

Noise

Air-conditioners



Noise from air conditioners can disturb neighbours by disrupting their sleep and interfering with normal daily activities (listening to the TV and talking on the telephone). If loud enough, it can impact on people's health. This fact sheet includes information that may assist residents to reduce noise emissions and meet legal requirements.

Be a good neighbour

Before installing your air conditioner, take the time to talk to your neighbour and discuss any noise concerns. Remember that by contacting your neighbour first, you may prevent problems arising

in the future.

The Law

Nuisance noise is regulated by the "Environmental Protection Act 1994" which provides restrictions on times air-conditioning noise can be made:

- 7am-10pm – no more than 5dB (A) above background level
- 10pm-7am – No more than 3dB (A) above the background level

Ways to reduce noise

A range of measures can be used to reduce the noise impact of air conditioners. These include:

Planning

A little prior planning and forethought about an air-conditioner's characteristics may reduce the likelihood of receiving a complaint once it is in use.

When looking at an air-conditioner, consider whether it is an appropriate size for the room(s) you intend to cool.

Ensure the unit is installed correctly so as to reduce the impact vibrations may have on the overall noise output.

If you are building a new home or renovating, think about insulation to reduce the heat load on the air-conditioner.

This may mean you can choose a smaller capacity air-conditioner, which may be quieter. Discuss this option with the manufacturer or installer.

Location

Finding the right position for your air-conditioner is one of the most important decisions. Be aware that air-conditioners that meet the Australian Standards may still cause a nuisance if not located in a suitable position.

Locate your air-conditioner away from your neighbours' house, especially sensitive areas (i.e. bedrooms, lounge rooms and entertainment areas).

Try placing the air conditioner on the rear wall facing the backyard or on a wall on that faces the street. Avoid placing the unit



near reflective surfaces (e.g. multiple walls, corners) and use existing features to hide the air-conditioner from view, as this will often reduce its noise impact.

Limit hours of use

Talk to your neighbours to find out if there are particular times when the air conditioner disturbs



them. Most people are affected late at night, and early in the morning when trying to sleep. Remember that some people may undertake shift work.

Acoustic Barriers/Enclosures

An acoustic barrier, such as a solid fence between properties or a specially designed enclosure may assist in reducing the amount of noise being emitted from a property. Acoustic enclosures must be designed so as to provide adequate ventilation. Discuss this option with the manufacturer or installer.

Maintenance

A lack of maintenance can cause higher noise levels and reduce the effectiveness of

air conditioners. Contact the manufacturer or installer for advice.

Also keep in mind that over time your unit will deteriorate in performance and may need to be replaced with a quieter model.

Modifications

Sometimes modifications can be made to the unit to reduce noise.

Modifications should be discussed with the manufacturer to maintain warranty on the unit.

For details please contact Mackay Regional Council.

Phone 1300 MACKAY (1300 622 529) or visit www.mackay.qld.gov.au