

22.0 Noise

22.1 Introduction

Noise is a normal part of most activities and a necessary part of day to day life. Provision for appropriate activities through the Plan needs to include provision for appropriate or acceptable noise associated with those activities. At the same time, unreasonable, excessive or unnecessary noise should be controlled. Whether noise should be subject to control will depend in many cases on the circumstances. For example, lower noise levels are properly associated with residential amenities however this needs to be balanced in particular circumstances with associated or nearby non-residential activities. Noise can affect people physically, psychologically and socially. Absence of adverse noise effects positively contributes to amenity values and is consequently an indication of sustainable resource management.

Generally, complaints occur when noise is at sufficient levels to create adverse effects. The desirable upper limit for night time noise exposure is determined by criteria to protect from either disturbance to the onset of sleep or awakening thresholds for the average person. However, adverse effects of noise are subjective and influenced by:

- Time, frequency and duration of noise;
- Individual sensitisation to a particular noise; and
- Vibration.

Most frequent noise related complaints arise from:

- Music - band practice, parties;
- Industrial operations - generators, processing equipment and machinery;
- Transportation - vehicle movement, loading and unloading vehicles;
- Rural activities - crop sowing, tending and harvesting machinery and equipment, animals, bird scaring devices, wind machines;
- Hobbies/Home occupations - power tools, machinery; and
- Barking dogs.

22.2 Issue

The need to provide for sound associated with appropriate activities whilst addressing any adverse effects of noise, including those effects on environmental and amenity values.

These adverse effects of noise could include:

- Sleep disturbance;
- Stress;
- Disturbance and stress related health problems;
- Disruption of speech and hearing;
- Interference with concentration;

- Disturbance with relaxation; and
- Reduction of amenity values.

22.3 Objectives and Policies

Objective 1	Protection of individual and community health, environmental and amenity values from disturbance, disruption or interference by noise.
Policy 1.1	Avoid, remedy or mitigate community disturbance, disruption or interference by noise within coastal, rural and urban areas.
Policy 1.2	Include techniques to avoid the emission of excessive or unreasonable noises within the design of any proposal for the development or use of resources.
Policy 1.3	Accommodate inherently noisy activities and processes which are ancillary to normal activities within industrial and rural areas.
Policy 1.4	Avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of noise caused by vehicle movement by implementing a roading hierarchy.
Policy 1.5	Avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of noise caused by the use of audible bird-scanning devices on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public health and safety; and • Amenity values.

Residential areas have noise levels that create an amenity value conducive to rest, relaxation and sleep.

Commercial and industrial areas have amenity values which are noisier than residential areas but still require limitations on excessive or unreasonable noise. The noise from some processes in industrial areas cannot be avoided.

Transport corridors are known and expected to be subject to higher noise levels than some other areas. The segregation of noise sensitive activities from such corridors and appropriate acoustic treatment of buildings or places where such activities occur are practicable ways of avoiding, remedying or mitigating noise effects.

Notwithstanding existing use practices, the noise generated from these activities is still subject to the obligations imposed under Section 16 of the Act, which requires occupiers of land to adopt the best practicable option to ensure that the emission of noise from land does not exceed a reasonable level.

Rural areas are often perceived to be quiet, tranquil places - but this is not always true. Many rural activities involve noisy mobile equipment and machinery with some special audible characteristics of that noise (eg; birdscaring). People living in rural areas have to accept, as part of their lifestyle, reasonable noise that is generated by legitimate rural activities, including that generated by animals.

Although there is a duty under Section 17 of the Act to avoid, remedy or mitigate any adverse effects, the Council recognises that the principle rural activities inherently involve effects that may not meet the expectations of an urban environment. These urban activities at the rural/urban interface must expect to compromise their urban

amenity expectations where there are justifiable and reasonable effects as a result of primary production activities in the rural environment.

Rural activities cannot operate in such a manner that the amenity values of rural areas are reduced. Consequently, rural activities will be required to avoid emission of unreasonable noise and mitigate the effects of noise adjacent to other areas. New Zealand NZS 6082:1991 Assessment of Environmental Sound provides a reasonable basis for assessment of most environmental noise.

22.4 Methods of Implementation

Rules	Set noise performance standards for different areas to reflect the existing amenity values.
Guidelines	<p>Development of guidelines for the operation of inherently noisy rural equipment and machinery (e.g. wind machines, birdscarers). These will address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of activity; • Operation of equipment and machinery; • Operating techniques and hours of operation; • Noise levels relative to notional boundaries; • Design and form of any structures; and • Means to mitigate emission of excessive noise. The Council will provide information on appropriate land use practices and encourage use of voluntary guidelines and best practices.
Enforcement	The Council will use the noise abatement provisions of the Act where emission of noise is excessive or unreasonable.
Monitoring	Monitoring of noise to establish annual and seasonal profiles and to ensure compliance with rules and consent conditions.
Research	Support research into looking at options other than the use of audible bird-scaring devices for controlling bird damage to crops.
Consultation	The Council will continue to consult with landowners and industry groups regarding the use of audible bird-scaring devices.

Rules define noise performance standards considered excessive or unreasonable relative to the amenity values in residential, commercial, industrial and rural areas. Where emission of noise exceeds these standards the Council will enforce the standards to protect the amenity values.

Guidelines allow the Council to provide advice to resource users on ways to avoid or mitigate the emission of excessive or unreasonable noise. Specific guidelines relating to the operation of wind machines and birdscarers will be produced.

22.5 Anticipated Environmental Results

Implementation of the policies and methods for management of noise will result in:

- Enhancement of individual and community health, and amenity values; and
- Improved conditions within which the community can provide for its social, economic and cultural wellbeing.