

Code of Practice for Small Scale Building Sites

1 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this code of practice is to ensure that disturbance by reason of noise, vibration, dust, smoke etc arising from small scale building works is kept to an acceptable level without the imposition of unnecessary or unduly onerous restrictions on contractors. Its primary objective is to minimise nuisance and it should be noted that health and safety issues are beyond the scope of this document.

2 General

2.1 Compliance with BS 5228 'Noise Control on Construction and Open Sites' is expected as a minimum standard. In all instances where alternative working methods exist the minimisation of noise and vibration shall be a prime consideration in the choice of technique and equipment used.

2.2 The contractor will be held responsible for ensuring that all plant and equipment, including any which may be on hire, is well maintained, properly silenced and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, as required by the above British Standard.

2.3 In all cases both contractors and clients are advised to familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions of this Code of Practice and to liaise as necessary with Council's Pollution Control Section.

3 Measures to Minimise Disturbance by noise

- Scheduling certain works to more acceptable times of day, for example, if you are aware that neighbouring residents are out at particular times the noisiest activities can be scheduled to coincide with their periods of absence.
- Use of the most environmentally acceptable plant and equipment which is properly maintained and silenced.
- Use of the least intrusive method of work.
- Proper instruction and supervision of staff (shouting and the use of loud radios often causes complaints).
- Acoustic screening.
- Work on party walls can often be particularly disturbing and neighbouring residents should be consulted about the best times to carry out the work.
- Deliveries to the site and removal of material from the site should only take place during normal working hours.

4. Working Outside Normal Working Hours

4.1 As a general rule, where residential occupiers are likely to be affected, it is expected that works of demolition and construction shall be carried out during normal working hours, i.e. 08.00 to 18.00 hours Monday to Friday, and 09.00 to 14.00 hours on Saturdays, with no noisy working audible at the site boundary being permitted on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

4.2 Where it is necessary for work to be carried out outside normal working hours contractors will be required to demonstrate and justify the need to do so in advance.

Full details of the proposed works shall be submitted to the Environmental Protection Team in writing for approval at least ten working days prior to commencement.

These details shall include:

- Details of residential/business premises likely to be affected.
- Proposed hours and date/s of work.
- Reasons why the works must be carried out outside normal working hours, including documentary evidence e.g. instruction from police or highway authority.
- Method of work to be used.
- Machinery and plant to be used.

4.3 Where residential occupiers are likely to suffer disturbance from works outside normal working hours the following additional information will need to be provided at least ten working days prior to commencement:

- Details of properties likely to be affected.
- Details of contacts/discussions with occupiers likely to be affected.
- Proposed noise and vibration attenuation measures and/or other measures taken to reduce the impact on local residents.

Work outside of normal hours will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances

5. Dust Control Measures

5.1 In assessing the need for dust control measures regard shall be paid to:

- The nature of the works.
- Proximity of dust sensitive properties.
- Effects on the general public and road users.

5.2 Where necessary methods of dust prevention and suppression should be agreed with the Environmental Protection Team in advance of works starting on site.

5.3 A mains water supply should be available on site from the commencement of works.

5.4 The choice of plant and equipment and the method of work should reflect the necessity to employ best practicable means in the control of dust. Generally, where alternative methods exist, intrinsically dusty operations such as dry sweeping or dry sandblasting are not acceptable.

5.5 Where adequate dust control cannot be achieved by the choice of appropriate plant, equipment and work method the most common means of dust suppression involve the use of water and/or containment by screening and enclosure.

5.6 Water suppression of dust may be employed to good effect for operations such as the cutting or sandblasting of stone or concrete as well as in more general applications where dampening can prevent excessive wind whipping of dust from stockpiles and operational areas of the site, or from demolition.

5.7 Where dust is likely to be a persistent problem water spray systems should be available from the commencement of works. The use of such systems can be particularly effective in operations such as demolition and removal of soil during construction.

5.8 Finely divided materials such as sand and cementitious products should be stored where practicable under cover or in sealed containers. In some circumstances screening or enclosure may be required in addition to water suppression, and if correctly designed can have the added advantages of noise attenuation and limiting visual intrusion.

5.9 Both water suppression and screening have practical limitations. In warm weather, for example, water will evaporate quickly from dusty materials leaving the site in a condition likely to result in dust emissions due to wind whipping or vehicle movements.

5.10 As far as practical constraints will allow, obvious sources of dust such as spillages of finely divided materials should be removed promptly using a wet cleaning technique.

The importance of cleaning would also apply to internal roadways and the highway which may become coated with dust from other operations and can become a secondary source of dust emissions.

6. Smoke

6.1 Smoke can be considered to constitute a Statutory Nuisance within the terms of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 if it affects the occupiers of other properties. The emission of dark smoke from the site would constitute an offence under the Clean Air Act 1993. Contractors are therefore advised that lighting fires on construction sites is not permitted and are advised to find alternative means of disposal of wastes.

7. Failure to Comply with Code of Practice

7.1 In the event of a contractor failing to comply with this Code of Practice or any agreement reached thereunder consideration will be given to the service of Notice under Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 in order to restrict days and hours of work, plant and machinery used, work methods etc., and to other statutory controls, such as the nuisance provisions contained in the Environmental Protection Act 1990, as appropriate.

NOTES

i) Noise at Work Regulations 1989

These Regulations control the exposure of persons to noise whilst at work and are enforced in the case of construction and demolition sites by the Health and Safety Executive (Tel. 020 7717 6000)

ii) Other Publications

There are a number of publications which offer useful advice on the control of noise and vibration in the construction industry, notably:

- British Standard Code of Practice BS 5228, Noise Control on Construction and Open Sites.
- Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) Technical Note - Planning to Reduce Noise Exposure in Construction, 1990.
- Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) Technical Note - Environmental Good Practice on Site, 1999 (C502)

All communications and requests for further advice should be addressed to :

Pollution Control Section

4th Floor. Woolwich Centre

Wellington Street

London SE18 6HQ

Tel : 020 8921 8172

Fax : 020 8921 8064

Email : environmental.protection@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Small Scale Building Sites – Quick Guide

- Ensure that all machinery is well maintained and that silencers / mufflers are fitted where appropriate.
- Turn off mechanical equipment when it is not in use.
- Avoid un-necessary shouting and don't play loud radios.
- Try to avoid noisy work in places or at times that are likely to disturb your neighbours.
- Take particular care when working on party walls, try to do this work when your neighbours are out.
- Only carry out noisy work between 8am and 6pm on weekdays and between 9am and 2pm on Saturdays.
- Schedule deliveries to arrive during the normal working day.
- Where possible use site huts or stock piles as noise barriers by locating them between the works and your neighbours.
- Always try to do any job in the quietest way possible.
- Make sure that cars and lorries leaving the site don't carry dust or mud onto the road by washing down the wheels and covering the backs of any lorries carrying any dusty material.
- Have a plentiful supply of water on the site to damp down any operations that are likely to cause dust.
- Keep any fine dusty material covered or well damped down, this is especially important during dry windy weather.
- Clear up any spillages of dusty material promptly and maintain the site in a clean condition.
- Use fine water sprays to damp down dusty areas or work.
- Do not dispose of waste by burning.

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