



Noise From “Do It Yourself” Building Works

Charnwood Borough Council Environmental Protection

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

Most people have jobs, which need doing around the home, especially if they have just moved in, or are redecorating. We have to accept that many people have jobs during the day and need to do DIY work in the evenings and at weekends.

However, this does not give them permission to annoy neighbours at all hours of the day and night. We all have to be reasonable to live together.

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:

Hand Tools

Use of hammers, saws etc should be restricted to the hours given over the page.

Power Tools

Normal hand-held power tools (drills, saws, sanders, etc) can cause a lot of noise.

Plant

People can now hire more “professional” tools and plant such as pneumatic hammers, cement mixers, large power saws and planers, compressors, generators, etc. Use of this powerful type of equipment needs greater consideration, as it is identical to that used by professional builders and can be very noisy.

Party Walls and Floors

Work on the party wall or floor between properties can give surprising levels of noise. Work such as wallpaper stripping or wall preparation can sound very loudly next door. Work on the floor, such as plumbing, rewiring and (especially) sanding, can be very loud.

Reasonable Times for Do It Yourself

We suggest that people need a rest from noise at the weekend and in the evening. It is especially important if young children are involved; we seek to provide peace and quiet in the evenings.

We recommend that the noisier activities (as defined above) are restricted to the following hours:

Saturday 9am to 5pm
Sunday 10am to 2pm
Weekdays 9am-7pm

Have you got the right equipment?

Sometimes the more powerful equipment will actually help solve the noise problem.

Maintenance of Equipment

There is nothing worse than someone using an old piece of machinery that cannot cope with the job. It makes far more noise, and the job will often take much longer, than if you had the correctly maintained equipment.

The Radio

It seems most people want the radio on when they are doing DIY- it eases the burden!. Please keep the volume down, especially in the evenings.

Dealing with Complaints

Just as your neighbour has no divine right to silence, neither does a DIYer have the right to do what they want when they want. Complaints about DIY nuisance are far better dealt with by reaching an amicable compromise.

Forewarned is forearmed - If you are starting a large DIY project try talking to or leaving a note for your neighbour . This gives you a chance to explain what you are doing, when you will be doing it and how long it will last.

Negotiate solutions to problems. Invite your neighbour to speak to you if they have any problems. For example they may have young children which means your working late will seriously inconvenience them. If problems arise negotiate a position that suits both parties as far as possible.

Stay Cool. Tempers get frayed when noise causes a nuisance. If a neighbour complains to you don't fly off the handle, no matter how rude they are. Listen to why they are complaining and try to talk through a solution.

If you think they are being unreasonable try to get them to see things from your point of view and explain what you are doing to be reasonable.

Information about how Charnwood deals with complaints about nuisance is contained in our leaflet ***"Charnwood Borough Council and You, Dealing With Nuisance Complaints"***

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