

Noise – Air conditioners

Air conditioners can increase the comfort and liveability of our homes. However, the noise they emit can cause significant discomfort to neighbours. It requires some planning and consideration to ensure that air conditioner noise does not unreasonably interfere with the quiet enjoyment of other community members. In support of this, the *Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997* (the Regulations) set out some requirements.

The Regulations

The Regulations work by setting maximum allowable levels of noise depending on the time of day, type of premises receiving the noise, surrounding land use and traffic levels as well as the type and duration of the noise. These are referred to as the assigned levels.

- The highest assigned level applies from Monday to Saturday 7am to 7pm.
- The lowest assigned level applies overnight from 10pm to 7am Monday to Saturday and 10pm to 9am on Sundays and public holidays, so these should be quiet times

Depending on the type and volume of noise from an air conditioner, there may be restrictions on the time of day that it can be used.

This information is available in alternative formats upon request.

Tips for dealing with musical noise

Speak to the person using the air conditioner.

Politely let them know that the noise is bothering you. They may not realise how far or how loudly the sound of their air conditioner carries. Ask them to consider adjusting the way they operate their air conditioner, for example by using lower fan speeds, or restricting the times when it is on. If this is not effective they may consider relocating the unit or installing an acoustic enclosure with the assistance of an acoustic consultant.

Lodge a written complaint with the City of Subiaco's environmental health services. You can do this by completing a noise investigation request form, available on the City's website. Make sure you include the times and duration of the noise, and as much information as possible about the source of the noise, so that the City can investigate effectively.

Tips for air conditioner owners

Choose the right air conditioner. First consider your power requirements. By ensuring that your home is properly insulated, and shading east and west facing windows, you can reduce the heat load on the air conditioner and achieve the desired results with a smaller, quieter unit. When shopping for a suitable air conditioner, check the sound power level label on the unit. Comparing sound power levels on units of the same capacity allows you to choose the quietest unit for your needs.

For further information, visit the City's website www.subiaco.wa.gov.au or contact Environmental Health Services on (08) 9237 9254 or city@subiaco.wa.gov.au

Consider noise when choosing where to install your air conditioner, not just aesthetics and cost. The location that is the most convenient and cost effective in the short term may not be the most appropriate in terms of noise. The long term costs of a poorly located air conditioner can include damaged relationships with your neighbours, a costly relocation of the unit and/or fines if noise complaints are lodged and justified. Therefore, air conditioners should be located as far away as possible from neighbours, and away from noise sensitive areas such as bedrooms and outdoor dining or entertainment areas.

Keep your air conditioner in good repair. Regular servicing and maintenance in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications will help to ensure that the performance of the unit does not deteriorate and lead to increased noise.

Be considerate if your neighbour approaches you with concerns about the noise, and accommodate any reasonable requests.