

Calgary Humane Society

Devocalizing of Dogs

Position:

The Calgary Humane Society does not support the “devocalization” of dogs.

The CHS urges that owners explore humane solutions to barking behaviour, including working with a certified humane trainer on the issue. If barking cannot be ameliorated and owners cannot tolerate or manage the behaviour, the society urges them to surrender their pet to the Calgary Humane Society.

Rationale:

- Dogs bark for many reasons and although barking can be normal behaviour, excessive barking can be a manifestation of behavioural issues such as boredom, inappropriate environment (e.g., when the dog is exposed to too many passers-by and becomes anxious or afraid), generalized anxiety, compulsive disorder, or separation anxiety. In such cases, the underlying issues, such as anxiety or boredom, should be treated.
- Consulting with a qualified trainer should be the first approach to solve the problem of excessive barking. Veterinarians, board certified behaviourists, or those certified by the Canadian Pet Dog Trainer association can be of help in this.
- Devocalization deprives a dog of a major means of communication.
- Devocalization may result in infections, laryngeal paralysis and airway stenosis.
- Alternatives to devocalization, such as behaviour modification techniques, citronella bark collars and pharmaceutical remedies should be pursued before devocalization is considered.