

AdsValue Research Report

Dog Territorial Marking Problems and Solutions

Client Name:	John. Q. Public	Format:	Overview Report
Date Requested:	7/14/08	Paid Hours:	2 hours
Date Needed By:	8/10/08	Research By:	Sally
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Research Request:

What are the causes of, and the solutions to preventing male dogs from marking (urinating) in the house?

Summary of Findings:

Animals mark their territory by leaving a scent marker (urine or other fluid) to warn other animals / intruders that this is their territory and to stay away. This primal instinct is a low-effort way to protect their home and food. Typically, the longer you allow the marking problem to continue, the more effort it will take to correct the problem, if it can be corrected at all.

Keep in mind, there are other reasons why a dog may urinate in the house such as a urinary tract infection or they just have been left in the house too long and their bladder is full. Excluding those reasons, dogs typically urinate in the house to mark “their territory” because of:

1. Poor potty-training – not trained properly on where and when to “go”
2. Increased hormone levels – male maturing to an adult – testing boundaries
3. Scent from previous markings not removed properly
4. Anxiety / Security threatened – new items, people in the house, separation anxiety
5. Lack of sense of security – no place that is their space (kennel, part of a room)
6. Dominance - dog feels he is the leader and is letting you know

Solutions to this problem depend on the source or sources. Due to the variability of this subject, additional study is suggested, and always consider consulting with trained professionals before attempting any irreversible actions. Use actions in combination for best results until acceptable behavior is achieved.

Medical / Physical

1. Urinary tract infection – have a veterinarian diagnose and treat
2. Increased hormone levels – male neutering is widely recommended, but depending on the situation, it may not solve the problem if the behavior is well established.
3. Medications – a veterinarian may prescribe medications to reduce marking behavior
4. Cleaning – clean soiled areas thoroughly with enzymatic cleaners, not standard household cleaning products
5. Litter Box / Marking post – depending on the size of the dog and your schedule; possibly provide an acceptable area to “go”. Small dogs can be little-box trained.

Behavioral

1. Confinement – limit opportunities to mark, restrict access to a smaller area near family activity, provide familiar items such as toys and their blanket
2. Supervision and Schedule – scheduled walks and potty breaks and watch constantly
3. Training – positive reinforcement – praise correct behavior, take positive steps to establish you as the leader. Corrective actions must be immediately following marking incident or it will be ineffective. Don't hit your dog or yell at them
4. Make previously soiled areas inaccessible or unattractive. If this isn't possible, try to change the significance of those areas to your pet. Feed, treat, and play with your pet in the areas he is inclined to mark.
5. Make your dog sit before each activity to establish you as the leader and decrease the dog's need to mark territory.

Remember, it took time to build the bad habit, and it will take time to replace that habit with a new, more acceptable behavior. Treat your pet with patience and give him lots of encouragement!

References:

1. http://www.paw-rescue.org/PAW/PETTIPS/DogTip_Marking.php

March 2004 ***Excellent article*** by noted persons in their field on each topic, with references.

1. Overview
 2. Canine Territorial Marking
 3. Marking vs. Peeing: Medical or Behavioral?
 4. On the Mark...Get Set... How to Stop Marking
 5. Odor Elimination
 6. Related Resources
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2. <http://canines.com/library/solutions/markings.shtml>

2003 www.canines.com a non-profit org. American Foundation for Animal Rescue, Inc.

Short general article on Indoor Marking

3. <http://www.dupageco.org/animalcontrol/brochures/Urinemarking%20dog%20brochure.pdf>

To-the-point 1999 DuPage County Animal Control brochure: Urine Marking in Adult Dogs

4.
http://www.hsus.org/pets/pet_care/our_pets_for_life_program/cat_behavior_tip_sheets/urinemarking_behavior.html

Updated 11/1/2006 - Good how-to article from The Humane Society of the United States, and additional detailed articles on specific related subjects.

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