



Noise Nuisance including Building Work & Regulated Devices

Noise Nuisance

The definition of Noise is a sound, especially one that is loud, unpleasant or causes disturbance. Everyone reacts differently to noise. Residential noise that occurs early in the morning, late at night, on weekends or public holidays can disturb neighbours, disrupt their sleep and interfere with their normal daily activities. Even general noise such as listening to the TV or talking on the telephone, if loud enough, can impact on people's health and wellbeing. This fact sheet includes information for owners, occupiers and builders and is intended to help manage noise on residential premises and meet legal requirements.

Ways You Can Reduce Noise

1. Limiting hours of use: Talk to neighbours to find out if there are particular times the noise disturbs them. Most people are concerned about noise at night or early in the morning when they are trying to sleep.
2. Location: Carry out the noisy activity or locate equipment as far as possible from neighbours and away from sensitive areas (eg bedroom windows). It may be possible to carry out the activity in a garage or shed where windows and doors can be closed to reduce the noise impact. Alternatively, consider completing some work (eg building framing) off-site at less sensitive locations. For those whose hobbies involve frequent use of regulated devices (eg woodworking, restoring cars) consider incorporating noise reduction measures into workshops. Often simple and inexpensive measures will reduce the impact of noise.
3. Maintenance: Old equipment and lack of maintenance can cause higher noise levels and reduce the effectiveness of the equipment. Faulty mufflers on engine-powered equipment are a common cause of noise. Contact the manufacturer for advice. Replacing the noisy equipment with a quieter or appropriately sized model may help solve the problem. If your pool is a noise nuisance; know how long the pool filter needs to run for acceptable water quality. In most cases, this is only long enough to achieve one to two turnovers of the pool volume per day. For an average pool, run the pump for three to six hours per day. Make sure the required maintenance measures are carried out (eg. chlorination, pH adjustment, etc.). Talk to the local pool shop or pool pump manufacturer for information.

4. Fences or barriers: A solid fence can reduce noise levels. If the fence has any gaps, this method won't be as effective.
5. Enclosures: Enclosing the activity or equipment (eg. in a wooden structure with absorbent lining) can be very effective and relatively inexpensive, although it is important that adequate ventilation is provided. Ask advice from the manufacturer or installer.
6. Modifications: Sometimes modifications can be made to the activity or equipment to reduce noise. Discuss this option with the manufacturer or installer.
7. 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. 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 (eg electrical equipment instead of petrol engine powered equipment, sweeping leaves instead of using a leaf blower, composting green waste instead of mulching). Often the available alternatives have other advantages (eg no fumes, less expensive, more effective).

What if there's a noise nuisance in my neighbourhood?

In most cases, the best way to resolve a noise issue is through polite and productive communication between yourself and the person causing the noise nuisance. If you haven't already spoken with the person about the noise, we strongly recommend you try this approach first.

Another option is to print out the Noise Nuisance Neighbourhood Handout available at www.gladstone.qld.gov.au, fill in your details (this is optional) and place it in the resident's letterbox.

If you have concerns about approaching or entering communication with the resident, or these measures have proven ineffective, you can report the problem to Council via Council's Online Services Portal www.gladstone.qld.gov.au/onlineservices.

How Council deals with Noise Nuisance

Council will investigate a Noise Nuisance issue upon receiving a customer request detailing the address of the property the nuisance is originating from.

The Environmental Protection Act 1994, introduced by the State Government, includes guidelines for noise nuisances. Council is legally required to enforce these limits when the noise is emitted from residential premises. The Environmental Protection Act includes noise limits for building work, regulated devices, pumps, air cooling/heating devices, refrigeration equipment and the operation of power boat engines on residential premises. A noise nuisance occurs if it can be heard in an affected building between the hours specified for each type of noise.

When investigating a noise complaint, Council will consider:

- The amount of noise being emitted;
- The duration and rate of emission and the noise characteristics, and qualities;
- The sensitivity of the environment into which the noise is being emitted and the impact that it has or may have; and
- Views of any other neighbours or complainants.

If the noise is found to be a nuisance, Council may issue the person or business causing the noise with a 'direction notice' or an on the spot fine. A direction notice details what offence has taken place, and the time frame that the offender has to rectify the problem. If a direction notice is not complied with, Council may then issue an on-the-spot fine.

It is important to note that achieving compliance under this process can take in excess of six weeks.

Regulated devices

A person (other than a builder or a person with an owner-builder permit) operating a regulated device on premises must not operate the device in a way that makes an audible noise during the following hours:

- Monday to Saturday - before 7am or after 7pm
- Sunday and public holidays - before 8am or after 7pm.

A regulated device means any of the following: a compressor; a ducted vacuuming system; a generator; grass-cutter (e.g. brush cutter, edge cutter, lawnmower, ride-on mower, string trimmer); an impacting tool (hammer, nail gun); a leaf-blower; a mulcher; an oxyacetylene burner; an electrical, mechanical or pneumatic power tool e.g. a chainsaw, drill, electric grinder or sander, electric welder, nail gun); domestic cleaning equipment.

Building Work Noise

A person carrying out building work on premises (including an owner builder) must not carry out building work that makes an audible noise during the following hours:

- Monday to Saturday - before 6.30am or after 6.30pm
- Sunday or public holiday - anytime.

Building work means any of the following: Building, repairing, altering, underpinning, moving or demolishing a building; providing air conditioning, drainage, heating, lighting, sewerage, ventilation or water supply for a building; excavating or filling and installing or removing scaffolding.

How can you contact us?



(07) 4970 0700

STD CALLS: 1300 733 343

For those residents who currently incur STD call rates when contacting their local customer service centre



(07) 4975 8500



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www.gladstone.qld.gov.au

