



Noise

Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA Victoria) is the state's independent environmental regulator. Under the powers of the *Environment Protection Act 1970*, EPA is responsible for protecting the environment and the community through effective regulation of industry and pollution. EPA's vision is a healthy environment that supports a liveable and prosperous Victoria. As part of its *5 Year Plan* EPA is committed to reducing disturbances from noise for all Victorians.

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What is noise pollution?

Noise pollution is sound at a level which is annoying, distracting or physically harmful. This can mean different things to different people. In residential areas, what is an acceptable level of noise to one person may be unacceptable to another, as well as dependent on the time of the day and the nature of the activity generating the noise.

EPA's role in regulating noise pollution

EPA plays a role in protecting the community from noise. It develops policies, regulations and guidelines to prevent and control noise, and then partners with other agencies (including local councils, Victoria Police and transport agencies such as VicRoads) to provide advice on the best ways to implement them. Noise pollution is policed by a number of different authorities and levels of government.

EPA developed the *Environment Protection (Residential Noise) Regulations 2008* after extensive consultation with residents, local government, police and the residential construction industry. The regulations are aimed at improving overall noise outcomes by balancing industry needs with the reasonable expectations of residents.

Noisy neighbours

Often the best approach for dealing with noisy neighbours is to talk to them and work together on a solution to settle the problem.

In some cases, noise can be so disturbing that immediate action is required. If you have a complaint about a noisy neighbour, you should contact your local council or Victoria Police.

EPA officers do not have the power to investigate residential noise complaints.

Your local council is responsible for all residential noise issues. A council must investigate the complaint and either take action itself or, if it believes that the matter is best settled privately, give you advice on how to do so.

Police are best placed to respond to domestic noise complaints such as loud music at parties, or issues where the noisy neighbour might also be threatening.

The table on page two is a handy guide for noise restrictions.

Noise from industry

If you are a resident concerned about commercial or industrial noise, you can report the noise to EPA or your local council. EPA investigates noise from major industries such as EPA licensed sites and manufacturing facilities. Investigations into noise from shops and other small commercial premises are usually resolved at the local level, and reports should be made to your local council.

Noise standards for wind farms are regulated through the planning system. Visit www.dpcd.vic.gov.au for more information.

REPORTING NOISE POLLUTION

To report noise pollution from industrial and large commercial premises call EPA's 24-hour Pollution Hotline on **1300 EPA VIC (1300 372 842)**.

EPA can also help identify the right authority to contact for other noise complaints.

Visit epa.vic.gov.au for more information on noise pollution.

Noise

EPA provides guidelines and legislation to help manage construction noise. The *Residential Noise Regulations*, *Noise Control Guidelines* and *Noise from large residential subdivision or urban development sites* are applied by local government through permits, local laws, and powers provided under the Act. Penalties apply for breaching the law.

Road Traffic Noise

Individual cars

Noisy cars are currently identified by:

- Victoria Police, VicRoads and EPA officers – if they hear and see a noisy car, they will report it to EPA's vehicle compliance team. A notice will be served on the owner requiring them to either take the car to an EPA-approved testing station, or obtain a certificate of compliance.
- Members of the public can report a noisy vehicle to their local police, who may then refer it to EPA for enforcement. Report noisy cars

to the Traffic Management Unit at your local police station.

Traffic noise

Reports about road traffic noise, including trucks using engine brakes, should be directed to the VicRoads Traffic Management Centre on 13 11 70 or your local council.

Entertainment venue noise

Under the Environment Protection Act, police have powers to deal with noise complaints from entertainment venues such as pubs, clubs and reception centres. After midnight, officers can issue a direction to abate the noise if appropriate which stays in force till 8 am. Failing to comply can result in a hefty fine for venue operators.

Hotels, licensed or BYO restaurants are required to hold the relevant liquor licence.

These licences are likely to contain a noise condition.

Any noise complaint involving these premises should be directed to your local council or the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (VCGLR), the state's independent statutory authority administering Victoria's liquor and gambling laws (www.vcglr.vic.gov.au). The VCGLR has the power to suspend, cancel or vary a licence or permit of an entertainment venue.

Responsible Authorities

Local councils often have planning controls over small businesses and can investigate noise-related issues such as noisy pets, buskers, residential noise or traffic noise on local roads.

EPA can help identify the right authority to contact for other noise complaints.

Environment Protection (Residential Noise) Regulations 2008

Prescribed items		Prohibited times	
1	A motor vehicle (except a vehicle moving in or out of premises), lawn mower or other grass cutting device and any equipment or appliance not falling within Group 2 having an internal combustion engine.	Monday to Friday: before 7 am and after 8 pm.	Weekends and public holidays: before 9 am and after 8 pm.
2	An electric power tool, chain or circular saw, gas or air compressor, pneumatic power tool, hammer and any other impacting tool or grinding equipment.	Monday to Friday: before 7 am and after 8 pm.	Weekends and public holidays: before 9 am and after 8 pm.
3	A domestic air conditioner or evaporative cooler, heat pump, swimming pool pump, spa pump, water pump other than a pump being used to fill a header tank, domestic heating equipment (including central heating and hot water systems) and a domestic vacuum cleaner.	Monday to Friday: before 7 am and after 10 pm.	Weekends and public holidays: before 9 am and after 10 pm.
4	A musical instrument and any electrical amplified sound reproducing equipment including a stereo, radio, television and public address system.	Monday to Thursday: before 7 am and after 10 pm. Saturday and public holidays: before 9 am and after 11 pm.	Friday: before 7 am and after 11 pm. Sunday: before 9 am and after 10 pm.
5	Any electric equipment or appliance not falling within Group 2, Group 3, or Group 4, including electric gardening equipment, but not electric equipment or appliances for personal care or grooming, or for heating, refrigeration or preparation of food.	Monday to Friday: before 7 am and after 8 pm.	Weekends and public holidays: before 9 am and after 8 pm.