

Noise Information Sheet

What is noise?

Sound surrounds us in our everyday life, ranging from the birds chirping, music playing, to people talking. Sound can aid in communication, provide warning or be annoying.

Noise is classified as unwanted sound. Noise can seriously disrupt peoples' lives, causing loss of sleep, interference to activities and emotional stress. Unlike sound, noise is a subjective term, what one person thinks is noise, another may consider music. Hence we cannot measure noise, but we can measure sound.

How do we legislate noise?

Environmental noise is governed by the Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997. The legislation sets various decibel levels according to the time of day, the type of noise, and the surrounding environment such as land zoning and proximity to roads. Any noise emitted from premises must comply with these set levels, however there are certain exemptions. Some exemptions applicable to residential areas include: -

Agricultural: All tractors, farm equipment and farm machinery operated on agricultural land, is to be operated in accordance with manufacturers specifications and shall have all factory installed noise reduction devices maintained and fitted at all times. Where adjoining residential areas and buildings, operators and owners of the equipment should have regard to disturbance of these areas.

Construction noise

Noise can be emitted from construction sites (including new home construction) between 7am and 7pm Monday to Saturday only. Out of hours work is permitted but Council must grant approval.

Equipment used at residential premises (eg lawn mowers and musical instruments)

Specified equipment such as lawnmowers, chainsaws and musical instruments can only be used between 7am and 7pm Monday to Saturday and between 9am and 7pm on Sundays or Public Holidays. There are also specific time restrictions on the use of specified equipment: -



- Lawnmowers, chainsaws, recreational motorcycles, power tools etc can be used for no longer than 2 hours in any one day.
- Musical instruments can be used for 1 hour in any one day.

Specified equipment must also be used in a reasonable manner, ie: it must not disrupt the health, welfare and amenity of neighbours.

The Councils Officers or the Police can determine whether the emission is reasonable.

Noisy Parties

In most cases music from parties will exceed the prescribed noise levels. However, neighbours will often tolerate 'one-off parties', but hosts should remember the following:-

- Neighbours should be advised of the date and time of the party and a contact number to call if the music gets too loud.
- Stereos or Jukeboxes should be positioned to reduce noise impacts on neighbours.
- Music should be turned down to a quiet level at midnight.

Following these tips should ensure that parties do not unreasonably impact on neighbours. However, if 'one-off parties' do create noise problems, the Police should be contacted on 9641 1400 as they have the power to turn music off or confiscate equipment. If parties are being held on a continual basis and are creating problems, the Shire can become involved.

Community activities

Special rules also apply to bellringing and calls to worship, certain community activities and outdoor concerts.



Alarms

The Police have the power to inactivate house or car alarms if the alarm is emitting unreasonable noise and has been sounding for more than 30 minutes. The Shire can also become involved if it is a continuing problem.

Noise we cannot resolve:

Please note that the Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997 does not apply to requests relating to:-

- Traffic, aircraft, behavioural (screaming, yelling, abusive/bad language), vehicle or animal (ie birds etc) noise and accordingly these types of requests will not be investigated.

*The Police may be contacted on 9641 1400 to deal with issues such as vehicle noise and behavioural noise.

How do I resolve a noise problem?

If noise emissions become a problem and the special circumstances outlined above do not apply, the Shire's Environmental Health Services may assist in resolving the matter. The first thing you need to do is locate the noise source. If a neighbour is creating the noise, the most appropriate action is to contact your neighbour and try to resolve it by speaking with them.

If you cannot resolve the matter or feel uncomfortable approaching your neighbour, please contact the Shire on 9641 2233. Alternatively you can write to the Shire detailing the nature, source of the noise and the time and length the noise occurs. It is recommended that a written log be kept for at least a week.

What happens when my service request is lodged?

After a Service request is received an Environmental Health Office will investigate the matter. This normally involves approaching the owner/occupiers of the property where the noise is occurring to try to resolve the issue. All Noise Service Requests lodged with the Shire **will** remain confidential and usually they can be resolved with this initial discussion. However, if it continues to be a problem further action may be required, such as taking noise measurements and issuing written warnings.

Officers can also issue Infringements Notices that carry penalties of up to \$500. Other notices can also be served which carry penalties up to \$250,000 for an individual. Legal action is normally used only as a last resort as the Shire prefers to resolve matters through mutual cooperation between all parties.

How can I get more information?

If you would like any further information regarding environmental noise, please contact the Environmental Health Services section on 9641 2233.