

Refrigeration equipment

Noise from refrigeration equipment can disturb neighbours, disrupt sleep and interfere with normal daily activities. If loud enough, it can affect health. This fact sheet can help you reduce noise and meet legal requirements.

Be a good neighbour

Talk to neighbours. Find out what concerns they may have and ask for suggestions to solve any problems. Solutions can often be found that satisfy everyone.

The law

Queensland's *Environmental Protection Act 1994* includes noise limits for refrigeration equipment and Council is legally required to enforce these limits. If issues between neighbours cannot be resolved and further complaints are made, Council will investigate. If refrigeration equipment exceeds noise limits, Council may issue a fine to the value of 15 penalty units (individual) or 75 penalty units (corporation). Refer to the Local Government Toolbox website www.lgtoolbox.qld.gov.au for more information about penalty units.

Allowable noise limits

If noise from refrigeration equipment exceeds the following levels, when measured at a neighbour's premises, the owner or operator may be issued with an on-the-spot fine:

- Between 10pm and 7am where the noise is more than 3 decibels above the background noise level
- Between 7am and 10pm where the noise is more than 5 decibels above the background noise level.

The background noise level is that measured in the absence of the problem noise.

Ways to reduce noise

A range of measures can be used to reduce noise impacts. These include:

Select quieter equipment

The noise level of refrigeration equipment can vary significantly depending on the type and size of the unit. Units operating on electricity or with an electric option are quieter than engine-driven units. Older equipment can be particularly noisy.

Choose location carefully

Locate equipment as far as possible from neighbours and from sensitive areas, such as bedroom windows and offices. Avoid noise-reflective surfaces, such as alcoves and walls. For truck-mounted units, consider parking at a depot or away from sensitive areas.

Regular maintenance

Lack of maintenance can cause higher noise levels and reduce the effectiveness of refrigeration equipment. Contact the manufacturer or installer for advice.

Install fences or barriers

A solid fence without gaps can help reduce noise levels.

Consider an acoustic enclosure

For fixed units, using an enclosure, such as a ventilated wooden box with absorbent lining. Contact the manufacturer or installer for advice.

Modifications to the fan or compressor unit

Sometimes modifications can be made to the unit to reduce noise. Discuss this option with the manufacturer or installer.

For more information on this topic, contact your local Council.

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