Fire Safety Messages

All licensees must be aware that it is a legal requirement under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 for licensed premises to have a written fire risk assessment.

If you’re holding an event you need to be aware of the maximum occupancy of the premises to prevent overcrowding.

This is the Licensee’s responsibility.
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More advice
If you want more advice, then just get in touch:-

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For advice on Fire Safety matters
Tel No: 01785 898516
E-mail: sstaffs.firesafety @staffordshirefire.gov.uk
**Introduction**

Pubs and clubs are a big part of our communities and we want to support them as much as we can.

However, some of the activities that take place at licensed premises can cause excessive noise. This leaflet explains some of the problems that can occur, the practical steps that can be taken to minimise and prevent unreasonable disturbance, and the law relating to noise from licensed premises.

**What do people complain about?**

- Amplified TV/music
- Live music
- Customers using the outside areas, including
  - children screaming and shouting
  - cars/pedestrians leaving late at night
  - emptying of bottles into skips
  - noise from fans and compressors
  - delivery noise
- Fireworks

**Speak with local residents**

Try to build and maintain a good working relationship with local people and be proactive about controlling noise from the premises. This will help promote goodwill and help ensure that complaints are not made to us and reduce the likelihood of objections to the licence in the future.

Always respond straight away to any complaints you receive. The longer you take, the less likely it is that you will sort it out without the complainant contacting us.

**Noise checks**

You can help prevent problems by making regular checks of the level of noise near neighbouring properties when you have an event. If you do this keep a record for future reference.
The Law

The Licensing Act 2003
Licensed premises are required to prevent public nuisance and failure to do this could see the licence taken away.

Environmental Protection Act 1990
We investigate complaints of noise nuisance and have an obligation to take legal action if a nuisance takes place. If a notice is served on a licensed premises it is also likely that a review of the licence will take place.

Noise Act 1996
If licensed premises make excessive noise at night, i.e. between 11pm and 7am the next morning, they could face a fine or even prosecution.

Speak with your local taxi companies and ask their drivers not to sound their horns when waiting to collect customers. Drivers should come to the door of your premises to collect their passengers. Your staff can call cabs for customers, or you might provide a dedicated freephone line. Always ask customers to wait inside the premises for their taxi. These measures can help reduce nuisance from taxi touts.

Smoking Shelters
Since the smoking ban there have been more incidents of noise problems from customers who use designated smoking areas. These should be sited as far away from neighbouring properties as possible. Please check with our planning team whether you need planning permission. Customers should be discouraged from standing in doorways, particularly where these open out onto the pavement or are near houses.

It is recommended that you provide

- acoustic lobbies or automatically closing doors to stop noise escaping from the premises as people go outside to smoke
- signs telling people to respect neighbours when they go outside
- restrict access to outside areas late in the evening and at night.
- brief door supervisors on how to monitor and control clients immediately outside the premises
- Don’t use speakers to provide music in the smoking areas.
Fireworks

We may stop or restrict the use of fireworks at licensed premises because of the widespread nuisance it can cause to the public.

The use of fireworks is controlled by the Fireworks Regulations 2004. These regulations prevent the use of fireworks between 23:00 and 07:00, with extensions on certain occasions including until 01:00 on New Years Eve and midnight on 5 November. These regulations are enforced by the Police.

Customers

It’s your duty to make sure that customers aren’t too noisy, both inside and outside your premises.

Remember, the use of lobbied doorways can help control noise, so don’t allow customers to prop them open.

Try playing relaxing music at a lower volume towards closing time. It will encourage customers to leave in a less rowdy manner.

Putting up notices at the exits, asking customers to be quiet, will also help to reduce noise. Door supervisors can also help to manage the coming and going of customers. In some cases specially trained staff may also be needed to patrol the surrounding area to help control noise from customers.

The Noise Reduction Toolkit

There are various steps you can take to ensure that noise from your premises doesn’t cause a problem to other people:

Building Structure, Design and Layout

- Windows, doors and vents will allow the noise to escape easily. Windows should preferably be non-opening and acoustically protected by seals. You might need to install acoustic secondary glazing. If windows can be opened they must be kept closed during events, and this includes windows serving adjacent rooms. Investing in air conditioning or fans could be a good idea during warmer weather.

- Acoustic lobbies to doors provide good noise control. Just make sure that if it is a fire exit route it is still capable of easy and rapid opening in the direction of exit, if you need to evacuate, and that the appropriate fire protection is provided after acoustic treatment. Ensure that doors are not opened unnecessarily during events.

- Ventilation grilles allow noise to escape unless they’re acoustically treated e.g. with fitted acoustic baffles or attenuators.

