

EAGLE RIDGE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

DOG ISSUES

As a result of a series of complaints lodged by Association members with the Board of Directors regarding instances in which members have been threatened by aggressive dogs off the property of the owners of those dogs, your Board has contacted the Animal Control Officer for this section of Snohomish County, Gordon Abbott, and provides the following information for your use in the event that you are involved in future incidents.

Under the Leash Law, which is applicable to Eagle Ridge, no dog is permitted off of the owner's property unless it is on a leash. All residents have been previously informed by the Board of this requirement through Association Newsletters, the most recent one dated July, 1997. While reports of violation of this law do not receive immediate attention, multiple complaints will result in the Animal Control Officer conducting a drive-through of the community and, if he discovers dogs off their owner's property and not on a leash, taking appropriate action.

However, there is another statute, known as the Nuisance Dog Act, which deals with any dog that presents a threatening attitude of attack when that dog is not on its owner's property. This law will be of use to those residents who encounter dogs that leave their owner's property and enter the street or follow them along the street in a snarling, menacing manner.

When incidents occur, it is important that you obtain the following information and provide it to the Animal Control Officer when he contacts you, as outlined below:

1. A basic description of the dog;
2. A description of the incident: for example, dog crossed street and approached in a snarling manner; dog followed down the street barking and snarling; etc.
3. The date, time and location that the incident occurred;
4. The address of the property from which the dog came.

The Animal Control Officer can be reached by any resident by contacting 911 and informing the answering officer that you are reporting an incident involving an aggressive dog. You will receive a return call the day you make the complaint and the Officer will come out to investigate the incident that day or the next. He will conduct a drive-through and attempt to determine the location of the dog. He will contact the owner; if no one is home, he will leave a note regarding the fact that a complaint alleging a potentially dangerous dog has been filed. If the dog is found on the road when he conducts the drive-through, he has full authority to take the dog at that time.

If there are recurrences and, most importantly, if you are willing to provide a written witness statement, the recurrences can result in a formal written warning and, with continued recurrence(s), the filing of a misdemeanor citation, requiring the owner to appear in court, normally resulting in a lost workday, and to face a fine of up to \$1,000.00.

Your Board continues to hope that the above actions will not be necessary. However, all residents of Eagle Ridge have the right to walk through the streets of the community without fear of harm from another resident's dog when that dog is off the owner's property.