

Noise Control Guidelines for Music, Singing and Instrument Performing Activities

1. *Introduction*

These guidelines are only applicable to noise from music, singing and instrument performance activities in places other than domestic premises, public places or construction sites, and provide information to organizers for holding such activities (especially large scale activities in which extensive sound amplification systems are employed and would likely cause noise disturbance to nearby noise sensitive receivers, such as residents) on noise control requirements and means for minimising noise emission from the activities.

2. *Noise control requirements*

Noise levels from the activities (including rehearsal and main event) should not be more than 10 dB(A) above the prevailing background noise level, as measured at one metre from the exterior building facade of any nearby noise sensitive receivers, during day time and evening period, i.e. 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. The noise levels from the activities shall be measured in terms of Leq(15min.), 15-minute A-weighted equivalent continuous sound pressure level and the background noise levels in terms of Leq(5min.), 5-minute A-weighted equivalent continuous sound pressure level. For the nighttime, i.e. 11 p.m. to 7 a.m., noise from the activities should not be audible within any nearby noise sensitive receivers.

3. *Noise monitoring*

The organizer should appoint an appropriate person to monitor the noise situation by means of sound level meters at a nearby noise sensitive receiver, preferably the most affected one, as far as possible. If the organizer cannot gain access to any nearby noise sensitive receiver for monitoring, noise monitoring shall be carried out at an accessible location where the noise situation can best represent that at the nearby noise sensitive receiver. When noise monitoring is not carried out at the most affected noise sensitive receiver, it may be necessary to adjust the measured noise levels from the activity to reflect the noise levels at the most affected noise sensitive receiver taking into account of the difference in the noise propagation paths (e.g. different distance and barrier effect). The appropriate person should also measure the background noise levels before and after the activity, and monitor closely the noise levels during the activity. The appropriate person should provide feedback to the organizer for immediate action, such as adjustment of the speaker output level, whenever necessary for avoidance of any non-compliance with the above noise control requirements. Noise measurement in terms of Leq(15mins.) should be conducted at least hourly throughout the activity, of which the results should be recorded properly and submitted to the venue owner subsequently. The venue owner will provide the recorded measurements for reference of Environmental Protection Department when requested for any necessary follow up investigation. The sound level meters should comply with International Electrical Commission Publications 651:1979 (Type 1) and 804:1985 (Type 1), or be of a comparable professional quality.

4. *Complaint hotline*

During the activities, the organizer should provide a manned complaint hotline (Tape recording is not acceptable) so that action can be immediately taken to reduce the noise in response to complaints raised by nearby residents or relayed from other parties such as Food and Environmental Hygiene Department/Leisure and Cultural Services Department or Police.

5. *Advance notice to nearby noise sensitive receivers*

The organizer should arrange to distribute advance notices to nearby residential buildings, hospitals or other noise sensitive uses to alert the people of the date, time, venue and programme of the activity, and the complaint hotline to which they can lodge their concern in case the noise from the activity is considered excessive.

6. *Other recommended noise mitigation measures when PA or loudspeakers systems are used*

- to orientate stage to point away from the nearby noise sensitive receivers;
- to use a cluster of small power loudspeakers instead of a few large power loudspeakers; and
- to use directional loudspeakers and orientate them to point towards the audience and away from the nearby noise sensitive receivers.

7. *Rehearsal*

Rehearsal might also cause noise disturbance. Testing of sound system should be shortened as much as practicable and full blown rehearsal should be minimised. In all respects, actions mentioned in paragraphs 2 to 6 should also be implemented including noise measurement. To minimize the inconvenience caused to nearby residents, rehearsal should be carried out during the time period between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.

8. *Other related noisy activities*

Other related noisy activities, such as preparation and tidying up of the venue, might also cause noise disturbance. In all respects, actions mentioned in paragraphs 4 and 5 should also be implemented. To minimize the inconvenience caused to nearby residents, such activities should be carried out during the time period between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.

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Note: For music, singing and instrument performances to be conducted during New Year Eve Countdown events that will last beyond 12:00 midnight and with the support of relevant community groups representing the concerned locality, separate advice from the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) should be sought.

[Contacts for the respective Regional Offices of EPD could be found in http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/about_epd/facility/offices.html]

