

## Neighbourhood Noise

The Environmental Protection Act 1986 deals with the problem of noise and makes it an offence to create unreasonable noise. Noise is deemed 'unreasonable' if it interferes directly or indirectly with the health, welfare, convenience, comfort or amenity of any person in any premises.

Regulations adopted under the Act allow for maximum levels of noise at certain times. (The time of day when a noise occurs influences its intrusiveness and annoyance. For example, making a loud noise late at night or very early in the morning may be likely to annoy your neighbours more than making noise during the day).



Environmental Health Officers working for local authorities play a key role in managing environmental noise pollution issues. Many are authorised Noise Officers under the Act and are able to respond quickly to complaints and assess the situation from a range of angles, balancing their approach accordingly. Noise is measured using sophisticated sound monitoring equipment adjusted to record sound in a similar way to the human ear.

### MAJOR SOURCES OF NOISE

- Amplified noise and noise from patrons of Hotels, clubs, bars, restaurants, sporting facility;
- Building sites;
- Home parties and gatherings;
- air conditioners;
- swimming pool/spa pumps;
- live and recorded music;
- Home workshops (i.e. woodwork or metal work machinery, drills, etc).



## **DOMESTIC NOISE PROBLEMS**

If you are annoyed by noise created by thoughtless or inconsiderate neighbours, there are a number of approaches you can take.



The first thing to do is to try to solve the problem amicably by talking it over with the person causing the noise. Often they will not have realised they are causing you a problem and, in many cases, they will be only too happy to do what they can do to help.

If this approach is not possible or unsuccessful, you should consider contacting your local authority.

## **MAKING A COMPLAINT TO YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY**

Council's Environmental Health Services deal with complaints relating to neighbourhood noise. All complaints should be in writing outlining the nature of the complaint, duration and exact location of the noise source. Alternatively, complainants can fill in a complaint form, which is available on request at the Council Office or by contacting Council's Environmental Health Services and one can be forwarded to you by mail.

Justifiable anonymous complaint will be investigated but will not necessarily be given any priority.

Upon receipt of a complaint, depending on the nature of the complaint, an Environmental Health Officer will either visit the property concerned and attempt to resolve the problem or write to the owner of the unit requesting a convenient time to take noise readings. It is not always possible to keep a complainant's details confidential particularly when noise readings are required however, every effort is made to allow the complaint to remain anonymous.

## **NOISE FROM POWER TOOLS**

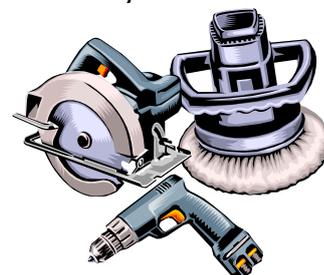
Power tools such as saws, drills, lawn mowers and jig-saws are also commonly used, and create considerable noise. This noise can even warrant the use of ear muffs to protect the user from deafness. Controlling noise from these tools can be difficult and it is recommended that you use the tools at times and places that will minimise annoyance to your neighbours.

If possible, use tools out of direct line of sight to neighbours' windows and doors.

The best places are inside enclosed garages, in your house or behind a barrier.

Try to use the best tools or machine for the job and one that will complete the work process in the shortest time possible.

The regulations permit hand operated equipment to be used on residential premises for up to two hours (accumulative) on any one day between the hours of 7am-7pm Monday to Saturday and 9am-7pm Sunday or public holiday. However, if the noise interferes with the health, welfare, convenience or amenity of the person receiving the noise, use of the equipment may not be permitted.



## **NOISY PARTIES**

Noise from parties can be disturbing, particularly if it is excessively loud or happens regularly.



If you intend to have a party and are concerned that some neighbours might be upset about the noise, try these suggestions:-

- Close all windows and doors, if possible, and use exhaust fans or the air conditioner to make the inside comfortable. This will help to keep the part noise inside.
- Don't use speakers outside the house.
- Start your party earlier so that it can finish earlier.
- Set the volume control, so as to ensure the music is not audible inside your neighbours home after 10.00pm on weeknights or midnight on Friday and Saturday nights.
- Ensure that party goers do not cause a nuisance with offensive language or behaviour while at the party or when leaving.
- If possible, use a room that has few windows and doors to the outside. Some rumpus rooms are built this way.
- Let your neighbours know about the party and its expected completion time.



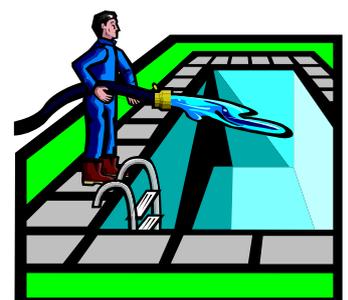
NOTE: Complaints concerning excessive noise can result in the Police or Council seizing equipment and fines in excess of \$1,000.00.

Remember, have fun, but remember your neighbours have a right to peace and quiet.

Where a party is a 'one-off' complaints concerning excessive noise, affected residents should contact the Police on 9881 1911.

## **SWIMMING POOL/SPA PUMPS**

A common source of annoyance, particularly during the summer months is the noise from swimming pool motors. This is very often aggravated if the equipment is left operating overnight or in the early hours of the morning.



## **BUILDING SITE NOISE**

Builders are permitted to work Monday to Saturday between 7am and 7pm. In order to work on Sundays or public holidays they must meet a strict set of conditions which includes advising all nearby residents of the work 24 hours before it commences.

Equipment used on building sites which are close to residences should always be maintained in good order and be fitted with good quality engine exhaust mufflers, where appropriate, so that noise emissions are minimised. Radios should be operated on building sites so that they are not audible on nearby residential premises. Mobile phones should not be arranged to sound the horn on a motor vehicle to signal a builder who might be some distance away on the site.



## **WHO CAN HELP**

<b>Noise Source</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Road traffic	Main Roads
Aeroplanes, helicopters	Civil Aviation
Noise within a workplace	Worksafe
Building construction	Town of Narrogin
Airconditioning, pool pump, heater, ducted vacuum	Town of Narrogin
Car alarms and burglar alarms	Police
Noisy parties	Police and Town of Narrogin next working day