

The Los Alamos County Police Department does recognize that dogs add companionship, loyalty, love and fun to our lives. However, when dog owners become insensitive to the barking of their own dogs, their companion becomes a nuisance to others.



**I never let my dog bark after 10:00 p.m. In fact, the only time my dog barks is during the day to let me know he wants to come back inside, or if someone walks by our house. Surely, this is not illegal, is it?**

According to the Animal Nuisance Ordinance (see back page for how to get a copy), section 6.6 prohibits unreasonable animal noise and specifically refers to dogs that bark or make other noise continuously for more than ten minutes at a time. Excessive barking usually indicates a highly nervous, neglected or bored animal and this disturbance of the peace is one of the quickest and most common ways to become a bad neighbor. Additionally, it can lead to fines for you!

If you have any questions or concerns about your pet, or another dog in your neighborhood, feel free to call 505.662.8179 to speak to one of the Animal Control officers.



## **What will happen if I let my dog bark?**

Upon receiving a complaint of a nuisance animal an Animal Control Officer will investigate. If it is determined the dog is barking excessively and that the dog's behavior was not intentionally provoked, the officer will issue a warning to the animal's owner. The owner has five days to provide proof that he/she has taken steps to rectify the problem. Steps include:

- **Use of a bark collar –**  
*either electronic or citronella spray*
- **Use of an ultrasonic device**
- **Use of a muzzle –**  
*muzzle must allow dog to drink*
- **Enrollment in dog obedience classes**
- **Moving the animal indoors**

If adequate proof of steps taken is supplied, the officer may remove the warning from the owner's record. With one warning on record any additional complaints will result in a citation to the animal's owner which will require him/her to appear in Municipal Court. The maximum penalty for owning a nuisance animal is a \$500 fine and/or 90 days in jail.

## What does the Los Alamos County Code say about dogs?

County Code, Chapter 6. Animals  
(Ordinance 02-076 updated Sept. 30, 2014)

- Animals that are off the owner's premises need to be on a leash (Sec. 6-3).
- The County does have provisions for "voice and sight control" for dogs to allow them to be off-leash (Sec. 6-4) in designated areas, including R-A zoned areas of the county, the stable area, Los Alamos County Trail Network trails, which are on County land. The County also has dog parks in both Los Alamos and White Rock where dogs can run and play off-leash.
- Unreasonable animal noise (i.e. barking dogs) is prohibited under Sec. 6-6.
- Section 6-8 makes it unlawful for the keeper of a dog to fail to promptly remove and dispose of excrement – the County supplies "baggie stations" in most of its County parks to encourage cleaning up – but please clean up after your pet when walking them on city streets and sidewalks, too!
- Dogs must have valid rabies tags attached to their collar whenever they are off the keeper's premises (Sec. 6-83).

What does  
"unreasonable  
animal noise"  
mean...



## What can I do about a nuisance dog?

When you have a problem with a neighbor's dog, please start by discussing the issue with the owner. The owner may not be aware of the problem and be happy to take steps for a solution. You may also call 662-8222 to report a nuisance animal. Additionally, Animal Control Officers can meet with you to discuss enforcement or to assist in neighborhood mediation. Neighborhood mediation sessions typically last about an hour and cover the various steps to alleviate nuisance barking as well as the legal consequences of owning a nuisance animal.

The Animal Shelter can provide anti-bark collars on loan for residents to determine if collars provide a viable solution to their barking problem.

## Can I take my dog to parks or on trails?

Dogs are welcome in our parks and on trails and must be leashed except in designated areas for "voice and sight control." Owners are required to clean up after their dogs in parks, on trails, and while walking on sidewalks. If you are looking for a place to take your dogs where they can interact and socialize with other dogs, Los Alamos County has two dog parks where dogs can run off-leash and engage in canine interaction. Both parks are fenced, have water and benches, and provide bags and garbage cans so you may pick up after your canine companion. Dogs must be friendly and current on all vaccinations.

Overlook Park in White Rock—East of the baseball fields—Minimal shade and grass surfaces

East Park in Los Alamos—North of the play lot towards canyon rim—Shade and grass surfaces