- Most walls and roofs will help stop noise transmission but, where there are very high noise levels, or buildings are made of lightweight materials, noise can still break out. Extra sound insulation could be needed before your premises can be used without causing noise problems.
• Conservatories or structures with large areas of glazing or lightweight roofs offer very little sound insulation and should not be used for regulated entertainment if located near to residential properties. An internal lobby between any conservatory, etc and those parts of the premises where high levels of music are played will help cut out the noise.

• Noise from marquees is likely to cause particular problems when it is near to residential property. Give careful consideration to the type of entertainment you hold in marquees because they will not be suitable when using high levels of amplified music.

• If your licensed premises is physically joined to someone’s house by a party wall, then noise travelling through the structure can be very difficult to control. In this type of situation it may simply not be appropriate to have noisy entertainment.

Before carrying out any internal or external alterations to the building, make sure you speak to our Planning and Building Control teams to find out whether permission is required.

Before installing equipment on the building, make sure you speak to our Planning and Building Control teams to find out whether permission is needed.

Delivery of Goods, Collection of Waste, Cleaning and Bottling Out

As a general rule, noisy activities such as deliveries, collection of waste and cleaning should not be carried out in the late evening, over night or early in the morning. Refuse and empty bottle/barrel storage areas should be positioned away from residential properties and preferably screened or enclosed.

Working methods that minimise noise, such as the use of padded mats where beer barrels are dropped, careful handling of empty bottles and crates, and careful manoeuvring of empty beer barrels and waste should always be used. Deliveries and collections scheduled during the day are unlikely to cause noise problems.
Electronic Noise Limiters

Electronic noise limiters can be useful in controlling amplified noise levels. Basically there are two types of entertainment noise limiter:

1. **Microphone controlled**

   These units continually monitor the Music Noise Levels (MNLs) via a microphone and either trigger a warning light or cut the power supply to the sound systems if pre-set threshold MNLs are exceeded. They have the advantage of working on any sound system, provided it is connected to the electrical circuit under the control of the limiter.

2. **Electronic in circuit devices**

   These are incorporated into the sound system and operate by monitoring the electrical power output of the amplifiers. If the noise becomes too loud, the device automatically reduces the noise level to below the threshold limit.

   **Benefits:**
   - Difficult to bypass
   - Virtually impossible to detect when noise reduction is being applied; so customers, DJs etc will rarely even know they’re there.

   **Drawbacks:**
   - A permanently installed in-house sound system is needed for best results.

Machinery and Equipment

Noise from machinery and equipment, such as chiller units and ventilation plant can cause significant problems, particularly if they operate at night. When choosing or installing these, always select which is least noisy.

When installing equipment, position it as far away as possible from residential premises. Regular maintenance and repair can make sure that the noise is kept to a minimum.

Where it is not possible to re-locate equipment, air-borne noise can be reduced by using silencers, acoustic screens or enclosures. Machinery should also be mounted on anti-vibration mounts. The equipment should be switched off when not in use, particularly at night. Operation times can be controlled by automatic timers.

5. Speakers should point away from the most noise sensitive premises and position stages as far away from these premises as possible.

6. Existing buildings, other barriers and natural features can provide good screening.

7. If these aren’t available then you need to get an alternative screen.

There may be some locations where these guidelines can not be followed, because of the proximity and position of residential property. Consider carefully whether an event should be organised. It is probably inappropriate to hold outdoor events in those circumstances.
• MNLs can increase if more sensitive loudspeakers are substituted for those used when the pre-set amplifier power out threshold was fixed

Other measures to consider, include:
• Review the type of music being played
• Reduce the bass content of the music
• Review the location, direction and number of speakers
• Tell performers beforehand about any noise problems, the controls being used and then monitor what they are doing
• Relocate and/or isolate speakers which are adjacent to wall or ceiling mounted extractors
• Mount speakers on rubber or other similar material. It will help reduce the transmission into the main building structure.

Outdoor Areas
These are more likely to cause problems in the summer months especially if they’re close to nearby houses.

You can screen the noise behind buildings or by the erection of walls or close-boarded fences to reduce disturbance to neighbours. Make sure you monitor and control your outdoor areas. You may need to restrict or stop public access to a beer garden, terrace, barbecue or children’s play area late in the evening and at night, to control noise problems.

Amplified Music Outdoors
Before organising outdoor events consider the potential impact on your neighbours. You need to ensure that a balance is struck between the enjoyment of people attending the event and disturbance caused to local residents.

Bear in mind the following if you have neighbours that may be affected: -

1. Events should only take place very occasionally; it’s more likely that residents will tolerate an occasional event, but they would complain if it happens regularly.
2. Limit the duration; don’t expect people to tolerate more than a few hours of loud music.
3. When you advertise the event locally, provide a telephone number so that people can contact you if there is a problem.
4. Make sure people know when it will start and finish, and stick to the times.