

BE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR!

NOISE FROM STEREOS, RADIOS AND TELEVISION

Domestic entertainment can be very noisy. It is the biggest cause of complaint between neighbours. This leaflet gives some simple precautions you can take in your home to avoid causing nuisance.

Noise from televisions, radios and (especially) stereo systems is a growing problem. Amplifiers in domestic sound systems are now so powerful that they can cause a severe problem to immediate neighbours and can affect a whole neighbourhood. Technology and fashion keep changing. Karaoke, home cinema systems and computer games all cause increasing amounts of noise and give rise to complaints. Of course, these problems are much worse late at night.

The Royal Borough accept that people have a right to enjoy their homes, and their choice of music. The law does NOT allow the Royal Borough to be 'party poopers', and we do not want everyone to be totally quiet.

However, noisy neighbours do NOT have a right to destroy other people's enjoyment of their homes, causing distress, loss of sleep or even illness. We all need to be considerate.

Generally, it is true to say that it does not matter what type of music it is – loud 'heavy metal' causes exactly the same distress and loss of sleep as does loud classical music. However, more recent styles of music have a much heavier bass beat than previously, and these bass frequencies penetrate buildings very easily. Modern sound systems are also designed to give you more bass and some deliberately have a 'bass boost' control. A thudding bass beat at 1am in the morning is certainly a serious nuisance and an offence under the Environmental Protection Act, 1990.

Almost all of these problems could be avoided if care was taken about the hours of use, and the loudness of use.

The advice over-leaf includes some tips on how to avoid causing problems.

How to Avoid Problems with Domestic Sound Systems

- **Loudspeakers** – These should not be fixed to or even close to the wall (or floor) between you and your neighbours.
- **Vibration** – Try to isolate the speakers from the floor or the wall between you and your neighbours. This will reduce the noise and vibration reaching next door. Put them on a decent speaker stand or put carpet or underlay under them to deaden the sound.
- **Volume** – Keep the volume as low as possible. As it gets later into the evening, turn it down.
- **Bass** – Use the bass controls and do not have too much bass beat.
- **Hours of Use** – We suggest that people need to rest from noise at the weekend and in the evenings. Although we cannot give any hard and fast rules, you should be especially considerate about the volume of noise after about 11pm at night.
- **Headphones** – (or an earpiece) can be used with almost all domestic entertainment equipment. You can even get cordless headphones which allow you to enjoy your music and still move around. Be careful not to have the volume up too loud, or you could cause long-term damage to your hearing.

If you have Professional Equipment – You must be more considerate. If a normal domestic stereo system can cause an illegal noise nuisance, then think what the larger professional systems can do!

Loss of Hearing – Sometimes, complaints about noise from very loud televisions are caused because people are losing their hearing. People simply don't notice that they are slowly becoming rather deaf. As a result, over the years they slowly turn up the volume on their televisions so they can hear them. Eventually, they've got it so loud that visiting relatives complain that it is painful! A lot can be done in these circumstances, and perhaps the best option is a special adaptor fitted to the television so that it 'talks' directly to a hearing aid. The person with loss of hearing can now hear perfectly, and the rest of the family can turn down the volume.

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