

## Getting Along with your Neighbors

We all want to feel comfortable and safe in our neighborhoods. Getting along is part of it.

Here are some tips:

1. **Establish good rapport** before any conflict arises. A little small talk at the mailboxes or a neighborhood gathering on Neighborhood Night Out can lay the foundation for raising concerns in a respectful manner.
2. **Be understanding.** If a neighbor has a difficult time with various tasks, you might offer assistance or ideas for outside resources. For example, you might know of a neighborhood teenager who can be hired for lawn mowing, snow shoveling, or dog sitting.
3. **Do not be quick to judge.** Your early morning lawn mowing may be as irritating to them as their late-night door slamming.
4. **Don't assume.** Your neighbor might not be aware of the fact that their dog is barking when they're gone, or that their son is riding his bike through your yard. Unless you have a concern for

your immediate safety, take your concerns directly to them first, without involving third parties.

5. **Speak calmly** and without accusation, allowing them a chance to respond in a similar fashion. Share your concerns – not your position. (“We’re concerned about mosquitoes breeding in the tires in your backyard.” vs. “Get those tires out of your yard!”).

6. **Clarify** key phrases and preferred communication methods. For example, does taking care of something “soon” mean this week or this year? Or, if there’s a problem with a child’s activity, should the neighbor talk to the child or the parent? By phone, in person, or in writing?

7. **Be open** when a neighbor approaches you. Instead of reacting impulsively and defensively, tell your neighbor you’ll “give it some thought and get back to them”.

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Should the above seven steps not resolve the neighborhood concern, the Commission encourages mediation. Mediating of neighbor, neighborhood, landlord/tenant and other community disputes is a remedy used all over America.

In Ohio, you can find a mediator through the Ohio Community Mediation Association, the Ohio

Mediation Association, the Mediation Association of Northeast Ohio and other organizations, links to which may be found at

<http://disputeresolution.ohio.gov/MiscellaneousResources.htm>