

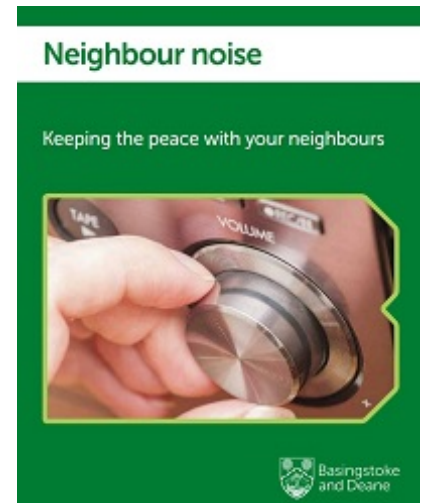


# Keeping the peace with your neighbours

Every day household activity creates noise. However, disputes can occur when people are inconsiderate in the noise they create. It is important to acknowledge the noise your household makes and think about the impact it might have on your neighbours. With this in mind, we have put together some top tips on how you can reduce noise.

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## Reducing noise

Get to know your neighbours and their lifestyle, for example, are they retired? Do they have young children? Once you have done this, you should understand the effect noise could have on them. If you suspect you have been noisy, go and speak to your neighbours to see if there have been any problems. Depending on the feedback you get, you may want to avoid the same happening again.

If you are approached by a neighbour and asked to keep your noise down react positively. Respect their right to peace and quiet in their home.

## Top tips

- ✓ Don't slam doors, consider fitting soft-closing mechanisms to doors to minimise noise.
- ✓ Remember that noise and vibration can transmit easily through walls and floors.
- ✓ Carpets and heavy curtains help to absorb sound.

- ✓ Keep musical instrument practices short and at reasonable times. Consider speaking to your neighbours and agree the times you will be practising.
- ✓ Make your children aware that their noise can disturb others.
- ✓ Don't sound car horns unnecessarily, slam car doors or rev engines, especially at night.
- ✓ Be aware of the law, and that you have responsibilities as well as rights.

## Stereos, TVs and radios

These are the most frequent causes for complaint. What is considered entertainment for one person can be torture for someone else. Avoid playing music so loud that it could disturb your neighbours and keep the bass level down.

Try to position any speakers away from party walls, floors and ceilings. Standing them on an insulating material can also reduce the transmission of sound. Loud music in the garden is more likely to cause a problem to your neighbours, try and keep it at or below conversation level or wear headphones.

## Parties

Avoid regular loud, late-night parties. Homes aren't the place to replicate a night club environment. If you are having a party, consider inviting the neighbours or at least discuss your plans with them and be prepared to compromise if there is some conflict. Let them know when it is likely to finish, at a reasonable time, and keep to that time.

When the party is underway try and keep the windows and doors closed. If someone complains, be prepared to apologise and turn the music down.

## Banging doors and stamping feet

Sound travels through walls, so be aware of what is next door. Avoid slamming doors and running up or down stairs especially if you live in a flat or terraced house.

When considering options for flooring think about your neighbours. [If you are considering laminate or wood flooring then we have some further information in the noise associated with wood and laminate flooring. \(/wood-and-laminated-flooring\)](#). Don't cut corners on insulation, and make sure there is adequate underlay.

## Dogs barking

Complaints about dog barking often happen because dogs are left at home alone for long periods of time. [There are however, practical steps dog owners can take to minimise dog barking and prevent noise nuisance. \(/barking-dogs\)](#)

## Household appliances

This is particularly relevant if you live in a flat or terraced house. Try to avoid using domestic appliances late at night. Domestic appliances such as washing machines, dishwashers and vacuum cleaners can be very loud. Although their use is part and parcel of everyday life, where you place them and when you use them can make all the difference.

Ensure, where possible, noisy appliances are away from party walls. Washing machines should be balanced to reduce vibration. Placing them on an absorptive surface could help reduce noise further.

Be considerate and only use noisy appliances during the normal waking hours.

## **DIY activity**

We all need to carry out DIY from time to time to maintain and improve our homes. However, drilling, hammering and sawing are noisy and their repetitiveness can be as much of a nuisance as the volume.

Talk to your neighbours if you have to do works that will be noisy and likely to take some time. Most people will be understanding and accommodating, but you should be prepared to compromise if there are times that your neighbour asks you to avoid for a genuine reason.

Warn your neighbours before you start a noisy job and try to carry out the work at a time that will be least disturbing to them. Try not to start work too late on a week night and try not to start too early on the weekend. If you have a lot to do and there is a compromise to be made, try and agree times with your neighbour(s) for when noisy DIY work can be done.

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