

Noise from “Do It Yourself” Work

What is “DIY” work?

DIY work covers the building, modifying, or repairing of something without the aid of experts or professionals. The scale of work encompassed by DIY can range from changing a fuse in a plug or redecorating a room right up to a complete reordering of the interior of a property involving walls, floors, windows, doors, ceilings, electrics and plumbing. Nor is the scope of DIY work restricted to internal work; extensions are built, gardens landscaped, and conservatories added. It is probably fair to say that the bigger the project the greater the potential disturbance that it will have on neighbours and therefore the more thought that needs to be given before work has begun on ways to control the impact.



What problems can arise from DIY work?

There are a number of areas of dispute that that can arise from DIY work involving obstruction of access, mud on paths/roads, boundary disputes and placement of skips. The only ones that the Council’s Environmental Protection team are legally obliged to investigate are the three most common; noise (including vibration), bonfire smoke from waste disposal and dust emissions.

What does the law say about nuisance caused by DIY work?

There are no UK laws that impose restrictions on the times or days when people can undertake DIY work, use particular equipment or carry out specific DIY jobs. The result is that people are free to carry out DIY work themselves, often at times to fit in with their work hours, which can mean that work is often carried out in the evenings or at weekends or on Bank Holidays. However, this does not mean that a person doing DIY work has the right to do what they want when they want and ignore the disruption their work has on neighbours.

What happens in situations where nuisance problems arise from DIY work?

Despite the absence of any legal guidelines or controls on DIY work the Council often finds itself intervening to negotiate arrangements that allow the necessary work to be carried out in a manner that minimises the intrusion to neighbours from noise, smoke



and dust. We have to accept that many people go to work during the day and need to do DIY jobs in the evenings and at weekends. Sometimes an emergency can necessitate a lot of unexpected noise especially in terms of a major water leak which can involve long term disruption as the property is dried out, re-plastered and reordered. On the other hand neighbours need some rest from continuous noise particularly at the weekend and in the evenings. It is especially important to try and provide peace and quiet in the evenings if young children are involved. We try to balance the need of the householder to carry out the DIY work and the right of neighbours to a reasonable amount of peace and quiet especially at certain sensitive times of the day/night.

What are considered to be reasonable times for DIY work?

In terms of a householder who is doing the work themselves we would usually recommend that the **noisier activities** are restricted to the following working hours;

Mon – Fri - 9.00am to 7.30pm.

Saturdays – 9.00am to 5.00pm

Sunday and Bank Holiday – 10.00am – 2.00pm

Please note these times are not legal limits, but are suggested as a sensible approach. It can be very helpful to talk to your neighbours first.

What happens if it is impossible to find a compromise arrangement?

In extreme cases involving noise, smoke or dust that causes a substantial interference with a resident's use and enjoyment of their property councils can investigate and take legal action to control the nuisance where evidence clearly shows there is a significant problem that needs controlling. Where there is no cooperation from the person undertaking the work to stop the nuisance a council can impose times and working conditions through an abatement notice, which is a legally binding order that must be complied with. An abatement notice does not necessarily mean that DIY work will be stopped outright, as it is usually possible to improve the situation by restricting activities to certain hours instead. Just as the person doing DIY work does not have complete freedom to undertake their work with complete disregard for their neighbours' comfort, the neighbours themselves do not have a right to demand protection from every intrusive noise and other nuisance they experience in and on their property. As obtaining the necessary evidence to take legal action can often be time consuming we will always try to seek an informal solution to the problem wherever possible. Information about how Charnwood deals with complaints about nuisance is contained in our fact sheet "Dealing with Neighbour Nuisance."

What should you do if you are disturbed by nuisance from DIY work?

We do encourage complainants to discuss any problems with their neighbours as they are going to have to continue living close to the source of their complaint whatever the outcome of the Council's involvement. There is no legal requirement for complainants to do this, but in many cases the problem might be resolved quicker or more amicably



by making an informal approach to the source themselves rather than jeopardising relationships through a formal intervention from the Council. However, if you have already spoken with the source with no success or do not feel that this would be worthwhile, or for whatever reason do not wish to approach the source, your complaint can still be investigated by the Council. Further advice on making an approach to your neighbour, either by speaking or sending a letter (there is an example available for you to copy or adapt by clicking on 'Related Documents' at the bottom of the page and opening the 'sample letter to neighbour' to open it), is available on our web pages at - www.charnwood.gov.uk/environment/environmentalprotection.html.

If you do not have access to the internet you can request a copy by contacting the Environmental Protection team on 01509 634636.

Alternatively there is provision in the law for a complainant to take their own action through a magistrates' court, in much the same way as the Council would proceed. A resident may wish to do this if they are dissatisfied with the investigating officer's decision, or if they have particular reasons for not involving the Council in their complaint from the outset. A fact sheet 'Neighbour Nuisance – Taking Your Own Action' giving advice on this is available from the Environmental Protection team at the same web address and contact number.

What should you do if you are thinking about undertaking DIY work?

Notify your neighbour – explain to your neighbour what you are doing, when you will be doing it and how long it will last. Let your neighbour know about any particularly noisy/dusty work that you need to undertake.

Negotiate solutions to problems - Stay Cool! If a neighbour complains to you don't lose your temper, even if they are rude or threatening. Listen to why they are complaining and try to talk through a solution that suits both parties as far as possible.

Keep noisy activities to reasonable hours - think about what type of activity you are doing and what problems it may cause. Take care when using hand tools (hammers and saws etc.), power tools (drills, saws, sanders, etc), plant (hired "professional" tools and plant such as pneumatic hammers, cement mixers, large power saws and planers, compressors, generators, etc.)

Party Walls and Floors - work such as wallpaper stripping or preparation can sound very loud next door, as can work on the floor, such as plumbing, rewiring and sanding.

The Radio! - It seems to be an essential companion for DIY work but please keep the volume down and don't automatically turn it up to try and hear it over some noisy equipment. And please don't turn it up and sing along when a favourite tune comes on!



If you require more information please contact:

Environmental Protection team, Regulatory Services, Charnwood Borough Council, Southfields,
Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 2TX

Office Opening Hours: Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.00pm; Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm

Tel: (01509) 634636 Fax: 01509 262076

E-mail: env.health@charnwood.gov.uk

<http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/environmentalprotection>

To arrange for an explanation of any part of this document in your language or to receive a copy in Braille, on audio tape or large print please call 01509 634567.

This information is available in different formats. To access these please phone (01509) 634560.

এ তথ্যাদি অন্যান্য মাধ্যমে পাওয়া যায়। এসব পেতে হলে দয়া করে (01509) 634560 এ নাম্বারে টেলিফোন করুন।

這資料具不同的格式，請致電 (01509) 634560 索取。

આ માહિતી જુદી જુદી પદ્ધતિઓમાં ઉપલબ્ધ છે. તે મેળવવા માટે કૃપા કરી આ નંબર પર ફોન કરો (01509) 634560.

यह जानकारी अलग-अलग प्रारूपों में मिल सकती है। इनको पाने के लिये कृपया यह नंबर डायल कीजिये (01509) 634560.

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਸਕਲਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਹਾਮਿਲ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ (01509) 634560

