



*Deep Roots
Greater Heights*

The Corporation of the District of Maple Ridge

Business Licences, Permits & Bylaws Department



BARKING DOGS

Local bylaws prohibit excessive noise. The District of Maple Ridge's Noise Bylaw states:

“No person shall own, keep or harbour any animal or bird which by its cries unduly disturbs the peace, quiet, rest or tranquility of the surrounding neighbourhood or the public at large.”

- Excessive barking does not have a specific definition – everyone has a different noise threshold.
- There is no time duration or specific time of day that automatically defines prohibited barking.
- For barking to be in violation of the bylaw, it must be:
 - (1) frequent and persistent, and
 - (2) disturb the neighbourhood (more than one household)

Bylaw Enforcement Officers cannot witness or verify an offence of this nature. They do not live in the neighborhood and dogs naturally and rightfully bark when someone approaches their master's house.

WHAT TO DO IF THERE IS A SERIOUS BARKING PROBLEM IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

1. If possible, approach your neighbour and tactfully discuss the problem with them. Many people do not realize their dog barks or is creating a disturbance in the neighborhood. Many dog owners react well to such a friendly approach. Be prepared with ideas or suggestions, for compromise. Most people are open to rational negotiations to resolve the problem. This type of approach may avoid a defensive and uncooperative attitude that may develop from an Enforcement Officers visit.

2. If no results are achieved by your friendly visit, submit a completed Barking Dog Log Form or written statement to the District of Maple Ridge's Business Licences, Permits & Bylaws Department. For your convenience, Barking Dog Packages, including log forms, are available at the District of Maple Ridge. By providing the Enforcement Officer with a written list of barking dates and times they will be able to demonstrate to the alleged offender that the problem is serious and if not corrected immediately, legal action may be taken against them. An Enforcement Officer will then contact the dog owner to advise them of the complaint. Please continue to keep a separate record of where the noise comes from, the dates, time and duration the barking occurs.
3. If the noise continues unabated and if the alleged offender makes no effort to rectify the situation it may become necessary to prosecute. To proceed, the courts require that at the least two neighbors must give their detailed records. This means that more than one neighbor must be willing to attend court and identify which dog barks, where the dog belongs and how the barking affects them. The Municipality recognizes that carrying out the above may be an arduous and time-consuming task for you. To achieve a successful solution and to avoid future frustration, such actions are necessary.

TRAINING A DOG NOT TO BARK

A barking problem is much easier to prevent than to cure. If possible, do not isolate the dog; they too like company. Introduce the dog to the chain or pen slowly, and for short duration at first. Play with him, make it “fun.”

Give both negative and positive reinforcements. If he barks give the appropriate correction. Don't reinforce the barking behavior by giving in to the dog's demand for attention.

RETRAINING THE PROBLEM BARKER

As both human and dog populations are on the increase, it is becoming more and more imperative to restrain dogs from running at large. Unfortunately, confinement often precipitates a barking problem. A dog is rarely considered a problem if it just barks at intruders. The problem barker is one who has learned to bark in order to achieve some goal such as freedom, attention, food, etc. Therefore, the objective of the responsible dog owner is to control the barking, not to suppress it.

Although the District of Maple Ridge is not in the business of training dogs, drawing on information available, we have put together some suggestions for you.

The following are given in order of severity:

1. Move the run or pen to an enclosed area (e.g. basement) where the dog can't see or hear whatever stimulates the barking.
2. Use a dog kennel and crate, train while you are away. Dogs are den animals and are content to be in a confined spaced with enough room to stand or lay down comfortably.
3. Turn on a portable radio that will cover up noises that induce barking, and keeps the dog company.
4. Place hand firmly around muzzle and shout “Quiet” or “No”. Be consistent.
5. Boredom barkers: distract with bones, chew toys, another dog or cat.
6. The use of an ultrasonic “beeping” collar or citronella collar should only be used with proper knowledge and restraint.
7. An electric shock collar should be avoided or only considered upon the recommendation of your Veterinarian or a qualified dog trainer.

All dogs have different personalities. While some may require a heavy correction, others will respond well to simple verbal reprimands. Match the correction to the temperament of the dog.

If your dog only barks when you're not at home, you will have to set up a mock departure, making sure the dog sees you drive away. Return silently to make the necessary corrections. This procedure might have to be repeated several times.

An obedience-trained dog is rarely a problem barker. Try joining an obedience club. A well-trained dog is a real pleasure.

Most important, have patience and be consistent.



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