

Your First Home, Your First Dog

Buying your first time is a major milestone, and it's made exponentially more exciting when you have a furry friend with whom to share the experience. But if you're not careful, you can easily become a bad neighbor. Keep reading for a few tips on how to be a conscientious – and responsible – neighbor and dog owner.

Understand the law

Certain rules and regulations may vary by city but, as a rule, Arizona dog owners are bound by a set of basic leash laws. According to attorney Michael Cordova, dogs within the confines of the state must be confined to an enclosure on the owner's property. Alternately, dogs taken out in public must be on a leash no longer than 6 feet in length. Check your local requirements – including those set forth by your HOA, if applicable – before sending Spot out the door.

Quiet, please

Similar to leash laws, each county in the state has applicable noise ordinances put in place to protect the quality of life of its respective residents. In Maricopa County, for instance, Noise Ordinance (P-23) [prohibits](#) “excessive, unnecessary, disruptive, and annoying noises from all sources.” Laws aside, it's a good idea to have your dog in the house when you start to notice the daylight fading. If your neighbors are elderly or have young children, bring your dog in a little bit early so that they can get some much-needed rest.

Invest in a fence

We've already mentioned that your dog must be confined to a closure. A fence will meet these requirements as long as it is installed correctly and does not allow for easy escape into your neighbor's yard. In the Phoenix area, the average wood fence installation costs between \$769 and \$1,695, according to HomeAdvisor. If you are a well-qualified buyer and have a prudent real estate representative, you may even be able to have this negotiated as a decrease in the home's price or request the homeowner have a suitable fence installed prior to closing.

Introduce yourself to your neighbors

Once you are settled into your new home, it's a good idea to put your pup on a leash and spend some time walking through the neighborhood. This will not only allow him to get use to the sights and sounds of his new home, but will give you a chance to meet the neighbors. Your first few outings should be during the day when young children are more likely to be at school, since, as *The Daily Dog* explains, an influx of new people – [especially children](#) – may be scary to your pet. Once your dog and your neighbors have become accustomed to each other, he will be less likely to bark in defense when another neighborhood dog saunters by his fenced-in backyard.

Stay up-to-date on vaccines

No matter how responsible you are, there is always a chance that your dog will get spooked and bolt out the front door or an accidentally-open gate. Keep your dog current on his rabies and other vaccinations, and make sure she or he is spayed or neutered. Vaccinations will keep him safe from disease in case he has a less-than-pleasant encounter with local wildlife; fixing your pet will help decrease the surplus population of [homeless animals](#) throughout the state.

It really doesn't take much to be a good neighbor and an even better pet parent. Know your local laws, be courteous to your neighbors, and keep your pet's vaccinations up to date. While you can't always expect Fido to behave, taking these preemptive measures will show that you are responsible and care about the welfare of your dog *and* your community.



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