



Guidance Notes on Noise Control for Concerts and Outdoor Events

September 2015

Introduction

1. These Guidance Notes have been produced to assist the organisers of concerts and similar open air events in making their entertainment run smoothly for the benefit of those attending whilst ensuring unreasonable disturbance is not caused to local residents.

Licensing Act 2003

2. The premises or site will either have a Premises Licence or a Temporary Event Notice issued under the Licensing Act 2003. Temporary Event notices will only apply to events for less than 500 people.

If a new Premises Licence application is submitted, which includes the provisions to hold outdoor events, it is likely the Pollution Control team will request that some or all of the following conditions be attached to the licence as they are considered the minimum requirements for controlling noise for this type of entertainment:

- a. The Premises Licence Holder shall notify the Licensing Authority and Environmental Protection team of the selected date for any concert or event at least three months in advance of the event.
- b. Each concert or event shall be subject to an individual noise risk assessment. The assessment shall be submitted to the Pollution Control Team at least eight weeks in advance of the event. No event shall take place unless the assessment has received written approval by the team, at least four weeks prior to the event.
- c. At least three months before the concert or event the Premises Licence Holder will invite licensing officers and representatives of the relevant responsible authorities to discuss the concert or event.
- d. Residents in the immediate vicinity shall be notified one month in advance by means of a suitable leaflet giving the date and times of the concert or event and a telephone number and contact person to whom complaints can be referred.

The Responsible Authority for Environmental Health (Environmental Protection) may also request other noise conditions be added to the licence. This may include controls on the hours of operation, limits on the music levels and requirements on the size and set up of equipment.

3. It is an offence not to comply with the conditions on the Premises Licence. You will need to check the conditions on the Licence for the premises or site and ensure they are complied with at all times during the event.

Liaison with Environmental Health

4. The Pollution Control team expects the following list of requirements to be completed, within the given time scales, before any outdoor event takes place.
5. Some may be included as formal conditions on a Premises Licence and therefore must be adhered to before an event can take place.
6. For events taking place under a Temporary Event Notice, it will still be considered good practice to consider the requirements and return the necessary documents before the event takes place. This will help to identify any potential noise problems and may avoid the need for formal action at a later stage.
7. It is suggested that the attached application form is used to provide the necessary information.
8. The Premises Licence Holder/Event Organiser should inform the Environmental Health Department of the date of the concert or event as soon as possible (this should be a minimum of three months before the event).
9. A schedule of events listing the times of the bands, DJ's and any other music, including the location within the premises or site, and the type of music etc. should be provided to the Environmental Protection team as soon as reasonably possible (see attached Noise Risk Assessment form).
10. A plan of the premises or site, to a scale of 1:500 (or a scale which shows all locations where music will be played), marked with the locations and dimensions of the stages, marquees, generators and other temporary structures to be used during the event, should also be provided.
11. The Officers from the department are ready to discuss with organisers the nature and location of entertainment of the event at as early a stage as possible, with the aim of helping the Organisers to promote a successful and safe concert or event that does not disturb residents.
12. At least three months before the concert or event the Premises Licence Holder (or organisers) will invite licensing officers and representatives of the relevant responsible authorities to discuss the event (see paragraph 2c above).

Public Relations

13. This is perhaps one of the most effective ways in which organisers can ensure that things run smoothly and that complaints are minimised.
14. A brief note should be delivered to noise sensitive premises around the site, telling residents when and where the concert or event is to take place, asking for their tolerance, advising of the precautions being taken against disturbance and giving a telephone number where someone responsible can be contacted in case of problems (see paragraph 2d above)

15. Experience has shown that where people are aware of what is to take place and how to contact someone if there are any difficulties than very few people feel the need to make an official complaint
16. Your risk assessment should identify the noise sensitive locations, and it is important to take appropriate precautions to minimise disturbance in these areas.

Fireworks

17. Fireworks or other noisy aerial displays must not occur after 2300 hours as required by the Firework Regulations 2004. To minimise disturbance to local residents around the premises or site displays should be as short as possible, with the minimum use of loud explosive fireworks.

Bands and live music

18. The amplification of most bands consists of amplifiers and speakers for the instruments and vocalists. The sound is mixed and balanced by a Sound Engineer at a sound desk prior to the performance. The use of noise limiters/compressors are advised for the main stage as this sets a maximum volume for the music. It is also important to set maximum levels for the low frequency levels (bass) as these cause the most disturbance to local residents. Seek advice from the sound engineer you employ.
19. In order that the performers can be aware of the sound around them, a "backline" of speakers is positioned on stage. This is not controlled by the sound desk and it is essential, therefore, that the Sound Engineer is made fully aware of the necessary restrictions on sound levels and so is in a position to set up the backline to enable full control to be exercised during the performance. Organisers should satisfy themselves that the levels are set accordingly. This is especially important, since when the performance is taking place the sound desk will be in control of only about 15-20% of the total volume of sound produced.
20. One of the most frequently encountered problems is that an unnecessarily large amount of sound equipment is provided, which makes effective control very difficult. The output of the sound system(s) should be suitable for the size of the event, and as a general rule it should be calculated on the basis of 1KW per 100 people in the audience expected.
21. It is important that bands booked to appear should be aware of the need to be sensitive to potential noise problems and should accept restrictions that may be imposed. In some cases verbal assurances have been proven quite inadequate and organisers are strongly advised to include suitable clauses in contracts so as to ensure that they retain effective control over sound levels.
22. An advantage of using a single production company to run a particular stage is that the sound engineer may be the same for all bands and this makes liaison much more straightforward.
23. Where more than one entertainment venue is proposed they should be spread throughout the premises or site. Simultaneous performances should be held at different places as to minimise the likelihood of large crowds being drawn to one place. It will

also avoid music from one sound system interfering with another and possibly of noise levels being increased as a result. There should be a conscious effort to use quieter entertainment at the end of the concert event. Sensitive sites should be for non-amplified music and only early in the programme.

