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EPA Victoria releases industry guidance on construction noise

09 Jun, 2023



Noise from construction and demolition on building sites can harm the health and wellbeing of people living or working nearby – especially when it interrupts their sleep.

That's why EPA Victoria has just published a [handy guideline](#) to help the construction industry to comply with noise laws, and it's all about being reasonable.

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EPA CEO Lee Miezi says all businesses must take reasonable measures to prevent pollution, including noise.

"Noise limits apply to all industrial sites in Victoria. If noise from your industrial premises exceeds those limits, it will always be considered unreasonable," Mr Miezi said.

Finding out whether you're pushing the limits is straightforward; there are qualified contractors who can assess noise levels at and around your site and advise if you need to install additional controls to keep it within reasonable limits.

"However, eliminating unreasonable noise is also about common sense. Think about the noise, does it happen early or late at night? What's the volume and intensity? These are some of the factors that help decide if noise is unreasonable," he said.

"Assessing the noise you make can help you understand the risk of harm it poses. If noise is unreasonable, it is probably creating a risk of harm and needs to be controlled."

EPA can use fines and prosecutions to hold polluters to account where necessary, but many noise problems are resolved with advice and cooperation.

EPA's Applied Noise Framework Guidance Series is designed to help businesses understand their responsibilities with explanations on which parts of the laws are more relevant to different business sectors and practical examples of businesses achieving compliance to protect the community and environment.

For the guidelines and other guidance on complying with the law, EPA's website has plenty of help for business to reduce risk from pollution and waste:

[Unreasonable noise guidelines](#) explains the concept of unreasonable noise, what makes noise unreasonable and how to assess compliance, and provides examples to show how to comply.

[Commercial, industrial and trade noise guidelines](#) explains the noise framework and limits that apply to factories, stores and shops, depots and other sites. It includes links to industry-specific advice, for agriculture, construction, manufacturing, mining/quarrying, retail, waste/recycling and wind farms.

[Assessing and controlling risk: a guide for business](#) explores how a business can assess and control risks under the GED and minimise risk of harm before it occurs. This includes assessing risk from noise.

There are practical guides to noise prevention methods such as site planning, acoustic louvres, barriers, mufflers, pipe lagging and vibration isolation epa.vic.gov.au/for-business/find-a-topic/noise/advice-for-businesses/controls

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And there's a guide to the General Environmental Duty (GED); the part of the Environment Protection Act 2017 that requires Victorians to understand and minimise their risks of harm to human health and the environment from pollution and waste: epa.vic.gov.au/about-epa/laws/laws-and-your-business/general-environmental-duty-for-businesses

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