

Information on Noise

Noise is simply unwanted or unpleasant sound. Too much noise can cause annoyance and stress. It can disturb sleep and disrupt simple day-to-day activities, such as reading or watching TV. In the longer term it may cause adverse health effects.

Regulation and enforcement

The *Environmental Protection Act 1986* and the Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997 are administered by local government Environmental Health Officers. The legislation aims to protect people from unnecessary noise while letting them carry out their business and social activities.

Residential Noise Complaints

You should attempt to resolve any dispute with a neighbour by talking and trying to reach a satisfactory solution. After all, you may be living alongside each other for years to come and it is in both your interests to be on reasonable terms. The ten tips below provide some useful advice on raising issues and communicating with your neighbour.

Ten tips for discussing a problem with your neighbour. Assuming there is no threat of physical violence or verbal intimidation:

- **Deal directly with the person you are in dispute with.** This is usually far better than letters, messages, shouting, banging on walls, throwing things, or talking to everyone else except "that person".
- **Plan a convenient, sensible time and place to talk to the other person.** Bad timing can increase and escalate the dispute rather than diminish the tension.
- **Think beforehand about what you want to say.** It is important to be clear about what you think the problem is and how you feel about the dispute.
- **Don't be too quick to lay the blame on the other person.** Finger-pointing and insulting behaviour will cloud the issue and make it harder for the other side to actually take in what you are saying.
- **Don't interpret your neighbour's behaviour.** "You park outside our entrance deliberately to wind us up" sounds much worse than "parking outside our entrance causes a lot of inconvenience".
- **Give your neighbour a chance to say their side of the story.** Let them know you are listening to what they are saying even if you disagree with what they are saying.
- **Let them know that you are pleased that you can get together to discuss the problem.** This can help you both to feel positive and bring you closer to an agreement.
- **Work on the problems co-operatively. See what you can both do to resolve the dispute.** Two people working towards a mutual agreement can get a lot further than one person dictating to the other on how they should change or improve their behaviour.
- **Bring all the issues out into the open.** Take the time to work on all the issues involved. Make sure that the difficult ones don't get swept under the carpet.
- **Look ahead.** Agree to meet each other at specific future dates to check on how things are going.

When talking doesn't work...

If your neighbour is unapproachable or denies a problem exists, mediation may be the next best option. Visit the Citizens Advice Bureau's website www.cabwa.com.au for further information on mediation services available.

Alternatively, for complaints about residential, commercial and small industrial noise issues, please contact the City of Melville. The City of Melville Environmental Health Officers administer regulations for these types of noise.

For complaints about noise from large industries or premises licensed under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*, please contact your Department of Environment Regulation (DER) regional office.

Residential noise complaints

Air conditioner noise

Noise emissions from air conditioners must comply with the assigned levels set by the Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997 at all times. If a complaint is lodged and an air conditioner doesn't comply with the assigned levels, legal action can be taken against both the owner and the installer of a noisy air conditioner.

If you are planning to buy an air conditioner, the Fairair website (www.fairair.com.au) will help you make sure the air conditioner you buy meets the noise regulations, saving you money and energy and helping to prevent future noise issues. It provides simple, practical and easy-to-use calculators for air conditioner sizing, energy consumption and noise levels based on the department's brochure "An Installers Guide to Air Conditioner Noise". This brochure is available below.

For complaints or further advice on noise from air conditioners please contact the City of Melville Environmental Health Officer on 1300 635 845.

Residential equipment

Most households will need to use residential equipment such as lawnmowers, power tools and musical instruments from time to time. The regulations define this type of equipment as "specified equipment" and this specifically refers to any item of equipment, which requires the constant presence of an operator for normal use.

The noise regulations provide for reasonable use of this type of equipment and provide guidance regarding the hours of use. Specified equipment other than musical instruments may be used for up to two hours per day and musical instruments may be used for up to one hour per day that is not amplified. All specified equipment may be used between the hours of 7am and 7pm Monday to Saturday and 9am to 7pm on Sunday and Public Holidays.

