonable hours such as early morning or late at night. Keeping a dog whose barking is a nuisance may even be a minor criminal offense.

If there is no law aimed specifically at dogs, a general nuisance or noise ordinance may still hold a dog owner responsible. For instance, local law may forbid loud noise after 10 p.m. Someone who allows a dog to bark, after numerous warnings, may be arrested or receive a citation for disturbing the peace.

Investigations of dog nuisance complaints and enforcement actions are typically performed by animal control officers. Depending on what local and state governments require, animal control officers' education and training varies greatly. However, in 44 states the law explicitly authorizes the seizing of any and all animals they believe appear neglected or abused before their owner is convicted on animal cruelty charges. In addition to being a good neighbor, preventing nuisance complaints and complaint-based visits from animal control should be regarded as a high priority for responsible dog owners and purebred breeders.

- Comply with your local and state laws. Research how they describe what constitutes a nuisance and the process used to both make and investigate a complaint. Go online or to a law library and check the state statutes and city, county or town ordinance yourself by searching for "noise," "dogs," "animals," or "nuisance." If you need help, contact AKC's Government Relations Department at [doglaw@akc.org](mailto:doglaw@akc.org).
- Some dog owners may be genuinely unaware that their dog(s) are causing a disturbance when left alone. Speaking with your neighbors about the potential and sharing your contact information may be the quickest and most effective means of avoiding trouble.
- Identifying the cause of the behavior is key to solving barking dog problems. AKC's expert advice articles may be a helpful resource:

[Help! My Dog Won't Stop Barking While Home Alone](#)

[How to Stop Nuisance Dog Barking](#)

[Ask Our Trainers: How Can I Stop My Dog from Barking at the Neighbors?](#)

[Learning to Speak Dog – The Meaning of Your Dog's Barks](#)



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