



## Barking Complaints

Barking complaints are bad news for everyone: for the owners of the barking dog(s) because they are startled and unhappy to find an Animal Services Officer at their door and for the complainant because they have lost sleep or are unable to enjoy their time. Resolving barking complaints is complex. Animal Services cannot just make the barking problem go away. We hope the following information will help you understand what local ordinances say about noise caused by pet animals and how you as the pet owner are responsible.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### What do the local ordinances say about noise caused by pet animals?

- City and County ordinances state:
  - “Any person who harbors, keeps, maintains, or has temporary custody of a pet animal shall be responsible for the behavior of such animal whether the owner knowingly permits the behavior or not. Such person shall violate the terms ... if such person’s animal constitutes a nuisance pet animal ...”
  - “Nuisance pet animal means a pet animal that ... habitually or continually disturbs the peace of any individual or neighborhood by barking, whining, howling or making any other noise ...”

#### What happens when a “barking complaint” is filed against me?

- Animal Services knows most people want to be good neighbors. In many instances, the dog owner is unaware their dog is barking. If this is the first complaint received in regards to barking, an Animal Services Officer will send the dog owner a letter to inform them of the barking complaint. The Officer will also include some tips on how to mitigate the barking issue. The expectation is the dog owner will take steps to correct the issue.
- If the barking problem is not corrected, the dog owner/caretaker may receive a citation. A citation is based on statements made by the people who are disturbed by the barking as well as audio/visual recordings.

#### Who responds to “barking dog” complaints?

- Animal Services responds to barking dog complaints within the city limits of Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, Yelm and in Unincorporated Thurston County.

#### What if my dog isn't barking?

- If another dog in the area prompted the barking complaint, help Animal Services Officer locate the dog and we will contact that owner/caretaker.

#### I heard that my dog can bark all they want until 10:00 pm. Is that correct?

- The nuisance pet animal ordinance is not time sensitive. The ordinance refers to “habitual or continual barking, whining, howling or other noise...” It does not consider the time the noise occurs.

#### 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 to the owners of the loose dogs and tell them you are interested in keeping the neighborhood peaceful. If the dogs continue to run, you can confine them and call Animal Services. If you know where the dogs live, write down the address for the Animal Services Officer.