

Dogs have been closely associated with man for hundreds of years, but in the early days of their relationship every dog had a job to do. Pet dogs were unknown and every dog worked for its living in one way or another. Dogs were trained to hunt, to herd stock, to track and to guard. In their many roles they proved adaptable and loyal.

In return for their services, they received food, shelter, and above all, companionship. They were not pampered - but neither did they suffer from loneliness and boredom.

Today, the average domestic dog does not have a job to do and often has no outlet for his natural instincts and energy. Many dogs are alone for hours at a stretch while their owners are elsewhere. They are lonely, bored and frustrated, so to break the monotony they chew, dig holes, and bark!

It is an owner's responsibility to prevent his dog from annoying other people and constant barking constitutes noise pollution of a most disturbing kind. It is also the owner's responsibility to understand his dog's basic needs and to ensure that these are met.

People often put up with a nuisance until things are so bad they have to report the problem to the Council. This can cause broken friendships and enmity between neighbours.

Some dog owners don't even know that their dogs are causing distress to neighbours.

If you have a neighbour whose dog is causing problems, talk to your neighbour first about it.

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## Kawerau District Council Dog Control

### **THE BARKING DOG**



## WHY DOES YOUR DOG BARK?

Barking is a dog's natural means of communication and often signifies its alertness to danger. This makes it useful, even to owners of adjoining properties, who can also benefit from the protection of a good watch dog.

Continual barking is another matter and is usually due to one or more of the following:

- Loneliness and boredom.
- Chaining the dog to a fixed point with insufficient movement or restricting the dog in too small an area for long periods of time.
- Deliberate or unintentional provocation by people or by roaming dogs.
- Lack of exercise.
- Owner's failure to provide suitable shelter from rain, wind, cold and heat.
- Discomfort due to hunger, thirst, skin irritation, troublesome flies etc.

Continual barking may well be a cry for help.

Unnecessary barking can usually be eliminated, or at least reduced, but it may mean that you must work harder at being a responsible dog owner!

## WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

If you are considering dog ownership, do not acquire a puppy and leave it alone for hours on end. Instead, give a home to a more mature dog. If you must leave your dog alone all day, provide some form of stimulation, remember he has already slept all night. You cannot expect him to sleep all day as well without something to break the monotony.

Make the effort to get up a bit earlier and take him for a walk - or play ball with him in the garden, before you go to work. Give him some individual attention.

Provide a securely fenced area close to your house in which the dog can move freely and can seek sun, shade, or shelter from the weather as necessary. Access to part of the house, for example the laundry, may make the dog feel more secure and less isolated.

Most adult dogs are given one meal a day, usually in the evening, so if your dog is distressed at being alone all day, try giving him a light meal in the morning plus a bone to chew on to help pass the time. Alternatively, you could try giving your dog his main meal in the morning and a snack at night. A full stomach helps to induce relaxation and sleep.

A dog should not be left on a fixed chain for long periods as this induces aggression and encourages barking. If a dog must be chained it should be on a correctly constructed running chain with access to adequate shelter, i.e. a good kennel of suitable size.

## AT NIGHT...

Dogs kept permanently outside the house are lonely and to relieve boredom they tend to bark at anything such as hedgehogs, cats, the moon, passersby etc. Then when the dog barks with real reason, owners and neighbours ignore him, assuming the cause to be just another visiting hedgehog!

Keep your dog inside your house at night. A dog sharing the fireside with his family will not bark and annoy the neighbours. He is also better protection for you. Intruders are definitely discouraged from entering a house where a dog is loose inside.

Remember also that a dog left outside the house is vulnerable. He can be bribed, poisoned, stolen or injured.

Apart from the basic requirements of food, water, shelter, exercise and medical care, dogs need human companionship.

Take notice of your dog, talk to him, and whenever possible, allow him to go with you, whether it be in the car or on foot. Remember he is a pack animal and you and your family are his pack. A contented dog, with a caring owner or family, is rarely a problem barker.

However, if you do not enjoy your dog and your only reason for keeping one is to guard your property while you are away then consider investing in a burglar alarm instead. You will find it a lot less trouble, and in the long run, a lot cheaper!