



Citizens' Guide to Neighbor Relations for Residential Properties

The best way to resolve disputes with neighbors is to avoid having them. This means making an effort to get to know your neighbor and communicating regularly. Respecting and tolerating each other will only help in resolving an issue, along with understanding your rights and knowing when to assert them. If your neighbor does something that bothers you, the first thing you should do is let your neighbor know in a polite, non-confrontational manner. Only if your effort fails should you:

1. Contact the Planning and Zoning Department for issues related to zoning violations, poor property maintenance or blight
2. Hire an attorney for civil matters
3. Contact the Police for criminal acts such as disturbing the peace or trespassing

Listed below are typical types of complaints and some points to keep in mind:

➤ **Noise:**

- The Town of Hamden has a Noise Ordinance (which can be found at www.hamden.com) but it is difficult to enforce unless violators are caught in the act of making noise
- Most noise problems between neighbors can be solved by following a few simple guidelines¹:
 - Understand the law and abiding by it
 - Utilize the police only when necessary
 - Use the courts only when necessary
- If other problems occur that violate the Noise Ordinance, please contact the Hamden Police

➤ **Trees¹:**

- The location of the tree's trunk decides who owns it
- If a tree straddles a boundary line, it belongs to abutting property owners
- You can only trim a tree up to the boundary line. After that, you must ask permission from your neighbor to continue trimming

➤ **Boundaries¹:**

- If you need to know where your property boundary is, you will have to hire a surveyor licensed in the State of CT

- A surveyor will provide a map that could also identify the corners of the property and run string between them to show the boundaries
- If, at some point, you discover your neighbor building on what you think is your property, talk to your neighbor immediately

➤ **Garbage:**

- The Town of Hamden has a Garbage and Rubbish Ordinance (which can be found at www.hamden.com)
- It is the responsibility of the owner of the private property to remove litter from the premise and maintain its condition

Lastly, we encourage neighbors to **communicate!** Problems generally arise because one party is honestly not aware that what they are doing is affecting their neighbor. **Speak up** to prevent further problems.

¹ Jordan A, Doskow E. *7th Edition Neighbor Law: Fences, Trees, Boundaries & Noise*

If you have any further questions, please contact the **Planning and Zoning Department** at (203) 287-7070