

# Guidelines for the Control of Stereo Noise and Parties

## Noise - there is a limit, even during the day!

In Western Australia, stereo noise is controlled by the *Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997*. These regulations are enforced by Police Officers and City of Kwinana Authorised Noise Officers.

The regulations set decibel levels for different times of the day and week that should not be exceeded at the property boundary. The levels vary during the day to reflect the changes in sensitivity to noise in residential areas.

Although the levels are least restrictive during the day on weekdays, please consider neighbours that may be working from home, have young children who need to nap or those that work night shift, so require sleep during the day. The levels are lower in the evenings, 7pm to 10pm, and on weekends and public holidays. Between the hours of 10pm and 7am the following morning the levels are very low to allow undisturbed sleep.

## How do I know if the volume of my stereo meets the permitted levels?

The best way to judge if your stereo is too loud is to go outside and listen for it at the dividing fence. If the lyrics or beat can be clearly heard at the property boundary then it will not meet the permitted levels. It will also be entering your neighbours' homes and causing a disturbance to them.

*Remember, if you live in a villa complex, flat, townhouse or on a cottage block you are at higher risk of disturbing your neighbours. In these situations stereos must be kept at a much quieter volume to meet the permitted levels at the adjacent house or dividing wall.*

## Subwoofers

Subwoofers or high bass components of stereos are often what cause the greatest disturbance to your neighbours due to the repetition of the beat. The bass cannot be blocked by closing windows or doors and can travel a longer distance often disturbing people several houses away. Noises that contain an intrusive bass level actually have to meet more stringent permitted decibel levels. The bass component of stereos must be kept to a minimum after 7pm, or subwoofers turned off.

## What about special occasions?

Everyone loves a good party and it is part of our culture to celebrate special occasions with friends and family. So whether you are planning an engagement party, house warming, or a 21<sup>st</sup> birthday please follow the guidelines below to maintain good relations with your neighbours.

- Let your neighbours know in advance that you are having a party, provide them with your number and invite them to call if they find the noise too loud.

- Turn the music down at 10pm and off at midnight (or down to a level that is not audible at the boundary). Monitor the noise at the boundary during the party and try to locate amplified music indoors rather than having it outside.
- Ask everyone to move inside the house after midnight to prevent loud voices from disturbing neighbours.
- Leave the clean up until the following morning so the sound of clanging bottles doesn't disturb neighbours.
- Ask your guests to leave quietly and say your goodbyes inside.

### **Defining unreasonable noise**

- When establishing unreasonable noise, an authorised person can use the objective or subjective assessment approach or both simultaneously. An objective assessment may include the use of a sound level meter to undertake measurements to compare against the permitted decibel levels defined in the regulations, whereas the application of a subjective assessment is performed in accordance to the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*.
- The subjective assessment will include considerations on the nature and duration of the noise emissions, the frequency of similar noise emissions from the same source (or source under the control of the same person or persons) and the time of day at which the noise is emitted, the noise unreasonably interferes with the health, welfare, convenience, comfort or amenity of any person.

### **What are the fines if I am found to be creating unreasonable noise?**

Fines starting at \$250 can be issued if complaints are received about regular noise emissions. Subsequent offences can be subject to \$500 fines, or you can be at risk of having the stereo and speakers seized.

For further information contact:

City of Kwinana Environmental Health Services  
 Corner of Gilmore Avenue and Sulphur Road  
 KWINANA WA 6167

or

PO Box 21  
 KWINANA WA 6966  
 Phone: 08 9439 0200  
 Email: [info@kwinana.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@kwinana.wa.gov.au)

**For after hours complaints, please contact City Assist on 9439 0400.**

*Disclaimer: This document is a guide only. For full details refer to the Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997 at [www.slp.wa.gov.au](http://www.slp.wa.gov.au).*

**NOTE: Local Government Officers cannot attend situations if there is antisocial behaviour and/or dangerous driving. These cases must be referred to the Police on 131 444.**