



CITY OF NORTH RICHLAND HILLS

RE: EXCESSIVE NOISE LETTER- ANIMAL OWNER

Date:

Current Resident:

Address:

City, State & Zip Code:

Dear Resident,

The North Richland Hills Animal Services Division received a complaint of an excessive noise nuisance at your residence.

This letter does not serve as a validation of the claim; however, you should be aware of the following violation(s) of the City of North Richland Hills Code of Ordinances possibly occurring at your residence:

City of North Richland Hills Noise Nuisance Ordinance:

Sec. 14-134. - Excessive noise.

Any person who shall harbor or keep on his premises, or in or about his premises under his control, any animal which by loud or unusual vocalization shall cause the peace and quiet of the neighborhood or the occupant of adjacent premises to be disturbed, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor; and a separate offense shall be deemed committed upon each day during or on which such violation occurs or continues.

This is notice that a violation has been reported and a court case may be processed and filed in the North Richland Hills Municipal Court. This violation may result in an assessment of a fine(s), nuisance abatement and/or civil penalties if you fail to rectify the situation.

Therefore, Animal Services encourages you to monitor and control your animal(s) to prevent an excessive noise disturbance and to comply with City Ordinance. Please also find an enclosed information sheet on possible causes and solutions to excessive noise.

In addition, within 10 days, you must provide written proof of current rabies vaccination and City license for all dogs, cats, and/or ferrets harbored on your property. Failure to do so shall result in citations under City Code of Ordinance, sections 14-61 and 14-64; which requires rabies vaccination and City license for all dogs, cats, and/or ferrets over the age of 4 months. Please contact Animal Services at (817) 427-6570 if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

North Richland Hills Animal Services

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BARK! BARK! BARK!

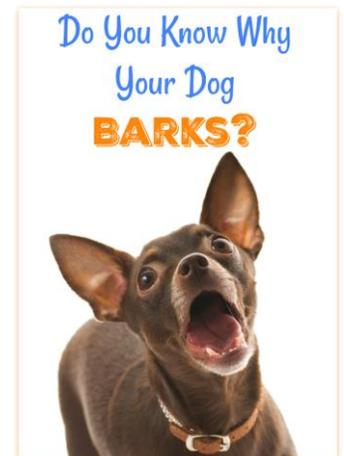
Is your dog's bark really worse than their bite? Excessive barking can lead to neighborhood disputes and violation of city ordinances, meaning that your family companion can get you into some trouble. Being a responsible pet owner means more than just providing food, water, and shelter for your animals!

Your commitment to identify and address the causes of dog barking is the key to success. Please feel free to contact us if you need further information or assistance!



LEARN WHY YOUR DOG BARKS?

Continued barking for long periods of time is a symptom of a problem that needs addressing – from the perspective of your neighbors and your dog. Determine when and for how long your dog barks. You'll need to really investigate if the barking occurs when you're not home. Talk with your neighbors to get a sense of when the barking happens, and what they observe. Being a thoughtful neighbor is important. Your neighbors can help you identify the source of barking triggers, so count on their valuable insight.



Barking Due to Social Isolation/Frustration/Attention-Seeking:

Your dog may be barking out of boredom and loneliness if:

- Your dog spends large amounts of time alone without human contact
- Their environment is empty, with few companions or toys to occupy their time
- They're under three years of age or a high-energy, high-activity breed

We recommend the following:

- ✓ Expand your dog's world and increase the time they spend with people
- ✓ Walk your dog for a minimum of 30 minutes every day
- ✓ Teach your dog commands or tricks
- ✓ Provide toys for your dog to keep them busy while you're gone. Rotating the toys makes them seem new and interesting. Provide toys that are meant for dogs, and not people items like shoes!
- ✓ If you suspect your dog is barking for attention, make sure YOU'RE making time for them



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- ✓ Keep your dog inside when you're unable to supervise them. Crating (indoor kenneling) is a wonderful tool to help confine and teach a dog, and can help dogs curb barking.
- ✓ Doggie day care or a pet-sitter might be in order if barking is consistent and other attempts to correct are not working.

Territorial/Protective Barking:

Your dog may be barking to guard their territory if:

- The barking occurs in the presence of "intruders," which may include the mail carrier, children walking to school, squirrels in trees, or other dogs in adjacent yards.
- If they bark with tail held high and ears up and forward, or with a sideways glance.
- You've encouraged your dog to be responsive to people and noises outside.



