

Be a Good Neighbour - Reducing Neighbourhood Noise



Sound is an essential part of day-to-day living and some sounds can be very useful. Noise, however is unwanted sound, and in many circumstances can be reduced.

Neighbour noise problems are one of the most common sources of nuisance. Everyone can expect to hear some kind of noise from their neighbours but there are reasons why this noise may become a problem. The most common reasons are:

- The neighbours may be behaving unreasonably
- The neighbours may be behaving perfectly normally but the sound insulation between the properties may not be good enough to cut out normal day to day living sounds
- Different people are sensitive to different types of noises. Sounds that some people enjoy may be very annoying to others.

All of us at some stage have been bothered by other people's noise. How much of a problem is caused depends on how loud it is, how long it lasts, how often it happens and whether it is high or low pitched. However, we should also remember the noise we make may also disturb other people and with a bit of thought a lot of this noise can be avoided.

It isn't always possible to prevent noise but the following guide looks at some of the common causes of neighbour noise and how that noise can be reduced.

Radios, TV's and Stereos

Think about where to place your T.V and stereo around your home. You can reduce the effect of such equipment on neighbours just by moving it away from party walls.





If you live in a flat with a neighbour below you try and raise the T.V. and stereo off the floor.

Keep the volume as low as possible. If you like to listen to loud music use headphones.

Set the bass control as low as possible. The "thump thump" of a bass beat can be particularly annoying to neighbours.



DIY Repairs and Improvements



Try and carry out the "noisy" jobs during the day, and keep the evening free to quieter jobs such as painting or decorating.

Don't keep machinery running if it's not being used.

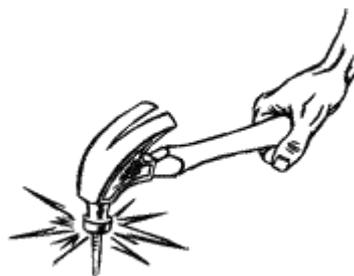
Try and complete the work in as short a time as possible.

If you have to carry out a particularly noisy operation let your neighbours know in advance. Try to be precise about when you will be starting the work and give an approximate time it will finish.

Remember people do need a break. This is especially so if your neighbours are elderly, sick or have small children.

Try to carry out noisy activities between the following hours:

- 8.00 a.m. - 7.00 p.m. weekdays and Saturday
- 10.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. Sundays and Bank Holidays



Dogs

Train your dog not to bark unnecessarily.

Never let your dog bark or whine for long periods of time.



Don't leave your dog for long periods of time on its own. If you do have to leave it get a friend or neighbour to check on it, leave its favourite toy or the radio on very low.

If you know your dog barks constantly when it is unattended or disturbed, keep it indoors wherever possible in a room where it is not likely to cause a problem to adjoining property.

Domestic Appliances

Think about where to put domestic appliances such as washing machines dishwashers and freezers. Wherever possible site them away from partition walls and place them on carpet or a rubber mat to reduce vibration.

Try to operate noisy machinery such as washing machines, spin dryers and vacuum cleaners during the day.



Use lawn mowers and power garden tools at reasonable times of the day. Try to avoid using them early morning or late evening.

Motor Vehicles

Try not to rev engines excessively

Close vehicle doors quietly, especially at night or early in the morning

Keep the vehicle horn for emergency use only.

If you like to listen to loud music in your vehicle keep the windows closed.

Try to drive quietly in built up areas. Avoid driving/braking fiercely

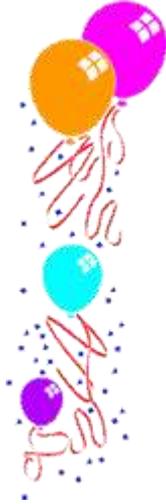
If you ride a motorcycle don't speed around the streets in groups or ride on open spaces near houses. Try and keep the machine properly silenced.



If you need to carry out repairs to your vehicle, where possible do this in a garage

Try to confine noisy repair work to during the day and avoid Sundays altogether. Don't rev the engine for long periods of time and don't repair any one else's vehicle on your property.

Parties and Late Night Revellers



If you are having a party or barbecue give advance warning to the neighbours or, better still invite them.

If you are playing music keep the volume at a level that cannot be heard outside your property. If there are children playing ensure that they do not cause excessive disturbance, for example by throwing or kicking balls against the walls of a neighbouring property.

If you are returning home yourself, do it quietly, don't stand around in groups outside pubs, clubs, or in residential areas.



If taxis or minicabs are being used late at night or early in the morning, ask the drivers to announce their arrival by knocking at the door or phoning rather than sounding the vehicle horn.

Musical Instruments

If you play a musical instrument try to avoid practising early in the morning or late at night.

If the instrument has an amplifier, keep the volume low or use headphones



If you can't practice without causing a noise to neighbouring property try to compromise with your neighbours.

Arrange a time period when you practising will cause them least bother and stick to the arrangement.

Quite often if people know when to expect noise and are aware of how long it is likely to last they are more willing to accept it.

House and Vehicle Alarms

If you do have an alarm fitted to your house or vehicles appoint a key holder who can be contacted if you are away.

Keep alarms well maintained to help prevent them going off accidentally.



Finally.....

If you are bothered by neighbour noise try talking to the neighbour causing the problem. Approach them in a friendly polite manner and avoid losing your temper. People are often not aware that they are causing a problem, and may be embarrassed to discover that they are. It is usually the case that if approached in the right manner they will do something to rectify the matter.

Remember if a neighbour approaches you to advise you that you are causing a problem try to stay calm, even if they have approached you in a less than polite manner. Although it is sometimes difficult to maintain your temper there may be a reason for the other person's unpleasant behaviour, perhaps illness or embarrassment or simply a build up of several factors causing that person to "sound off" at you.

If you can't resolve a problem amicably then we may be able help. Some neighbourhood noises may be actionable under legislation enforced by the Environmental Services section. We can be contacted on **(01636) 650000** or environmental.services@nsdc.info.