

**Guidance on Noise  
Control For Pubs,  
Clubs  
& Commercial  
Premises**



Environmental Protection  
7B Parkshot  
Richmond  
TW9 2RT  
Tel: 0208 891 7994  
Fax: 0208 891 7726  
Email: [commercialeh@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:commercialeh@richmond.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.richmond.gov.uk](http://www.richmond.gov.uk)

## Noise Control

This Booklet is primarily intended as a guide for licensees, breweries, club owners, and club managers, to allow for the control of noise from pubs, clubs and other commercial premises. If noise is adequately controlled then this can prevent complaints and the need for formal action by the Local Authority.

Noise from pubs and clubs is a common cause of complaint to the Local Authority by neighbouring residents. During 2003/2004 the council received over 300 complaints regarding noise from commercial premises.

The Council's Environmental Health Department has a duty to investigate such complaints and to take action if the noise is considered to be a statutory nuisance; such action can require adequate controls to be put in place to ensure noise nuisance does not recur at the premises. Ultimately, fines up to a maximum of £20,000 can be imposed on by the courts if further noise nuisance is found to exist at the premises.

### Entertainment Noise

**The new Licensing Act comes into force in February 2005 and will have implications for new and existing premises holding public entertainment events. For further information regarding this contact the councils Licensing Department. See the back of the leaflet for contact details.**

Noise associated with entertainment includes noise resulting from amplified music, live entertainment, and public address systems. Such entertainment often occurs in the evening when

### Internal Noise Levels ; Noise at work

High music noise levels can pose a potential risk to both employees and to customers. There are statutory requirements to employees under health and safety legislation to minimise this risk. Further advice can be obtained from the contact details on the back of this leaflet.

### **Contact Details;**

Licensing Department : Tel 020 8831 6455

Environmental Health Department: Tel 0208 891 7994

Planning Department: Tel 020 8891 7300

Building Control Department: Tel 020 8891 7356/7

### **Useful Websites;**

Institute of Acoustics: <http://www.ioa.org.uk>

Association of Noise Consultants:  
<http://www.association-of-noise-consultants.co.uk>

Department for environment, food and rural affairs DEFRA  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/noise/index.htm>

Buildings are often designed and constructed of materials, which will appropriately control the transmission of noise. However, older buildings, community centres and church halls may be constructed to a lower specification and may need to require sound insulation works if located within residential areas and used for noisy entertainment. Structures such as conservatories offer little resistance to the transmission of noise and should not be used for loud music or similar entertainment if they are close to other residential properties.

In cases where residential accommodation shares party walls or floors/ceilings with licensed premises then additional sound insulation works may be necessary to prevent noise disturbance. Where practicable, rooms used for entertainment should be sited as far from residential property as possible. These measures, when combined with adequate volume control and attention to good practise in the fixing of loudspeakers away from party walls or floor structures can contribute significantly towards minimising noise disturbance to local residents.

### Outdoor events

Functions such as outdoor music events, barbecues, bouncy castles, firework displays, charity events and public address systems may need a license from the council. Event organisers should contact the Council's Licensing Team well in advance of the proposed events. (Such events are not generally encouraged in residential areas but if carefully planned, disturbance can be kept to a minimum.)



local residents are more likely to be at home hoping to relax. This, combined with generally lower background noise levels, means people are more likely to be disturbed at night, often resulting in complaints to the Council.

Simple measures, such as closing doors and windows, or lowering volume controls are effective and can control noise to an acceptable level. Noise is best assessed at the boundary of the nearest noise sensitive premises. (to allow for any necessary action to be taken to control the noise )

Certain styles of amplified music can cause more problems than others due to dominant bass beats which can readily pass through building structures; You must take extra care to control bass levels. **Noise limiting devices can be set up within a sound system to allow noise levels to be controlled automatically.**

### Plant and Equipment

Plant and equipment often associated with commercial premises includes chiller units, air conditioning and extract ventilation systems. Unless noise control measures are taken these can cause disturbance to local residents, especially late at night when background noise levels fall.

If new plant or equipment is to be installed then consideration must be given to its location and the noise level it is likely to produce. Ideally, plant and equipment should be positioned away from noise sensitive premises such as housing as to ensure the residents are not disturbed. If this cannot be achieved additional controls may be added to reduce noise



levels to an acceptable level. Such controls can include silencers, time switches and acoustic enclosures. It is recommended that specialist advice is to be obtained to control noise from plant and equipment.

You may need planning permission to install new plant or equipment, so contact the planning department on 020 8891 7300

### **Deliveries and waste collection**

These services can give rise to disturbance to local residents, especially when carried out in the early hours of the morning or late at night. Scheduling such activities to take place during the day between 8am and 6pm, and not on Sundays will minimise this disturbance. Refuse and bottle storage areas should be sited away from housing and ideally housed within purpose designed structures.

At all times, you should adopt working practises to avoid unnecessary noise disturbance.

### **Garden and Play areas**

Noise from gardens and children's play areas, is often a cause of complaints, particularly during the summer months, and is difficult to control. The following steps can help;

- Site away from housing and gardens if possible
- Restrict the hours the area is used
- Provide screening / fencing
- Any new area may need planning permission.

### **Customers**

Customers are often a source of complaint to Environmental Health departments. You must take reasonable steps to ensure that customers arrive and leave without causing a nuisance to your neighbours

### **Controlling Noise through Building Design**

Good building design is essential to control noise breakout/transmission from premises, in order to prevent disturbance to local residents. Common sources of noise breakout include doors, windows and vents which, when open, offer no resistance to noise.

Many potential problems can be avoided by good design of windows, doors and ventilation systems. Ventilation grilles that are prone to noise breakout can be treated with acoustic baffles. Further improvements can be achieved with sealed acoustically treated windows and close fitting doors constructed of dense, heavy materials. Good management control is necessary to ensure doors and windows are kept closed; fire doors can be alarmed to ensure that the management is aware of their unauthorised use.

