

The Animal Control of the City of Coolidge is dedicated to helping preserve the quality of neighborhoods by reducing animal control related disturbances and nuisances, while protecting the rights of animal owners to own and enjoy their pets. The most common animal disturbance that the City of Coolidge animal control officer responds to are barking dog complaints. It is a violation of the City of Coolidge Code for a dog owner to disturb another resident's peace by allowing their dog to bark excessively and unreasonably. It is not a violation for a dog to bark. It is only a violation if the dog is barking excessively and unreasonably.

When determining if a dog is barking excessively and unreasonably the animal control officer considers the following:

- How often the dog barks and for how long?
- How loud the dog is barking?
- What time of day the dog barks?
- If there is some other disturbance that is causing the dog to bark?

#### **EDUCATION AND WARNING:**

The most effective way to solve a barking dog problem is to try and work with the dog owner and the neighbors. Animal control officers will try to resolve barking dog problems by educating dog owners. Often dog owners may not know that their dog is disturbing another person, or they may not know that their dog barks when they are away. Some dog owners are not aware that there are laws regulating animals

making excessive noise. There is no way to immediately change a dog's behavior. Animal control officers will work with dog owners who are sincerely trying to resolve the problem. Sometimes the first attempt to change a dog's behavior doesn't work or only partially reduces barking. Different or additional techniques may be necessary. Accurate information is essential to solving the problem. Knowing when, how, and why a dog is barking helps animal control officers assist dog owners in finding the best way to change their dog's behavior. While a complainant's perception may be that the dog barks "all the time, non-stop", such generalizations make it difficult to isolate a true problem and also to convince a dog owner that there is really a problem.

#### **PROTECTING CIVIL RIGHTS:**

Animal Control Officers work hard to investigate and solve barking dog problems, but there are some things we are not lawfully allowed to do. These include:

- Unlawfully enter a dog owner's property
- Take a pet from an owner to stop the barking
- Order a pet owner to remove an animal from their property
- Order a pet owner to keep their pet inside
- Prosecute anonymous complaints
- Prosecute complaints where the victim is unwilling to testify
- Prosecute complaints where there are no witnesses
- Use witness statements that are general in nature

- Issue multiple warnings on anonymous or unfounded complaints

Unfortunately, there are people who make false or exaggerated complaints about a neighbor's barking dog, whether to expedite service, out of frustration over an ongoing neighbor dispute, or as an act of revenge or to deliberately harass a neighbor. Persons making such statements may damage their credibility as a witness in court, and deliberately making false complaints about a neighbor's dog is a crime. It is the policy of the City of Coolidge Code Compliance Department to pursue prosecution of all malicious false reporting 11-1-6: *It is unlawful for any person willfully to make the Police Department of the city any false, fraudulent, misleading, or unfounded report or statement, or willfully to misinterpret any fact for the purpose of interfering with the operation of the Police Department or with the intention of misleading any police officer.*

It is not uncommon for the City of Coolidge to disallow anonymous complaints and require two witnesses. In the City of Coolidge, dog owners can be contacted a limited number of times if a complaint cannot be substantiated or if the person making the complaint does not wish to aid in prosecution. Once an anonymous complaint has been found to be unsubstantiated, investigation will continue only if a known witness steps forward.



## **WHAT IS EXCESSIVE BARKING?**

In the City of Coolidge, excessive barking new guidelines is considered to require a person to document five days within a seven-day period where barking occurs for at least a five-minute duration for at least thirty (30) minutes of unprovoked barking within a 24 hour period for a period of seven (7) days.

## **IS A DOG BARKING EXCESSIVELY IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?**

City of Coolidge Animal Control wants to assist if there is nuisance barking in our community that is negatively impacting a citizen's or neighborhood's quality of life. In order to assist us with enforcement of the barking laws, we recommend the following:

We have found that many pet owners are not aware (because they are away from home or have grown accustomed to the noise) that their dogs are causing an inconvenience for others. Once aware, they may voluntarily correct the problem. We ask that neighbors try and come to an amicable solution before we get involved.

If an attempt at addressing the problem with the dog owner fails or no contact was attempted, please call us at (520)723-6075. When a complaint is received, a letter is sent to the property owner/dog owner advising of the complaint and the City's nuisance code. If the barking occurs at night, early morning or weekends, citizens can also contact the Police Department on their non-emergency number: 520-723-5311. An officer will be sent to check the disturbance.

If the problem continues, the complainant may request a Barking Dog Complaint packet, which includes requirements for submitting a petition and weekly logs. In order for Code Compliance to initiate legal action against the dog owner, it is required that two adjacent neighbors sign the petition and keep a

log documenting the barking nuisance for a period of seven days. To request a Barking Dog Complaint packet, please contact Code Compliance at 520-723-6075. All corrective options will be attempted prior to taking legal action.

The reporting party and any other witnesses will be required to testify in court to prove the charge if the dog owner chooses to dispute the allegation.

The reporting party will need to provide their name, address and phone number so we can contact them with information and if we have any follow up questions. We generally allow seven days for the dog owner to receive the information in the mail and correct the problem before we proceed to the next step. If we are not contacted after we have mailed the barking letter, we will assume the problem has been solved and take no further action.



## Neighborhoods and Barking Dogs



## City of Coolidge Animal Care and Control