

Q: Dear Chief, We had a really great time at National Night Out last year. When do we get to do that again? Jessica—The Falls

Dear Jessica,

Not until October! Two years ago, because of the heat, Texas moved NNO to October from August. We have had a really great time at our community event in Slayter Creek Park that past two years and are looking forward to it again this year.

Jennifer from Willow Creek writes: Good morning Chief Jenks, One of our neighbors has a dog that will not stop barking. Do I have to call the Police Department to make a complaint?

Jennifer,

I am sorry to hear that you are having problems with noise from a neighbor's dog. There are parts of the City's Code of Ordinances that both prohibit loud noise and incessant animal noise. Part II of the Code of Ordinances has both the noise and animal provisions (City's website under the Government tab, "City Ordinances")

First, I always recommend that the offended party talk with the neighbors first. Getting to know your neighbors and developing a relationship with them is always preferred over some type of official complaint to the Police Dept. You are neighbors, after all, and a friendship would always be better than an adversarial relationship for all involved. This is particularly true in our subdivisions like yours with short setbacks and very close lot lines. Friendly neighbors are at the core of any Neighborhood Watch program and are in all of our best interests for maintaining safe neighborhoods!

If you are not able to get some relief, loud noise violations are filed directly by the offended citizen in the Municipal Court (see the Court Clerk @ 101 S Powell Pkwy) and you will swear to and sign the form in front of a Notary Public. It will then take some time to process the complaint, set up hearing dates, etc. In the mean time, if there is a period in which the animal is barking and you are not able to rest, please feel free to call our Communications Center (972-547-5350) and request an officer meet with you regarding your complaint. After your explanation to the Officer, he will usually try and speak to the dog's owner and request that they keep the animal quiet on your behalf. If the filing of a complaint is your decided resolution, I recommend that you document all dates and times that you are offended and if possible a dated/timed video or audio recording of the offense(s) should be kept to help you with your case should it go to trial in Municipal Court.

I hope this gives you some helpful information. However, my statements and opinions above are not legal advice, and if you need any type of legal opinion you should consult with a qualified, licensed attorney.

***Phone numbers: Emergency???? Dial 911.** To have a police officer sent to you in a non-emergency, call 972-547-5350. During normal business hours, the APD number is 972-924-2848.

*For Crime Prevention information visit www.annacrimewatch.org or www.annatexas.gov and go to the police pages.

If you have a question or comment, please email: kjenks@annatexas.gov