

Noise Pollution

Building Work

Building work conducted early in the morning, or on a Sunday or public holiday can cause a disturbance for neighbours, disrupt their sleep and interfere with their normal daily activities (listening to the TV, talking on the telephone). If loud enough, it can impact on people's health. This fact sheet includes information that may assist builders, residents and property owners to reduce noise emissions and meet legal requirements.

Be a Good Neighbour

In many cases, talking to neighbours and nearby residents about what building work is planned and how long it will take may prevent or solve problems. If noisy work is planned (e.g. jack hammering, concrete cutting and pouring), discuss this with nearby residents beforehand. A sign on the site or distribution of leaflets explaining the hours and duration of operation may help prevent complaints.

The Law

The *Environmental Protection Regulations 1998* introduced by the State Government include noise limits for building work. Gladstone Regional Council is legally required to enforce these limits when the noise is being emitted from construction work at residential premises. If issues between neighbours cannot be resolved and further complaints are made, Council will have to investigate. If building work exceeds noise limits, Council may issue the builder or the resident/property owner with an on-the-spot fine (\$150).

Allowable Noise Limits

If noise from building work can be heard at residential premises between the following hours, the person carrying out the building work may be issued with an on-the-spot fine.

6:30pm to 6:30am – Monday to Saturday
At any time – Sundays and public holidays

Ways You Can Reduce Noise

A range of measures can be used to reduce the noise impact of building work. These include:

Limiting Hours of Building Work

Talk to neighbours to find out if there are particular times when the noise disturbs them. Most people are concerned about noise at night or early morning when they are trying to sleep.

Selecting Quieter Equipment or Using Alternatives

When buying equipment, consider its noise level and where possible purchase the quietest option available. Manufacturers often label equipment with its noise level or can provide this information if requested. Alternative methods can achieve the same results without producing as much noise (e.g. electrical equipment instead of petrol engine powered equipment). Alternatives may provide other advantages (e.g. no fumes, less expensive, more effective).

Location

Where practical, work as far away as possible from neighbours and away from sensitive areas (e.g. bedroom windows). Close windows and doors to reduce noise levels and consider completing some work (e.g. building framing) off-site at less sensitive locations.

Maintenance

Lack of maintenance can cause higher noise levels and reduce the effectiveness of equipment. Faulty mufflers on engine-powered equipment are a common cause of noise. Contact the manufacturer for advice.

Fences or Barriers

A solid fence can help reduce noise levels. Consider completing the fencing prior to other building work. If the fence has any gaps, this method won't be as effective.



Acoustic Enclosures

Some fixed equipment (e.g. compressors, vacuum equipment) can be effectively enclosed (e.g. in a wooden box with an absorbent lining). Make sure that the unit has adequate ventilation. Ask for advice from the manufacturer or installer.

Equipment Modifications

Sometimes modifications can be made to the unit to reduce noise. For example, a more effective muffler can be fitted to engine-powered equipment. Discuss this option with the manufacturer or installer.

For further information on this topic, please contact Gladstone Regional Council's - Environmental Health Section on 4970 0772.