Barking Dogs

All dogs bark – it is part of their natural communication, but sometimes dogs that bark persistently can become a nuisance to neighbours.

Under Section 55 of the Dog Control Act 1996, dog owners need to ensure that their dogs do not create a nuisance by persistent and loud barking or howling.

Dogs bark to express a variety of emotions: anxiety, boredom, territorial or dominance aggression, playfulness and hunger. Certain conditions in a dog's environment can trigger these emotions, and barking is often the first behavioural response.

Managing or preventing nuisance barking is a part of every dog owner’s responsibility, however, often dogs bark when their owners are not at home, so the owners may not be aware that there is a problem.

Many dog owners appreciate being made aware of the barking. Approaching the dog’s owner in a friendly manner, and discussing your concerns with them, can sometimes easily resolve this type of complaint.

If you don't feel comfortable talking to the owner, you could leave a letter in their mailbox. I have included an example letter.

I have also sent you a barking information brochure for your own reference.

The process Council follows for a barking complaint is as follows:

- You will need to identify the correct address and description of the offending dog/s that are barking. This is so we can discuss the details of the barking with the dog owner. (Please note your personal details will be kept confidential at all times).

- On receipt of your complaint, an Animal Management Officer will contact the dog owner and advise them of the complaint and inform them of their responsibilities. By using the information received from your complaint and from speaking with the dog owner, the Animal Management Officer will look at
barking patterns and try to determine the reason the dog may be barking and offer solutions to reduce the barking.

- The Animal Management Officer may need to confirm if other residents are being affected by the dog’s barking.

- If after one week there is no improvement, the Animal Management Officer will warn the dog owner of the consequences should a Noise Abatement Notice be issued and send out a letter advising them of Section 55 of the Dog Control Act 1996. The Animal Management Officer will continue to work with you and the dog owner to resolve the issue.

- If after two weeks there is still no improvement, the first Noise Abatement Notice will be served.

- If barking continues, you will be required to give a short statement stating that the dog is causing a nuisance and/or distress with persistent and loud barking. This statement may then be used as evidence in court and you could be asked to appear.

- Once a Noise Abatement Notice has been served, it is valid for one week – if any barking occurs within this period, a $200 infringement notice will be issued to the dog owner for failing to comply with the notice.

- Any complaints received after that week will cause a second Noise Abatement Notice to be served – this is also valid for one week and any complaints received in that week will also result in a $200 infringement notice issued and the dog impounded. The dog will not be released until Council is satisfied that the barking will not continue after the release of the dog.

- Any complaints received after that week will cause a third and final Noise Abatement Notice to be served, which is also valid for one week and will also cause the dog to be impounded and possibly held for prosecution. Any complaints received after the one week that the notice is valid may still result in prosecution, but without the impounding of the dog.
Dear Dog Owner

You may not be aware that your dog is barking persistently when you are not home.

I am contacting you as the first step, to raise my concern and ask you to please make some changes to fix this situation.

Generally, your dog has barked/howled during the following days and times:
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
This appears to happen when:
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

Other information:

I have included some information from Auckland Council which may help identify why your dog is barking so much, and some possible solutions to help reduce the barking. For more detailed information and tips you can visit:


Please assist us by working with your dog to reduce the barking.

Thank you