Snapshot: Building and construction noise in the ACT

February 2019

Did you know noise from building and construction work can disturb neighbours, disrupt their sleep and interfere with their normal daily activities?

Noise standards

The ACT noise limits or standards are detailed in Schedule 2 of the Environment Protection Regulation 2005. The noise standards permit higher noise levels in industrial areas and much lower levels in residential areas.

Noise levels are measured at the boundary of the property emitting the noise.

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is responsible for enforcing these limits.

Noise standards in the ACT

Noise levels are measured in decibels dB(A). Different activities have different noise levels.

- Quiet bedroom 20-30dB(A)
- Daytime levels in quiet residential area 35-45 dB(A)
- Lawn mower at 15 metres 70 dB(A)
- Jack hammer at 1 metre 100 dB(A)

The following noise standards apply in the ACT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>7am-10pm Monday to Saturday</th>
<th>10pm-7am Monday to Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civic centre and other major town centres (Belconnen, Gungahlin, Woden and Tuggeranong)</td>
<td>60 dB(A)</td>
<td>50 dB(A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group centres such as Dickson and Kingston</td>
<td>55 dB(A)</td>
<td>45 dB(A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller local centres such as Griffith and Lyneham</td>
<td>50 dB(A)</td>
<td>35 dB(A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Zones</td>
<td>45 dB(A)</td>
<td>35 dB(A)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noise standards for building and construction activities

Building and construction works occur throughout the ACT including areas with residential properties. Noise from these activities can be very loud and needs to be managed to minimise impacts on neighbours.
The Environment Protection Regulation 2005 sets times and conditions when building work that generates noise is permitted. The time periods and conditions are detailed in the table below.

Table 2: Noise standards for building activities in the ACT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Maintenance or repair work* including the use of power tools, etc | 7am-8pm Monday to Saturday  
8am-8pm Sunday and Public Holidays  
Noise exceeding the standard may only be emitted for up to 40 hours in any 8 week period. |
| Building work in industrial, city and town centre areas** | 6am-8pm Monday to Sunday and Public Holidays  
Completed in less than 2 weeks  
7am-8pm Monday to Saturday  
8am-8pm Sunday and Public Holidays |
| Building work in other areas                 | Taking more than 2 weeks to complete  
7am-6pm Monday to Saturday  
No noise exceeding the standard permitted on Sundays and Public Holidays |

*Any equipment used must be maintained and operated according to the manufacturer’s specifications.

What can be done about excessive building and construction noise in the ACT?

2. You can lodge a complaint about excessive building and construction noise by ringing Access Canberra on 13 22 81. **Please note a complaint will only be considered if it is made by the person affected by the noise.**
3. In the first instance a letter will be sent to the person making the noise.
4. If the noise continues to be an issue, the matter will be investigated. Should the noise be found to be above the noise standards a warning letter, a fine or an Environment Protection Order (EPO) may be issued. Breach of an EPO is a serious offence and could lead to prosecution in court.

For more information

For further information call the EPA on 13 22 81 or email [environment.protection@act.gov.au](mailto:environment.protection@act.gov.au)