

Covid-19: Noise - Temporary Changes

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all of our lives in one way or another and changes have been made by the NSW government to allow businesses to continue operating.

Recent changes to NSW planning legislation now allows premises/activities to operate beyond what was previously allowed and this may give rise to unfamiliar noise.

Noise complaints and working from home

The pandemic has also changed the work environment for many of us resulting in a larger number of people working from home. Whilst we appreciate that this environment may bring unfamiliar noise intrusion, current restrictions have limited Council's ability to respond to a number of noise nuisances.

The following is a summary of the new changes and tips for both minimising and handling noise intrusion.

Temporary changes to planning Legislation

On 25 March 2020, temporary orders were made under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment (COVID-19 Development – Extended Operation) Order 2020*.

This Order will be in place until 25 September 2020 or when it is repealed.

Retail Premises: The Order now allows retail premises that are not affected by the Federal Government shutdown to operate beyond the times approved by an existing Development Consent. Waste can also be taken away and goods can be delivered outside of approved hours.

Construction Sites: Under the new rules, approved construction sites can now operate on weekends and public holidays as a way of supporting the construction industry during this time. For further information, please visit the [Planning NSW website](#).

Tips to reduce noise for construction sites and retail premises

Although retail premises and construction sites can operate beyond their approved operation hours, it is important to minimise the noise emitted from the operation. Some effective noise reduction strategies include:

- Lowering the volume of any amplified sound such as phones, radios and speakers,
- Ensure operations at construction sites on public holidays and weekends do not exceed the approved weekday operating hours,
- Lowering voices when speaking,
- Be considerate of residential neighbours.

Working from home and neighbourhood noise

For those people now working from home, this environment may highlight unfamiliar and/or new noise intrusions. Please be aware that routine activities around the home are still governed by existing restrictions.

Noise Source - From Residential Premises	Time restrictions when noise should not be heard in a habitable room in a neighbour's residence
Power tools and equipment (powered garden tools – e.g. lawn mowers and leaf blowers – electric or pneumatic tools, chainsaws, circular saws, gas or air compressors and swimming pool or spa pumps)	Before 8.00am and after 8.00pm on Sundays and public holidays Before 7.00am and after 8pm on any other day
Musical instruments and electrically amplified sound equipment (e.g. radios, TVs, tape recorders, CD and DVD players, and home theatre systems).	Before 8.00am and after midnight on any Friday, Saturday or the day immediately before a public holiday Before 8.00am and after 10.00pm on any other day
Air conditioners and heat pump water heaters	Before 8.00am and after 10.00pm on weekends and public holidays Before 7.00am and after 10pm on any other day
Motor vehicles (except when entering or leaving residential premises)	Before 8.00am and after 8.00pm on weekends and public holidays Before 7.00am and after 8.00pm on any other day
Refrigeration units fitted to motor vehicles	Before 8.00am and after 8.00pm on weekends and public holidays Before 7.00am and after 8pm on any other day.

For further information on noise restrictions, please visit the [NSW EPA website](#).

Tips on minimising and handling neighbourhood noise

- Talk amicably to noisy neighbours (people may not realise how loud they are being and may be happy to stop or turn down the noise)
- Ensure you comply with the time restrictions in place for use of any noise equipment
- Keep in mind that equipment such as an air conditioner or pool pump must not be operated outside of the restricted hours of use (if they can be heard within a habitable room of a neighbouring property)
- Lower the volume of any radios, televisions and speakers to reduce disturbance.

Remember, noise can affect people in different ways. What is acceptable to one person may be offensive to another. It is important during these times to be considerate to each another.

For further information:

For Further information regarding noise nuisance, please contact Council's Environmental Health Officer or Customer Service team on:

Phone: 9330 6400

E-mail: mail@georgesriver.nsw.gov.au