



## NOISE NUISANCE IS AN OFFENCE

Our last article focused on overall noise pollution and how it is managed generally, and according to the Environmental Protection (Noise Management) Regulations 2000. This week, we will take a look at how the EPA manages noise.



Sample of noise meters used by officers in the field

Prior to 2017, the management of noise fell under the Compliance Division which ensured compliance and enforcement of the relevant environmental regulations. In keeping with Guyana's green agenda, the Agency was reorganised to be more efficient and targeted in achieving its mandate. Consequently, an Air Quality and Noise Programme area was set up and commenced operations in March 2017. This programme area is tasked with developing programmes, policies, and regulations for noise and air quality management for industrial, commercial, and other activities.

The Unit works closely with the Guyana National Bureau of Standards and the Guyana Police Force to develop standards and have them enforced.

### ***Sources of noise pollution in Guyana***

The Air Quality and Noise Management Programme area of the Agency notes that the majority of noise pollution complaints occur within residential areas. These stem from generators, bars, processing facilities, wood processing facilities such as sawmills and furniture workshops, welding workshops, and even wash bays.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Public Security, the Air Quality and Noise Management Programme area along with other sector agencies have established an Inter-Agency Task Force, with the main focus being enforcing the law and regulations to reduce noise nuisance in the country.

Many of these activities take place in close proximity to neighbours, and there are often no buffer zones, this contribute to increase reports of noise pollution. In addition, people are becoming more sensitive to issues relating to noise pollution, particularly households that have elderly citizens and newborns. Noise is measured in decibels and prolonged

exposure to sounds louder than 80dB is hazardous to hearing. Even brief sounds louder than 140dB may cause pain and permanent hearing loss.

Table below represents Guyana National Bureau of Standards Guidelines for Noise Emissions into the environment.

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Day-time Limits(dB)</b>	<b>Night-time Limits(dB)</b>
Residential	75	60
Institutional	75	60
Educational	75	60
Industrial	100	80
Commercial	80	65
Construction	90	75
Transportation	100	80
Recreational	100	70

### ***A word from our officers – tips to reduce noise level***

1. **Avoidance**- Do your best *not* to place noise making equipment in close proximity to neighbours and operate within reasonable hours.

2. **Be aware** of the noise limits for respective areas (industrial and residential) and times of operation.

3. **Install** Sound Attenuation Devices.

4. **Service** your equipment (in keeping with manufacturer's requirements) for greater efficiency.

5. For large industries, invest in a noise meter for self-monitoring.

6. **Soundproof** buildings where noise is most likely to be generated.

7. **Apply** the 5 Cs of driving to noise management: Care, Courtesy, Commonsense, Caution, and Consideration, especially those providing public transportation.

8. **Consider** indoor versus outdoor activities.

**For the first half of 2017, one hundred and sixty two (162) short term noise applications were received. The cost for a short term permit is US\$20 while the cost of a long term permit starts at US \$50.**

**9. Authorisation by external Agency-** Use of generators for domestic and commercial purposes should seek authorization or guidance from the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Hinterland Electrification Co. Inc. (HECI) Department.

**Be reminded: Events that require a Short Term Noise Permit**

**Any open air activity including but not limited to weddings, fairs, concerts, and horse racing events. The police can stop events unpermitted events generating noise.**

**Music cart operators are also reminded that they need to have a noise permit to operate.**

Remember, your actions should not be a nuisance to others.

To find out more about the Noise Regulations and other Regulations, visit the EPA's website at [www.epaguyana.org](http://www.epaguyana.org), and remember to be considerate and respectful of others.

**Sources**

Environmental Protection (Noise Management) Regulations 2000 **You can share your ideas and questions by sending letters to: "Our Earth, Our Environment", C/O ECEA Programme, Environmental Protection Agency, Ganges Street, Sophia, GEORGETOWN, or email us at: [eit.epaguyana@gmail.com](mailto:eit.epaguyana@gmail.com).**