

Noise

Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997

Neighbourhood noise

Most of us have been disturbed from time to time and there are probably occasions when we ourselves have been responsible for causing a disturbance to our neighbours. Advances in technology and a current trend towards smaller block sizes in residential areas have increased the potential of producing noise that may affect others.

Whilst most of us are happy to tolerate the occasional disturbance, living next door to people who are regularly noisy can lead to neighbourhood disputes and unhappiness. The *Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations* provide rules to protect the community from the disturbance of unreasonable noise.

Power tools

The use of power tools is inherently noisy and their use is allowed provided the equipment is in good working order and compatible with the work being undertaken. When using a static unit, such as a brick saw or compressor, it is advisable to position it away from your neighbours' living and sleeping areas.

Power tools should be operated for no longer than two hours per day. Their use should be restricted to:

- between 7.00am and 7.00pm on Mondays to Saturdays.
- between 9.00am and 7.00pm on Sundays and public holidays.

Noisy equipment used regularly, such as lawn mowers, should be used later in the day to avoid disturbance.

Construction sites

Work that creates noise on a building site may also be carried out between 0700 hours and 1900 hours on Mondays to Saturdays (excluding public holidays).

For work conducted on a Sunday or public holiday the builder will need to have a noise management plan that details how they propose to carry out the work and respond to complaints should they arise. The noise management plan requires approval by the City.

Intruder alarms

Noise arising from the activation of audible intruder alarms can often cause considerable disturbance. The frequency of these alarms being accidentally activated has caused most people to become desensitised to this type of noise. Now, when an alarm is triggered we are more concerned about the noise than the possible crime. If an alarm has been sounding for more than 30 minutes you may contact the police to have it disconnected.

Please refer to our Fact Sheet titled 'Noise from House/ Intruder Alarms Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997' for further information.

Fixed equipment

When installing fixed equipment such as air conditioners and pool pumps, remember that they may be operating for several hours per day, sometimes while neighbours are trying to sleep. Noise, even if not loud, can become very annoying under these circumstances. Don't assume that equipment that is described as quiet, or that complies with the Australian Standards, will not cause a disturbance to neighbouring properties.

Music

Loud music accounts for up to 40% of all noise inquiries received. As a guide, music that is clearly audible at the boundary of a property may cause a disturbance and exceed allowable noise levels. Music with a dominant bass component can be disturbing even when it doesn't appear to be loud. The bass component should therefore be kept to a minimum.

Musical instruments

It is very often difficult for music students to practise their musical instruments effectively without the neighbours being able to hear this; however, the level of noise can be reduced provided the following measures are taken:

- Play the instrument in a suitable room (a garden shed is not considered a suitable room).
- In the case of electronically amplified instruments maintain the volume at the lowest level possible.

- Consider using sound off pads, cymbal silencers or hot sticks on drum kits.
- Practise during the day and for a maximum of 1 hour.
- If possible, advise the neighbours of your intentions (e.g. your practice days and times).

Please refer to our Fact Sheet titled 'Musical Instruments (Noise)' for further information.

Party noise

It is reasonable for people to host the occasional party; four 'one-off' parties a year is not considered excessive provided consideration is given to your neighbours. If you are considering entertaining outside it may be worth trying these suggestions to avoid a strained relationship with your neighbours:

- Start your party earlier so that it can finish earlier.
- Avoid using speakers outside the house.
- Let your neighbours know about the party beforehand and the time you expect it to finish.
- Adjust the volume control (especially the bass) to ensure music does not annoy your neighbours.
- If possible move your guests inside if the party is likely to finish late at night (after midnight) and close all windows and doors to contain the noise within your home.

Further information

For further information please contact the City's Health and Environmental Services on **9400 4933**.

You may also wish to visit the following web site:

State Law Publishers www.slp.wa.gov.au and follow the links to the *Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997*.