DO YOU OWN A DOG THAT IS BARKING EXCESSIVELY?

Often, a dog owner is the last person to know that their dog(s) barks when they are away from home. Determining when and why a dog(s) barks is critical to finding a successful solution to the barking problem. Below are some of the most common reasons dogs bark and some suggestions on how to address the underlying issue.

Protecting their territory: Dogs often have a job to do. For many breeds, their job is to notify you of when they see a potential intruder. In reality, it may simply be a neighbor gardening in their back yard, children walking home from school or the local mail or delivery person. If your dog’s posture while barking appears threatening — tail held high and ears up and forward, this could be his motivation for barking.

Fears and Phobias: Dogs often bark as a response to something they are afraid of. This generally occurs when they are exposed to loud noises, such as thunderstorms, firecrackers, or construction noise. If your dog’s posture while barking appears fearful — ears are back and tail held low, this could be the reason behind his noisy behavior.

Separation Anxiety: Dogs often bark when they are lonely. If your dog barks only when you’re gone and starts as soon as, or shortly after, you leave, they may be experiencing separation anxiety. Dogs are social animals and need to be part of a pack or family.

With some investigation on your part, you should be able to determine why and when your dog is barking. Once you have been able to determine that, there are numerous solutions available to you. Below are a list of resources that might assist you in finding a solution to the barking problem:

- The following web-sites have behavioral information:  www.animalservices.mesacounty.us/ or www.ddfl.org
- The Dumb Friends League (DFL) has a toll free hotline to address behavioral issues: 1-877-738-0217
- There are numerous books and videos on dog behavior available at local book stores and the library.
- Dog training services are available locally.

Our Vision: Citizens and pet animals living together harmoniously. Every pet owner is a responsible owner and every pet has a humane home.
WHAT IS EXCESSIVE BARKING?

In Mesa County and the City of Grand Junction, excessive barking is generally considered to be at least (30) minutes of unprovoked barking within a 24 hour period.

IS A DOG BARKING EXCESSIVELY IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

Mesa County Animal Services 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 a neighbor is not comfortable speaking with the dog owner in person, an informative and polite note can be placed on the dog owner’s door or sent through the mail. Hopefully the owner will correct the problem within a few days.

- Some individuals are uncomfortable contacting their neighbors. We certainly understand and our suggestion that the dog owner be advised of the barking prior to our involvement is a recommendation, not a requirement.

- If an attempt at addressing the problem with the dog owner fails or no contact was attempted, please call us at 242-4646. We will send the owner an official bark warning, a copy of the barking resolution or article regarding nuisance barking and some informative materials that might be helpful to them to change the behavior of their dog(s).

In order to send this warning, we will need the dog’s address, a date and time frame the dog(s) was barking (i.e. 3:30 a.m. – 4:30 a.m.) and description of the dog(s), if available.

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 issue the official bark warning, we will assume the problem has been solved and take no further action.

- In order to issue a citation for a violation of the barking ordinance/resolution we typically require evidence of at least (30) minutes of unprovoked barking within a 24 hour period. Video or audio evidence is generally required for proof of nuisance barking.

  Video recordings must be date stamped, timed and marked at the spot where the nuisance barking incident occurred. The reporting party should be careful not to infringe on the dog owner’s privacy rights in the course of obtaining any visual evidence.

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 owner can choose to pay the citation or contest it. Paying is an admission of guilt. If they choose to dispute the citation, the reporting party and any witnesses will be required to testify in Court.

- If the barking continues, the reporting party may provide evidence of continuing nuisance barking violations. With sufficient evidence of a new violation, our officer may issue a citation with progressive consequences to encourage compliance.