



## LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL'S NOISE AND POLLUTION CONTROL TEAM ADVICE LEAFLET

Noise from domestic, commercial and industrial sources can be annoying, disturb sleep and cause distress to neighbours. Noise from domestic sources is the most common type of noise complaint we receive in Leicester City.

The Noise and Pollution Control Team accepts that people want to enjoy their homes and their choice of music. We do not expect everybody to be quiet all of the time. However, we must also advise that it is **illegal** to cause noise nuisance.

This leaflet offers advice on what to do if you are experiencing noise problems and how to avoid causing a noise nuisance to your neighbours.

### What Affect Does Noise Have On Health?

Noisy neighbours can drastically affect a person's enjoyment of their own homes causing loss of sleep, stress and illness.



### Noise from Domestic Entertainment

Noise from televisions, radios, stereos and phones attached to speakers is a growing problem. These issues can be much worse late at night.

Generally, it does not matter what type of music is played. Loud 'heavy metal' or 'dance' music can cause the same distress and loss of sleep as loud classical music.

Some types of music have a very heavy bass beat and these low frequencies penetrate buildings very easily. An intrusive bass beat is one of the most common causes of noise nuisance.



### How to Avoid Causing Noise Problems with Domestic Sound Systems / Hi-fi

Almost all noise problems can be avoided if consideration is given to the times stereos, radios, TVs etc. are played and the volume they are played at.

- **Hours of Use.**

It is commonly thought that:

*'I can play my music as loud as I want before 11.00 pm'* **THIS IS NOT TRUE.**

**Loud music can be classed as a Statutory Nuisance at any time of the day or night.**

- **Speakers**

These should not be fixed to or facing party walls (dividing walls between you and your neighbour's properties)



Speakers can be isolated from the floor by placing them on suitable speaker stands. Alternatively, extra pieces of carpet or underlay can be placed under the speakers. This will reduce the noise and vibration affecting neighbouring properties.

- **Volume and Bass Beat**

The volume and bass control should be turned down as low as possible. It is also advisable to turn them down further as it gets later into the evening and night

- **Headphones**

Alternatively, people who like to hear their music loud can use headphones.

Cordless headphones are available which allow a person to enjoy their music whilst moving around their home. However, to avoid long-term hearing damage, it is advisable not to set the volume too high.

- **Professional Equipment.**

We would advise that professional equipment is *not* used in domestic properties without the use of headphones.

- **Music In The Garden**

If music is played when windows are open or outside e.g. in a garden, a number of people are more likely to be affected. Noise nuisance is therefore more likely to be caused in these circumstances. People speaking loudly in your garden at night can also cause noise problems.

- **How Loud Can I Play My Music?**

Unfortunately, we are unable to give specific decibel readings which state what is or is not a nuisance. This is due to the number of different factors that need to be taken into account (e.g. time of day, background noise etc.)

A non-scientific guide is as follows:

***Close the door in the room where your music/TV is playing.  
Stand in an adjacent room so the noise you are hearing is coming through a wall. If you can clearly hear your music, your neighbour can probably hear it as well.***



## **Enforcement**

On occasion we have to take enforcement action against those people who continually cause noise nuisance. As a last resort, this can result in us obtaining a warrant from Leicester Magistrates Court to gain entry to a property to ***seize noise equipment.***

***Remember a noise nuisance can occur at any time of the day or night***

## **Burglar Alarms**

If you have an audible intruder alarm fitted to your property, is it regularly maintained? If your alarm goes off continuously without cutting out after 20 minutes and we receive complaints about the noise, we have legal powers to disconnect it. Unfortunately we have to charge for this service and it could cost you over £200.

## **My dog barks a lot, what can I do?**

- The more tired a dog is, the less it will bark – so it's a good idea to exercise it regularly
- Do not leave your dog alone for long periods - dogs naturally stay in packs and therefore prefer company. Do not let your dog bark or whine for long periods of time
- Try not to excite your dog too much when playing as this will lead to barking - try to keep it calm.
- Do not leave your dog outside late at night or very early in the morning if it is prone to barking
- Consider seeking professional advice from a pet or behavioural specialist.



## **What Happens When A Noise Nuisance Is Witnessed?**

- The First Noise Nuisance will usually be dealt with informally. For domestic noise, a warning letter may be delivered. The noise perpetrator may also be asked to attend an informal interview.
- The Second Noise Nuisance may result in enforcement action. A legal notice is usually delivered to the person responsible for causing the noise, informing them that by law, they must stop causing noise nuisance. If the noise is coming from a commercial premises, we may require the company to carry out works to resolve the issue before we serve notice
- Subsequent Noise Nuisances may result in further formal action. For domestic noise, this can include seizure of noise equipment. For commercial premises, action can also be taken if a Premises License is breached and/or planning conditions are contravened.

## **Can I Take My Own Action?**

Yes you can. Section 82 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 allows you to take your own action. Please contact the Noise and Pollution Control Team for more advice.

## **Further Information**

If you would like to make a complaint about noise or contact us for further information, please use Leicester City Council's My Account <https://my.leicester.gov.uk/>