

# Noise in the Territory

## Background

It's a fact of life that we all make noise, whether we are talking to others, playing music, entertaining, working around the house or just going about our daily business.

What is enjoyable to one person may be noise to another. Too much noise can reduce people's quality of life and, in some extreme cases, destroy it entirely. Everyone reacts differently to noise. What can be unbearable for one person may go unnoticed by another.

[The Northern Territory Noise Management Framework Guideline](#)<sup>1</sup> (the guideline) provides advice on:

- neighbourhood noise
- commercial and industrial noise
- construction noise
- entertainment venue noise
- vibration and blasting.

The guideline outlines what you can and can't do when it comes to noise. It also provides advice on how the community can make a complaint about a particular noise problem.

## Defining noise

We define noise as 'unwanted or unpleasant sound'. Noise is perceived differently from one person to the next and is measured on a scale of units called decibels. We assess noise by averaging the quietest and loudest (actual or predicted) measurements while also considering how the human ear perceives it.

## The effects of noise

Noise can have a range of effects on health and wellbeing. Some effects of noise include:

- hearing loss
- anxiety
- stress
- high blood pressure
- sleep deprivation
- distraction
- lost productivity
- general reduction in the quality of life.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ntepa.nt.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/566356/noise\\_management\\_framework\\_guideline.pdf](https://ntepa.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/566356/noise_management_framework_guideline.pdf)

## Regulating noise pollution

The Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA) plays a role in protecting the community from noise, by administering the Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998 (WMPC Act).

The Act says it's an offence if noise has caused or is causing environmental harm or environmental nuisance. The WMPC Act also establishes a general environmental duty. This duty requires all persons undertaking activities to take all measures that are reasonable and practicable to prevent environmental harm and/or environmental nuisance.

The NT EPA works with various partners and agencies to regulate the impacts of noise. This includes local councils, the Northern Territory Police, Northern Territory Liquor Commission and Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics.

Noise pollution is policed by a number of different authorities and levels of government. Table 2.1 of the guideline lists the different regulatory agencies responsible for the different types of noise sources.

A series of recommended assigned noise levels are set out in the guideline to ensure that noise from the variety of sources are kept to acceptable levels.

## Recommended assigned noise levels

The NT EPA will use the recommended assigned noise levels presented in section 3 of the guideline in determining if:

- a particular noise source has caused or is causing environmental harm and/or environmental nuisance
- general environmental duty has been complied with.

Unless otherwise specified, an activity that emits noise from a premise will be deemed to cause environmental harm/nuisance, if that noise exceeds the guideline's recommended assigned noise levels for that activity.

## Further information

### Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority

Website: <https://ntepa.nt.gov.au/your-environment/noise>

Email: [pollution@nt.gov.au](mailto:pollution@nt.gov.au)

Pollution hotline: 1800 064 567

General queries: 08 8924 4218 and ask for the noise regulation section.