Noise Emission Factsheet

Regulated Devices

Noise from power tools and other regulated devices may have a negative impact on environmental values such as disturb 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

Regulated devices include:

- A compressor or generator
- A ducted vacuuming system
- A grass-cutter (lawn-mower, edge cutter)
- An impacting tool (hammer, nail gun)
- A leaf-blower or mulcher
- An oxyacetylene burner
- An electrical, mechanical or pneumatic power tool (chainsaw, drill, sander/grinder)

Note: These provisions do not apply to a builder, owner builder or building contractor working on a building site.

Be a Good Neighbour

Take the time to talk to neighbours. Find out what concerns they may have and ask them for suggestions about solving any problems. In many cases an agreement can be reached that satisfy everyone's needs.

The Law

The *Environmental Protection Act 1994* introduced by the State Government include noise limits for regulated devices. Council is legally required to enforce these limits when the noise is being emitted from residential premises. If issues between neighbours cannot be resolved and further complaints are made, Council will have to investigate. If a regulated device exceeds noise limits, Council may issue the operator with a Direction Notice or on-the-spot fine.

Allowable Noise Limits

If an audible noise can be heard at residential premises between the following hours, the person making the noise may be issued with a direction notice or on-the-spot fine.

- 7:00pm to 7:00am – On a business day or Saturday
- 7:00pm to 8:00am – On any other day (Sunday and public holidays).

*"**Audible noise**" is defined as noise that can be clearly heard by an individual who is an occupier of a building. An individual is taken to be able to clearly hear a noise if he or she can hear the noise from the part of the building occupied by the individual that is most exposed to the noise.*

Mount Isa City Council
PO Box 815
MOUNT ISA QLD 4825

p. 07 4747 3200
f. 07 4747 3209
e. city@mountisa.qld.gov.au

There are a number of exceptions:

- Operating a grass cutter or leaf-blower at a place that is a State-controlled road or a railway under the authority from the occupier of the place.
- Operating a regulated device at a manual arts facility, at an educational institution between 7:00p.m. and 10:00p.m. during a business day or Saturday.

Ways to reduce noise

A range of measures can be used to reduce the noise impact of an amplifier device. These include:

a) Limiting hours of use
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.

b) Selecting quieter equipment or using alternatives
When buying equipment, it is important to consider its noise level. Alternative methods may be effective without producing as much noise (e.g. sweeping leaves instead of using a leaf blower, composting green waste instead of mulching, using electric powered equipment instead of petrol engine powered equipment). Often, the available alternatives have other advantages (e.g. no fumes, less expensive, more effective).

c) Location
Carry out work as far away as possible from neighbours and away from sensitive areas (e.g. bedroom windows). Use existing features to reduce the noise impact. Complete work indoors or in a work shed. Close windows and doors to reduce noise levels. For people with hobbies that involve frequent use of regulated devices (e.g. woodworking, restoring cars), consider incorporating noise reduction measures into workshops. Often simple and inexpensive measures will reduce the impact of noise.

d) 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 annoyance. Contact the manufacturer for advice.

e) Acoustic enclosures
Some fixed equipment (e.g. compressors, vacuum equipment) can be enclosed. Enclosing the unit (e.g. in a wooden box with an absorbent lining) can be very effective although it is essential that the unit has adequate ventilation.

f) Equipment modifications
Sometimes modifications can be made to the unit to reduce noise (e.g. more effective mufflers can be fitted to engine-powered equipment).

g) Fences or barriers
A solid fence can reduce noise levels. If the fence has any gaps, this method won't be as effective.

For further information please contact:

Environmental Health Services at Mount Isa City Council on 4747 3200