



**City of Lockhart  
Department of Animal Services**

**STOPPING EXCESSIVE DOG BARKING**

These guidelines are provided for your convenience if you have a problem with a dog that barks excessively. Chronic dog barking is bad for your pet. The factors that cause dogs to bark, mostly off-property noises and movements, often causes stress in pets. Stress can rob your pet of years of life. Even worse, chronic barking by animals is the main reason that so many are deliberately injured or poisoned by neighbors tired of listening to the noise.

Why Do Dogs Bark Excessively?

A dog's bark is its way of communicating with the outside world. While there are many reasons for dogs to bark, excessive or prolonged barking is annoying and disturbing to neighbors.

Excessive barking may be caused by any of the following:

- A dog's feeling of separation or loneliness from the owner or family.
- Boredom and frustration. Some dogs whine, howl, or bark because they are bored or frustrated from having little to do. More attention to the animal will help relieve the dog's feeling of boredom and will reinforce good behavior while giving the dog a sense of belonging to the family.
- Off-property noises may cause a dog to bark as a way of alerting the owner of a possible problem. Dogs sense many things they cannot easily respond to. That frustration, repeated over and over, day after day, month after month, can cause dogs to bark in response. Furthermore, barking may get a dog the attention it craves while its silence only means it remains ignored.

Determining the reason your dog barks is the first step in figuring out how to make him or her stop.

### What Can I Do to Stop My Dog From Barking?

- If possible, keep your pet inside the house. Remember, dogs often bark in response to some particular stimulus. The less an animal is exposed to such things as cars or motorcycles driving down your street, people walking by your yard, other dogs barking, or sirens wailing, the less likelihood there is that these stimulus will annoy him or her. Be sure to spend time playing with him or her. This will give the dog a sense of security and a feeling of belonging to the family.
- Behavior correction. When your dog barks excessively, a sharp verbal “NO” command often is enough to quiet down the animal. Never praise a dog for unwarranted barking. That only reinforces the idea that barking is acceptable behavior.
- Act promptly. Correct needless barking immediately, not 10 minutes after the dog has stopped barking. Your dog will not understand your correction if it comes too late after he or she has stopped barking.
- Don’t expect to be able to command someone else’s dog from barking. In fact, when you yell at a barking dog, in the dog’s mind, your reprimand is a reward because it gets him or her attention he or she was seeking.

### What Else Can I Do?

If your dog is an outside dog, make sure that he or she has a sturdy dog house. This not only protects your pet from the weather, but also helps subdue outside noise that may cause your dog to bark needlessly. Remember, however, a dog exposure to outside stimuli is what makes him bark. The more you can control the kinds of sights and sounds your dog experiences, the more chance you have at preventing excessive barking.

Please remember that no one likes to listen to a dog’s excessive barking. With a little time and patience and your understanding of why a dog barks, your dog’s needless barking can be stopped or at least very much reduced.

{Note: This information was provided by Dr. Dennis Fetko—also known as “Dr. Dog.” Dr. Fetko is a highly regarded animal behaviorist and former barking dogs hearing officer for San Diego County, California. If you want more information on barking dog control techniques, Dr. Fetko offers an audio tape. He can be contacted by writing Dr. Dog, Post Office Box 28126, San Diego, CA. 92128}