



Dog Complaint Policy Laketon Township

Send to all persons making a complaint about a dog

With some regularity the township receives complaints regarding barking or loose dogs. The County has animal control laws that address such things as licensing, the need for a rabies vaccination, and a prohibition of animals running at large. Muskegon County Vector Control can be reached Monday through Friday; 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. at 724-6007- select "0" to speak with someone. Note, they do not respond after hours or to barking dog complaints. Emergency situations like dog bites should be addressed through 9-1-1. Nuisance barking can also be reported through 9-1-1.

The Township also has ordinances addressing animals running at large and nuisance behaviors like making "*frequent, extended, excessive noise.*" In order to take enforcement action on the offending party, the enforcement officer has to witness the dog(s) engaging in nuisance activities (i.e. continual barking, running loose, etc.). Oftentimes, when investigating a complaint, the enforcement officer does not hear or even see dogs at the offending address—even after a couple of visits.

In addition to the ordinance enforcement officer, a police officer can also be enlisted to help monitor properties at various times during his shift. Still, we are often unable to obtain the proper evidence to support a claim that someone's dogs are a nuisance. This frustration is often compounded by the resident who insists the neighbor's dogs are infringing on the quiet enjoyment of their property.

Because a good deal of staff time can be spent making multiple visits to a property trying to substantiate a complaint the Township Board instituted a policy that tickets will only be issued for dog complaints when the complainant identifies themselves to township staff and is willing to sign a civil infraction as the complainant (see attached).

Staff will send an initial letter to the alleged violator and hope that eases the situation, but to write a ticket, we must have someone willing to be a witness to the offence. Having the offended party appear before the court attesting to the nuisance provides enough evidence to give weight to the civil infraction ticket.

Policy adopted: September 20, 2012