

What to do if your dog is barking excessively

The Sunshine Coast Regional District Dog Regulation and Impounding Bylaw No. 376 states:

Section IV 26(a):

“No owner shall allow any dog, by its barks, bays, cries, or other noises to unduly disturb the peace, quiet, rest or tranquility of others”.

Barking is a natural dog behavior...OK, but how do I stop dog barking?

- Birds sing; frogs croak; and a dog barks, whines and howls. But you, your neighbour and your dog will be much happier if the barking is under control. Dogs are social and if you leave your dog alone all day it will take up the habit of barking.
- The first step in obtaining peace and quiet is to realize your dog may be barking a lot because it is lonely, bored, frustrated or frightened. Exercising your dog makes for a happy dog rather than sleeping all day when you are not home. Spend time playing, exercising and training your dog when you are home; it will help to alleviate the nuisance barking.
- To have a well behaved dog, teach it to “heel”, “sit”, “stay”, “off” and “down”. Dogs are like our children, they need structure and rules.

Nuisance Barking

- A dog that barks at birds, noises, the neighbours, passing pedestrians, and other dogs is not a good watchdog. This type of dog is similar to a car alarm that goes off for no reason and annoys your neighbours.
- Until your dog is re-trained keep them inside the house. The back of the house, for example, can help to muffle the sounds. Leave a radio playing for company and to mask the noises from the street.

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Stop Barking

Dogs have no idea if barking is good or bad.

As humans we respond to our dog barking in various ways, sometimes yelling, or encouraging or ignoring.

Here is a good rule:

Barking is OK until the dog is told to “Stop Barking”. Once the dog has stopped, reward them with a treat in front of their nose. Dogs can’t bark and sniff the treat at the same time. During this quiet time, praise your dog continuously with “good girl, you stopped barking, what a good girl, good dog.” After three seconds of no barking give your dog the treat. The next time they bark do the same but wait five seconds before the treat is given. Increase the quiet time before giving the treat as time goes by.

The consequences of barking



When your dog stays quiet for the required period of time after you have told them to “Stop Barking”, give the reward. When they make a mistake, loudly say “Stop Barking”. Most dogs are so shocked and surprised by your loud tone of voice that they will stare at you in disbelief (and silence).

If your dog then stops barking, you must immediately give them a reward in order for them to understand the concept: stop barking, get a treat. After enough repetitions your dog will understand the meaning of “Stop Barking” and you will no longer need your training reward.

Substituting the barking habit



Be patient, changing a habit doesn't happen overnight.

Keep repeating the “Stop Barking” retraining and you will notice that your dog won't bark excessively anymore.

Remember keep practicing the “Stop Barking” command and always give praise afterwards if your dog gets it right.

General Tips for Good Dog Management



- Neuter or spay your dog.
- Register your dog with the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) so that if it's lost, the Dog Control Officer will be able to find the owner and where the dog lives.
- Do not let your dog bark at things that are not a threat to your security. Correcting is better than having the dog bark incessantly.
- Seek professional help if your dog is too difficult to handle. Do not feel like a failure, humans train humans! It takes special skills to be able to train dogs successfully.
- Always walk your dog on a leash and pick up the feces. Bags are available at all SCRD parks.
- Whenever possible confine your dog at night and when you are away from home to reduce annoyance to your neighbours.



While you are out



Dogs are social animals and can become stressed when everyone leaves without them. Some of the reasons can be:

- **Separation Anxiety:** This is marked by your dog barking as soon as you leave. You may need to sneak back in, catch the dog barking and correct the behavior.
- **Boredom:** This is usually identifiable in the fact that your dog will bark, dig and chew. To help entertain your dog throughout the day, try toys or a Kong with peanut butter inside.
- **Apprehensive/Fearful:** This is usually found in a nervous, confidence-lacking dog that barks out of the fear of the unknown and the fact that it is on its own and its behavior goes unchecked. Try sneaking back in and catching the dog in the act. Sometimes putting the dog in a crate may help.
- **Territorial:** Dogs can be territorial and, if this is the case, you may need to seek professional help.



For more information,
please call **604-885-6817**

or visit
www.scrd.ca/Dog-Control.