The equipment should be used in a reasonable manner, which does not unreasonably interfere with the health, welfare, convenience, comfort or amenity of surrounding neighbours. The equipment should be used for the purpose for which it was intended and kept in a good operating condition.

For complaints or further advice on noise from residential equipment please contact the City of Melville Environmental Health Officer on 1300 635 845.

Party noise

Music noise from a party will generally exceed the assigned levels set by the Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997, however, most neighbours will generally tolerate "one off parties" if they have been advised of the following in advance:

- The date of the party. Neighbours can make alternative arrangements to go out for the evening.
- The music will be switched off or turned down to a quiet level after 10pm.
- A phone number to ring if the music gets too loud.

Even if the above guidelines have been followed neighbours can still lodge a complaint with the Police or Council. Authorised Noise Officers and Police Officers have the power to ensure music is turned down or confiscate equipment if the noise continues to cause a disturbance to neighbours.

The [WA Police advice on hosting a party](#) has information on strategies to help ensure minimal disturbance to neighbours and others in your local area. If you plan on hosting a party, you should also consider registering your party with the WA Police.

For complaints or further advice about party noise please contact the City of Melville Environmental Health Officer on 1300 635 845.

Barking dogs

Noise from dogs is controlled by the *Dog Act 1976*. For complaints or further advice please contact the City of Melville Ranger Services on 1300 635 845.

Audible alarms

The *Environmental Protection Act 1986* gives WA Police the power to silence audible alarms that have been sounding for more than 30 minutes causing unreasonable noise.

Construction

Noisy construction work may be carried out on a building site between the hours of 7am and 7pm Monday to Saturday. Noisy construction activities are not permitted on Sundays or Public Holidays without an approved noise management plan.

All construction work is to be carried out in accordance with control of environmental noise practices set out in section 6 of AS 2436-1981 Guide to Noise Control on Construction, Maintenance and Demolition Sites. In addition, the equipment used on the premises is required to be as quiet as what is reasonably available.

For complaints or further advice about construction noise please contact the City of Melville Environmental Health Officer on 1300 635 845.

Other Noise

Vehicle – Main Roads - 9323 4111

Passenger Trains – Public Transport Authority - 9326 2000

Freight Trains – WestNet – 9212 2501

Air Craft Noise – Perth International Airport – 1300 302 240

- **Jandakot Airport – 9417 0900**

Boat Noise – Department of Planning and Infrastructure – 9216 8999

Concerts

Special rules apply to outdoor concerts. The noise regulations allow local councils to approve concerts, as well as any sporting, cultural or entertainment type of event, where the activities may result in noise emissions exceeding the prescribed noise levels.

For complaints or further advice on noise from outdoor concert and like events please contact the City of Melville Environmental Health Officer on 1300 635 845.

Community Events

Noise from some community activities is "exempt noise" under the noise regulations. Exempt noise includes children in school playgrounds, crowds at sporting events, church services, fairs and fetes. The Local Council can take action over an exempt noise if it considers that the impacts outweigh the benefits to the community.

For complaints or further advice on noise from community events please contact the City of Melville Environmental Health Officer on 1300 635 845.

Industrial and commercial

There are a number of commercial and industrial sites that can generate unwanted noise emissions. In most instances noise problems can be handled by the local council/shire office. However, some major industrial premises are licensed with the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC). In these cases, noise problems from major industrial premises are handled by DEC inspectors.

If you have an industrial or commercial related noise complaint, your first point of contact the City of Melville Environmental Health Officer on 1300 635 845. However, in the case of a noise complaint about a known licensed premises, please contact your regional DEC office.

Pubs and clubs

With the mix of suburban and inner city areas changing and growing in density, the likelihood of residents and licensed venues being in close proximity to each other is increasing and this requires careful management.

For complaints or further advice on noise from licensed or live music venues please contact the City of Melville Environmental Health Officer on 1300 635 845.

CONTACTS

Department of Environment Regulation (DER) – 08 6467 5000

City of Melville Health Services – 1300 635 845

City of Melville Community Safety Service – 1300 653 643

WA Police – 13 14 44