

Building work

Building works early in the morning, on weekends or public holidays can disturb neighbours, disrupt their sleep and interfere with their normal daily activities. If loud enough, it can affect their health. This fact sheet can help you to reduce noise and meet legal requirements.

This fact sheet includes information for builders and owner-builders, but does not apply to home renovators (please refer to fact sheet entitled *Regulated devices* for home renovation noise). It is intended to help residents and builders manage noise and meet legal requirements.

Be a good neighbour

Talking to your neighbours about what work is planned and how long it will take can prevent or solve problems. Work such as jack hammering, concrete cutting and pouring, should be discussed with neighbours beforehand. A sign on the site or distribution of leaflets detailing work hours may help prevent complaints.

The law

Queensland's *Environmental Protection Act 1994* includes noise limits for building work and Council is legally required to enforce these limits. If issues between neighbours cannot be resolved, Council will investigate. If building work exceeds noise limits, Council may issue 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 building work can be clearly heard at premises between the following hours, the person carrying out the building work may be issued with a fine:

- 6.30pm to 6.30am on a business day or Saturday
- at any time on any other day.

Ways to reduce noise

A range of measures can be used to reduce noise. These include:

Limit work hours

Talk to neighbours to find out if there are particular times when noise disturbs them. Most people are concerned about noise at night or early morning.

Select quieter equipment or user alternatives

When buying equipment, consider the quietest option. Manufacturers often label equipment with the noise level or can provide this information. Alternatives such as electrical

equipment, can be quieter, cheaper, more efficient and kinder to the environment than petrol powered models.

Choose location carefully

Where practical, work as far away as possible from neighbours, bedroom windows and offices. Close windows and doors to reduce noise levels and consider completing some work, such as framing, off-site at less sensitive locations.

Regular maintenance

Regular maintenance reduces noise and increases effectiveness of equipment, such as mufflers. Contact the manufacturer for advice.

Install fences or barriers

A solid fence without gaps can help reduce noise levels. Consider completing the fencing prior to other building work.

Consider an acoustic enclosure

Some fixed equipment, such as compressors and vacuum equipment, can be effectively enclosed in a wooden box with an absorbent lining and adequate ventilation. Ask for advice from the manufacturer or installer.

Equipment modifications

Sometimes modifications can be made to the unit to reduce noise. For example, a more effective muffler can be fitted to engine-powered equipment. Discuss this option with the manufacturer or installer.

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