

Business Pollution Prevention Fact sheet

Every year Council receives numerous complaints about noise coming from industrial and commercial premises. Many of these complaints could have been avoided along with the need for Council officers to investigate your premises.



Community Contact

Often businesses don't realise they are causing a noise problem and if approached by a resident they may be only too happy to do what they can to help. However residents will usually contact Council as their first step, either because they are scared about talking to the business or they simply don't know whom to contact at the business. As a business you can make yourself more approachable to the public by:

- erecting a sign advising the public of a contact person and number who they can contact about any issues of concern regarding your business; or
- a letter box drop of the neighbouring premises with an information sheet detailing your operations and providing a contact person for them to call with any issues of concern regarding your business.

Hours of operation

You should know the hours during which your business has consent to carry out operations. Many businesses should have "development consent" from Council. Often these development consents limit the hours of operation or limit the hours when certain activities can be carried out. You should know the hours in which you can conduct your activities and also make sure all your employees know these times. A breach of your development consent can attract an on the spot fine of \$3000.

Noise control strategies

There are many strategies available when deciding how to reduce noise to an acceptable level, some of which are very inexpensive and simple;

Eliminate noisy activities and equipment from your premises where possible. Some noisy activities and processes can be carried out off site in a more suitable location. Update your equipment and replace old noisy equipment with new quieter equipment. Some noisy activities can be removed all together such as turning off truck engines rather than allowing them to idle for long periods.

Minimise noisy activities during sensitive times of the day. Plan ahead where possible and perform noisy activities such as drilling, grinding or hammering during the middle of the day rather than early morning or late afternoon. If you are loading a truck first thing in the morning then reverse the truck into place the afternoon before.

Control the noise produced by targeting the noise source, the path which the noise travels or the location where the noise is heard. For example:

- Absorption – cover surrounding walls, benches and objects with material that absorbs sound such as foam, rubber, adhesive cork or fibreglass wool. If it is possible, cover the machinery that is causing the noise.

- Vibration isolation – prevent the noise producing machinery from transmitting vibration to other equipment. For example, mount a compressor onto rubber blocks.
- Vibration dampening – prevent equipment vibrating as much by making the equipment stiffer. This may be done by adding extra support frames to mounted equipment.
- Transmission path – place sound absorbing obstacles between the noise source and the person hearing to noise. Barriers, screens, partitions and natural objects can all reduce noise heard outside the premises.
- Enclosures – isolate noisy activities in one sealed room. Heavy drapes on window or room with no windows are best, and keep the door shut.
- Distance – place noisy machinery as far away from the public as possible. Noise reduces naturally over distance.

Offences

It can be an offence to cause the emission of noise. Breaches of the noise offence provisions of the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* can attract fines of up to \$250,000 in the case of an individual and \$1 million in the case of a corporation, with additional fines for continuing offences.

On the spot fines range up to \$1500 for corporations and \$750 for individuals.