24. It is always difficult to keep the programme running to schedule. Bands take longer than expected to set up or fail to arrive on time and slippage frequently takes place. Organisers should make sure that sufficient change over time is allowed between bands.

Sound Systems

25. Employ a sound system whenever possible that uses circuit speakers (i.e., a range of relatively low powered speakers sited around the premises or site marquee rather than one with a bank of speakers either side of the stage to force sound out over the whole audience). Ensure that the sound engineer strictly controls the low frequency levels of the music, as this causes the most disturbance to local residents.
26. Ensure, when booking a sound engineer that they fully understand the need to work within restrictions imposed and is prepared to accept direction from the Premises Licence Holder, Organiser, or Responsible Authority regarding sound levels. You are recommended to draw up a suitable contract giving the Premises Licence Holder, Organiser, or Responsible Authority full control over the location of speakers and sound levels.

Noise Risk Assessment

27. A Noise Risk Assessment is expected for all concerts and similar outdoor events.
28. Organisers will need to demonstrate in the assessment that the location of all external stages and marquees where music is to be played has been planned so as to minimise their impact on the noise sensitive premises identified.
29. Organisers will need to demonstrate in the Noise Risk Assessment that the programme of events for stages and marquees where music is to be played has been planned so as to minimise the impact on the noise sensitive premises identified.
30. Any measures to mitigate the noise levels from the music sources must also be considered in the Noise Risk Assessment for example the use of delay or circuit speakers, and compressors or limiters on the sound system.
31. The attached Noise Risk Assessment form must be completed and submitted as part of the application. It is suggested that the form is completed in consultation with the sound company supplying the equipment.

Monitoring

32. Officers from the Responsible Authority for Environmental Health may monitor such events. They should receive co-operation from the Premises Licence Holder or Organisers in charge of the entertainment when carrying out monitoring inspections. They may monitor the event to ensure that no unreasonable disturbance is being caused, no public or statutory nuisance is being created and the conditions on the Premises Licence are being complied with.
33. A Premise Licence Holder or a member of the organisers or a designated person shall be responsible for monitoring the noise level/and any noise complaints received regarding the event. The noise level should be monitored throughout the duration of the event and any advice/or instruction given by the Environmental Health Officer shall be complied with.
34. An inspection may be made before the start of the concert or event to check on the general organisation and layout, with further inspections during the course of the event will be carried out during the course of the event. An Officer(s) may request a reduction in sound levels if they are satisfied that it is necessary for compliance with the noise conditions set preventing unreasonable disturbance. The propagation of sound is frequently complex and may be affected by atmospheric conditions. There are occasions when sound levels (especially low frequency music) appear to be relatively low close to the source but are still intrusive some considerable distance away.
35. Organisers should not rely solely on the Environmental Health Officers to advise them of noise problems. When possible the organisers should monitor noise levels at noise sensitive premises around the premises or site to assess whether noise is likely to be disturbing.

Fairground Rides, Bouncing Castles etc.

36. Fairground rides must not be sited in noise sensitive areas and sirens and loud music must be controlled to a level agreed with the Responsible Authority for Environmental Health.
37. All diesel generators/plant must be sited wherever possible away from noise sensitive areas or be sound proofed to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority for Environmental Health.

Food Safety

38. If food traders will be on the premises or site you must check they are registered with a Food Safety Authority and have a FHS of 3 or more, at the last inspection. Check

<http://ratings.food.gov.uk/enhanced-search/en-GB/Eat%20Fresh%20Catering/%5E/Relevance/0/%5E/%5E/1/1/10>

Acknowledgement: This guidance document has been based largely on information provided in the document 'Code of Practice and Guidance Notes on Noise Control for Concerts and Similar Outdoor Events' by Oxford City Council.

**Application for an Event
(Information Required by Pollution Control Team)**

1. Name and Address of premises/site

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2. Date of the Event:Maximum Numbers:.....

3. Start Time:.....Finish Time:.....

4. Names, Duties and Telephone Numbers of the Premises Licence Holder/Organiser.

Name	Duties	Tel Number

(Please ensure that the person responsible for the control of noise during the event is identified. Contact details of the person responsible for Health & Safety is also required)

5. Name : Premises Licence Holder/Organisers in charge of the event.

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6. Plan of the premises/site to a scale of 1:500 attached: Yes/No

(plan to show the locations of all music areas/fairground rides and dimensions of marquees and other temporary structures to be used during the event)

7. Details of the Sound Engineer or Production Company to be Employed

Name:.....

Address:.....

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.....Tel Number:.....

8. Has the attached Noise Risk Assessment form been completed: Yes/No

Noise Risk Assessment Form

(Separate form to be completed for each noise source)

Name of premises/site.....

Location of the Sound

System(s):.....

Expected Audience

Capacity:.....

Entertainment to be provided e.g. band or sound system:.....

(Attach a full itinerary including times)

Noise sensitive premises that may be affected

Address	Distance from Source (m)

(Continue on separate sheet if necessary)

Type and size of the sound system (include details of how calculated):

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Sound system set up (e.g. number and position of delay / circuit speakers, compressors / limiters etc.):

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