We recommend the following:

- ✓ Teach your dog a quiet command. See the information sheet "Teaching a Quiet Command," which we've included for your assistance.
- ✓ Kennel your dog inside your house, using a crate. Thus, the stimulation of the outdoors is less likely to be an issue.
- ✓ Teach your dog the "sit" command, one of the easiest a dog learns. When your dog sits, give them a reward (such as a hotdog piece) and praise. Thus, when they start to bark, you have a command to break their barking.
- ✓ Spay or neuter your dog to reduce their territorial behaviors.

Fears and Phobias:

Your dog's barking may be in response to something that they are afraid of if:

- The barking occurs in response to loud noises, such as thunderstorms, cars, or construction noise.
- Your dog barks with ears back and tail held low, a common posture indicating fear.
- Your dog barks while backing away or running away.



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We recommend the following:

- ✓ Seek professional help to work with your dog. Anxiety behavior is best addressed through your veterinarian or other professional trained to treat a dog's fears and phobias.
- ✓ Avoid comforting the fearful dog. It teaches the dog that it's okay to be scared and to bark when they are anxious.
- ✓ Create a safe place for them where they can be removed to some degree from the anxiety-producing stimulation.
- ✓ Identify your own response to their fear: anger or coddling only serves to make matters worse.

Separation Anxiety



Your dog's barking may be in response to separation anxiety if:

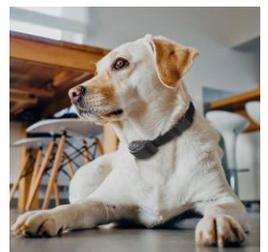
- The barking only occurs when you are gone, and starts as soon as you leave.
- The dog displays a strong attachment to you, such as following you from room to room, an over-enthusiastic greeting when you return, or anxious behavior as you plan to leave.
- There is also destruction, house-soiling, or other unacceptable behaviors while you are not at home.
- A sudden change in the family's schedule, such as different work hours, a death/loss in the family, or a period of separation such as boarding at a vet or impoundment at a shelter.

We recommend the following:

- ✓ It is very important to seek medical and professional counseling for separation anxiety. It is a serious condition that takes reconditioning and desensitizing techniques to successfully treat. In some cases, behavior modification along with medication is needed to correct the problem.

Bark Collars & Muzzles

- ✓ We DO NOT recommend Bark Collars as the only method to deal with barking. A bark collar doesn't address the underlying reason a dog barks, nor does it modify a dog's behavior. You may be able to eliminate the barking, but your dog will learn other outlets for its anxiety or territorial behavior, such as digging, escaping, or developing aggressive tendencies.
- ✓ Muzzles should never be used to control a dog's barking!





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Teaching the QUIET Command

We condition our dogs to bark, either willingly or unwillingly. Teaching your dog when it is okay to bark (and not to bark because they think it's okay) is important to curb nuisance barking.

For this lesson, you'll need a leash, a soda can, 1/3 filled with pennies, a spray bottle, and some tasty treats (like little bits of hotdog, the size of a lima bean).

- ✓ Spend at least 15 minutes a day working on barking, and try to have two sessions: one in the morning and one in the evening.
- ✓ With your dog on a leash, allow them to bark two or three times.
- ✓ Say "quiet" and interrupt their barking by shaking a can filled with pennies. If they don't respond to the can of pennies, squirt water at their mouth.
- ✓ The surprise should cause them to stop barking.
- ✓ When they are quiet, say "good quiet" and offer a tasty treat. Be sure to praise as well!
- ✓ Remember, the noise or the water is NOT meant to punish them! It's to distract them into being quiet so you can reward them. Resist the urge to spray your dog over and over or threaten them with the can of pennies.
- ✓ If the dog is frightened by the can of pennies or squirt bottle, find an alternative method of interrupting their barking (whistle, throwing a toy or ball near them).
- ✓ Beating, kicking, or using the leash or collar to "correct" your dog will not teach them good behavior or to be quiet.
- ✓ Using the reward method teaches your dog the RIGHT behavior, and does not punish them for doing something else. Eventually, they will learn that they get a yummy treat and your praise when they're quiet, and will do it more often to get the reward.
- ✓ With time, use fewer treats and more praise.
- ✓ Barking is NOT an indicator of how defensive a dog will be of its territory or its ability to guard your property!
- ✓ Repeating your lesson is important! Dogs, like people, take time to learn a lesson. If your dog doesn't get it right away, don't give up. Please feel free to contact us for more information!