

What is noise?

Sound surrounds us in our everyday life, ranging from the birds chirping and music playing. 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 measure sound?

Sound is measured in decibels (dB) by using an instrument called a sound level meter. A sound level meter records sounds as perceived by the human ear. The scale below gives an estimate of the different levels of sound.

Equipment	dB(A)
Chainsaws, Motorcycles (modified)	100
Heavy traffic, vacuum cleaner	80
Conversation (normal)	60
Library	40
Soft whisper	30
Still in the night	20

NB: an increase of 10 dB(A) will sound about "twice as loud!!".

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: -

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: -

Please return completed form to:

Health Services City of Mandurah PO Box 210 MANDURAH WA 6210	Phone: 9550 3746 (Health Services) Facsimile: 9550 3888 Customer Services: 9550 3777 Email: health@mandurah.wa.gov.au Office Location: 3 Peel Street, Mandurah
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- Lawnmowers, chainsaws, 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 City's 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 9581 0222 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 City 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 City can also become involved if it is a continuing problem.

Noise we cannot resolve:

The City will not apply the Regulations to control human voices such as screaming, yelling, abusive/bad language due to the complexities of achieving compliance.

***The Police may be contacted on 9581 0222 to deal with issues such as vehicle noise and behavioural noise.**

If noise emissions become a problem and the special circumstances outlined above do not apply, the City'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 City on 9550 3777 and ask for a Noise Service Request Form to be sent out. Alternatively you can write to the City 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.



All Noise Service Requests must be in writing.

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What happens when my service request is lodged?

After a Service request is received an Environmental Health Officer 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 City **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 Infringement 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 City 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 City of Mandurah's Health Services on 9550 3746.

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