



# The FindLaw Guide to Neighbor Relations

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Unless you live on a hundred acres of land, you have probably dealt with neighbor relations at some point. Not all neighbors act neighborly, leading to disputes over boundaries, noise, trees, and every other thing imaginable.

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## Introduction

Many of you may have a closer relationship to your neighbor than you do with family members. After all, they may live above you, below you, and next to you. Given the closeness of neighbors, it's not surprising that heated disputes can arise over just about anything. Instead of losing your cool, FindLaw and its directory of attorneys can help you resolve any differences.

## Boundary Disputes

Not sure where your property ends and where your neighbor's begins? The first step you may want to take is undergoing a property survey. A survey should reflect your property's boundary lines – though in the case of some older deeds, even a survey may be inaccurate.

If a property survey won't resolve a boundary dispute with a neighbor, you may need the help of a real estate attorney. An option for property owners is filing a "quiet title lawsuit," which will request a judge to determine the boundary lines of the property.

In the alternative, a lawyer can help you resolve an agreement with a neighbor without having to go through the court system. If there are minor differences, an agreement may be made and a lawyer can help draft quitclaim deeds making the agreement official. You can learn more about [boundary and fencing disputes here](#).

## Trees and Views

Trees are a common dispute among neighbors. Tree disputes can take many forms such as trees that fall on a neighbor's property, thereby causing damage or destruction, or circumstances where a neighbor's tree blocks what would be a scenic or otherwise pleasant view.

You may want to consult an attorney before taking action with a tree (like cutting one down, or even cutting branches down) as you could expose yourself to legal liability and damages. Generally, while you may trim overhanging tree branches that extend past the property line, you may not go onto the neighbor's property or destroy the tree.

And if your tree is knocked down by a storm and causes property damage, whether you are liable for the damage usually depends upon circumstances like whether you took reasonable care to maintain the tree. You can learn more about [conflicts involving trees here](#).

## Water Damage

Neighbor disputes over [water damage](#) to property can arise over everything from a broken pool pump to drainage systems that fail.





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Generally, a neighbor will not be responsible for damage to your property caused by run-off from naturally occurring rain and land conditions. So even if your prized garden full of roses is ruined during a spring downpour from water running off of your neighbor's land, you probably don't have any recourse.

But if your neighbor has landscaped the land or altered the property in some other way that causes more water to run onto your land than would otherwise naturally occur, then you may have some recourse to damages. If you can prove that your neighbor is responsible for water damage that you suffered, you may be able to collect damages for:

- The cost of repairs or replacement of water damaged property
- The cost of staying at a hotel while your home is uninhabitable because of water damage
- Any medical bills directly related to the water damage, either for physical injury or mental distress
- Punitive damages if you can show that your neighbor acted maliciously

## What to do About the Noisy Neighbor

Your neighbors may be so noisy, it may leave you to wonder if they are [breaking the law](#).

In almost every community, there are laws and ordinances that prohibit excessive, unnecessary and unreasonable levels of noise. Most of the time, these laws are enforced by the police and set aside certain periods of time as "quiet time" such as between the hours of 11p.m. and 6a.m. In addition, many cities and towns also have some prohibition on sustained noise levels above a certain decibel.

You can resolve most noise complaints by simply talking to your neighbor. If you live in a planned community or condominium, you may also complain to the housing board or other authority. If this doesn't resolve the issue, you may then want to contact the police.

**STOP**

## Should I Talk to an Attorney?

Neighbor relations can be an especially touchy subject as it impacts your home life and in most cases you are stuck with your neighbors. That's why if you have a boundary dispute or noise complaint, it may be best to resolve the differences without the help of an attorney. However, there will always be cases where an informal resolution is not practical. In these cases, an attorney can help fight for your rights.

You can locate an experienced property attorney in your area by visiting our [directory of lawyers](#).

## For More Information

Regarding neighbor relations, please visit <http://realestate.findlaw.com/neighbors/>

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