

DIY Noise



May 2020

Noise from do it yourself works

Noise from DIY works can annoy, cause stress and generally affect the quality of life of our neighbours. The best way forward is to avoid causing a problem in the first place. This guidance is to assist you in dealing effectively with DIY noise.

Most people have DIY jobs that need doing around the home and many people have jobs during the day and need to do DIY in the evenings and at weekends. However, we have to be reasonable in what and when we do things that are noisy or cause dust etc if we are to avoid becoming a nuisance to our neighbours.

Disturbance from DIY building and decorating can be minimised by keeping noisy activities to reasonable hours and by thinking about what type of activity you are doing. We would define 'noisy activities' as the use of:

- **Hand Tools** - Use of hammers, saws, etc .
- **Power Tools** - Normal hand held power tools e.g. drills, saws, sanders etc
- **Plant** – 'Professional' tools and plant such as pneumatic hammers, cement mixers, large power saws, planers, compressors, generators, small diggers etc. Use of this type of equipment needs greater consideration, as it can be extremely noisy.
- **The Radio** - If you work with a radio on when doing DIY keep the volume down, especially in the evenings.

Before you start

If the work is likely to be noisy, or if the project is large and will take a long time to complete you should make neighbours aware of your intentions and give them an opportunity to agree when it is reasonable for the work to take place.

What are reasonable hours?

All DIY jobs are different and it is difficult to provide clear rules when DIY can or cannot take place. As a general rule you should consider the following:

- The later into the evening you are making noise, the quieter you need to be. We recommend that activities take place Monday – Friday from 9 AM by 7 PM, unless you have spoken to and got agreement with your neighbours.
- At weekends the earlier you start work the more likely you are to annoy your neighbours. On Saturdays you should carry out activities from 9 AM – 5 PM and on Sundays and Bank Holidays from 10 AM – 2 PM.

- If a DIY project is going to take more than a few days, consider reducing the amount of time you carry out noisy work each evening. Try to gain agreement with neighbours as to when work should start and finish.

Special consideration needs to be made if the work involves the following:

- **Prolonged/Extensive Works** - If the works you are planning to carry out are going to take several days, weeks or even months, you should discuss the details with your neighbours in advance. When carrying out such works you should try to be neighbourly and take into consideration their circumstances, particularly if the works are noisy or dusty.
- **Party Walls and Floors** - Work on the party wall or floor between properties can give rise to surprising levels of noise. Work such as wallpaper stripping or wall preparation can sound loud next door. Work on the floor, such as plumbing, rewiring and especially sanding, can be very loud downstairs.
- **Young Children** - If neighbours have young children who go to bed early you should bear in mind that your noisy activity may be keeping them awake. This will be particularly annoying to their parents and is likely to cause conflict.

DIY in the garden

There are times when building projects are undertaken in the garden, e.g. laying patios, building walls, erecting pergolas, etc. As this is undertaken outside noise can travel much further and affect more people. Most people are tolerant of short duration disturbance, as long as you have been considerate as to when you start and how long it goes on for.

We recommend speaking to neighbours if you are going to carry out noisy works over a long period (as might be the case if laying slabs - you may have to cut the slabs regularly through the day). In particular try to make sure your work doesn't coincide with a party, or when lots of people are out in their gardens enjoying good weather.

If you are affected by DIY noise

Firstly, let your neighbours know that the work they are doing is disturbing you. Be polite and see what they will do to minimise the impact of their work. Try to gain agreement as to times they can work. You will need to show that you can tolerate a certain amount of reasonable disturbance.

If there is no improvement you can contact the council and an officer will visit to discuss and give advice. Keep a record of when and how you are disturbed, this will be helpful if we need to carry out an investigation.

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