

Construction noise

Health Services Information Fact Sheet



The *Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997 (the Regulations)* prescribe assigned (permitted) noise levels. The Regulations recognise that in some situations it is impracticable to comply with these levels. Therefore a number of special case provisions (exceptions) have been created. These exceptions cover a range of situations but are subject to conditions. The exception ceases to apply if any of the conditions are not complied with. If this happens, the noise must then comply with the permitted levels. One such exception relates to noise from construction sites.

What is construction work?

Construction work is defined by the Regulations as the construction, erection, installation, alteration, repair, maintenance, cleaning, painting, renewal, removal, excavation, dismantling or demolition of, or addition to any building or structure.

What is allowed?

Noise from a construction site is permitted under the regulations between the hours of 7am to 7pm Monday to Saturday, excluding public holidays. The equipment used must be the quietest reasonably available.

Approval from the City may be obtained in special circumstances to emit noise outside these times. This is usually for cases where it is impracticable to undertake the construction work during normal hours eg road works on a major road which would cause significant disruption to the community if undertaken during the day. In these situations a noise management plan must be lodged with the City and it is usual for the City to require that affected residents be notified of the works beforehand.

Please note that construction work may be carried out at any time if it is not emitting any noise. For example a painter using a brush or roller would not emit any noise and therefore does not need to be restricted to the above times. Other activities such as workers arriving on site, unloading tools or moving materials may be done prior to 7am providing they do not emit noise in excess of the permitted levels.

Tips when undertaking construction work:

- Use tools out of direct sight to neighbours, windows and doors, such as behind barriers.
- Avoid using tools early in the morning and late in the evening where possible.
- Ensure tools are properly maintained and most suited to the task at hand.
- If using a piece of equipment repeatedly, try to plan the activity to use equipment in block periods. eg if using a saw to cut timber, measure a number of bits of timber and cut them all at the same time rather than measuring and cutting each piece separately.
- If undertaking renovations inform neighbours of likely timeframe of construction work.

Tips when dealing with noise from construction sites:

- Speak to the builders on the construction site to make them aware of your concerns.
- Contact the building company who is responsible for the construction. Often workers are sub contractors and the site manager may not be aware of any issues.
- Be patient. Remember construction work is of a temporary nature and so the noise nuisance will cease eventually.
- Remember you may wish to undertake construction work at some point and the situation will then be reversed.
- Should the annoyance caused by construction site noise continue, you may lodge a written complaint to the City's Health Services.

What happens if a complaint is lodged?

Where the City receives a noise complaint an investigation will be undertaken as per established procedures. For more information on this as well as possible enforcement options please refer to the City's Neighbourhood Noise fact sheet.

If you require further information about noise, you may contact the City of Swan's Health Services on 9267 9267.