

Amplifier devices

An amplifier device includes loud-hailers, megaphones, public address systems, remote telephone bells and telephone repeater bells. Noise from amplifier devices can disturb people, disrupt their sleep and interfere with their work or normal daily activities (watching TV, talking on the telephone). If loud enough, it can impact on their health.

This fact sheet includes information that can help people to reduce noise emissions and meet legal requirements. Note: For stereo and radio noise, contact your local Police.

Be a good neighbour

Before installing equipment that emits noise, take the time to talk to neighbours and other building occupants to find out their concerns and to resolve any problems. In many cases, an agreement can be reached that satisfies everyone's needs.

The law

The *Environmental Protection Act 1994* includes noise limits for amplifier devices. Council is legally required to enforce these limits when noise is emitted from a premises. If issues between neighbours cannot be resolved and further complaints are made, Council will investigate. If an amplifier device exceeds noise limits, Council may issue the offender with a fine to the value of 15 penalty units (individual) or 75 penalty units (corporation). Refer to the Local Government Toolbox website www.lgtoolbox.qld.gov.au for more information about penalty units.

Allowable noise limits

If noise from an amplifier device can be clearly heard at a neighbouring premises during the following hours, the owner or operator of the device may be issued with an on-the-spot fine:

- 10pm-7am on a business day
- 6pm-8am on any other day.

Fines may also be issued when noise from an amplifier device is greater than 10dB(A) above the 'background noise level'* between:

- 7am-10pm on a business day
- 8am-6pm on any other day.

Devices used at indoor venues and entertainment events have different noise requirements.

**Background noise level* is the ambient noise measurement obtained in the absence of the source noise being investigated. It can vary throughout the day and night.

Ways to reduce noise

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

Limit hours of use

Talk to neighbours and other building occupants to find out if there are particular times when the noise disturbs them. People are often concerned about operation at night or early morning, when they are trying to sleep.

Select a quieter alternative

Alternatives may be available that are quieter and do not disturb neighbours. For example, telephone repeater bells can be replaced with visual alarms (e.g. flashing lights) or a personal pager to alert the receiver of a call.

Choose location carefully

Locating amplifier devices as far away as possible from neighbours and sensitive areas (e.g. bedroom windows, offices) may reduce their impact.

Install fences or barriers

A solid fence may help to reduce noise levels. If the fence has gaps, it will not be as effective.

For more information on this topic, contact your local Council.