

Noise from House/Intruder Alarms

Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997

Alarms are good they:

- deter burglars;
- protect property from theft;
- can reduce insurance premiums.

However, unfortunately alarms can cause distress to neighbouring residents if they continue to be activated unnecessarily and this can result in frequent complaints both to the police and local authorities. These complaints relate to both the level and duration of noise being produced by the alarm. As a population we have become desensitised to the noise from audible alarms to the point that it is now merely an intrusion into our privacy.

Nevertheless, it is important that audible alarms are treated seriously as warning systems. The following provides advice on how to protect our neighbours from undue noise disturbance, and what to do when we ourselves are disturbed.

What can I do to protect others?

- If you wish to install an audible intruder alarm please also take responsibility to ensure that the system is maintained in proper working order and enter into a maintenance agreement with the alarm company or its representative for the system to be checked at a minimum of once a year.
 - AS/NZS2201.1:2007 Intruder Alarm Systems specifies the minimum requirements for the design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of intruder alarm systems.
- Keep clear and precise operating instructions near the control panel to avoid errors in arming or de-activating the alarm.
- To avoid unnecessary disturbance to nearby residents ensure that one or more detections on a single zone do not cause the audible alarm to sound for longer than 5 minutes. It is important that you as the owner or occupier notify your insurer of this action so that it does not result in a potential claim being refused.

- Choose your location carefully. Many systems claim sound levels of 105 dB(A) and, when fitted to the external façade of a building rather than an interior wall, the potential for disturbance to many residents is greatly increased. In most circumstances the system can be equally effective if the alarm is installed within the main structure of the premises and the volume reduced so as to produce a maximum noise level of 90 dB(A).
- Consider arranging for a friend to be available (preferably someone living close by) who can organise for your alarm to be disarmed and serviced should a fault occur whilst you are away on holiday.

What can I do if I am unduly disturbed by an intruder alarm?

- Contact the police if the alarm has been sounding for 30 minutes or longer. Under section 99 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* the police have powers to enter any premises where an alarm has been sounding for 30 minutes and arrange for the alarm to be deactivated. The cost will be recovered from the owner of the house or business.
- If the alarm has been operating intermittently (for periods shorter than 30 minutes) then you may contact either the police or the City of Joondalup Environmental Health Services on **9400 4933**, who can assist but will not be able to enter the premises to disarm the unit.

Do you need 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*