

Noise associated with construction

When Watercare builds, maintains or demolishes infrastructure, whether above or below ground, a wide range of machinery and work tools are used, all of which generate noise of varying levels and intensity.

There are limits to when and how much noise can be generated. The following information provides some guidance on noise generated by construction and how it is managed.

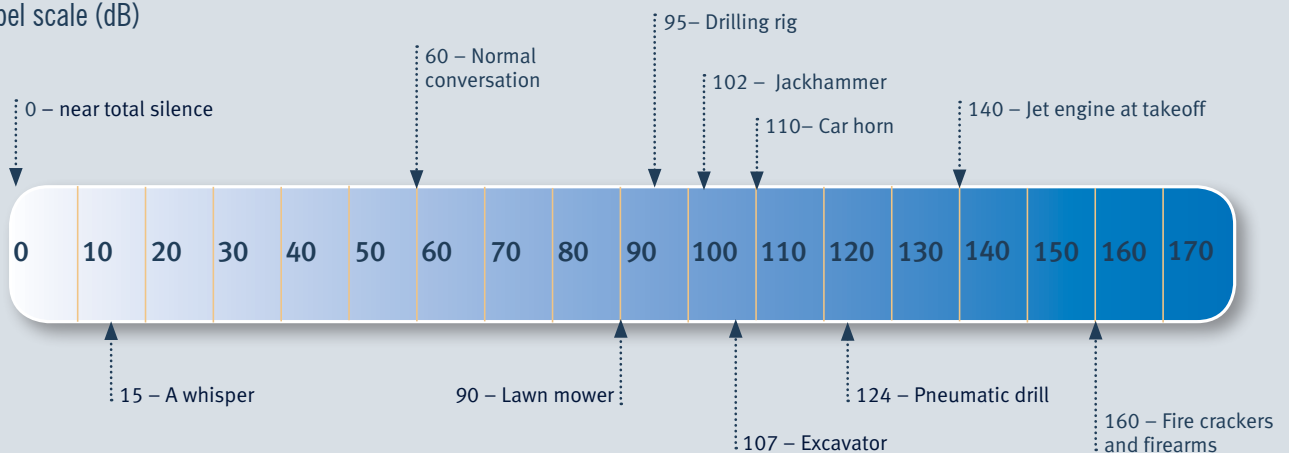
How is noise measured?

Noise is measured in decibels (dB), which is the unit used to measure the intensity of a sound. The decibel scale is a little unusual because the human ear is incredibly sensitive. In terms of power, the sound of the jet engine is about 1,000,000,000,000 times more powerful than the smallest audible sound.

Sound associated with heavy construction equipment ranges from 80 to 120 dB at the source and power tools commonly used in construction produce sound levels up to 115 dB. The Auckland Council daytime noise level is 70dB at the property boundary. Here are some common sounds and their decibel ratings assuming you are standing close to the noise:



Decibel scale (dB)



What is considered excessive noise?

The Resource Management Act defines excessive noise as ‘any noise that is under human control and interferes with the peace, comfort and convenience of any person’. Watercare is required to manage noise from construction and resource or building consents for projects normally include conditions for the management of noise.

How is construction noise managed?

The impact from construction noise is often controlled by limiting working hours. Limitations typically depend on the location and days of the week. For example construction noise is generally allowed between 7.30am to 6pm from Monday to Saturday with no noisy construction work allowed on Sundays.

Watercare and our contractors also use specialist methods and equipment to help minimise noise disturbance (e.g. construction fencing, silenced pumps, battery powered tools, temporary sound barriers or screens etc.). We will also liaise with neighbours and residents where construction noise is likely to be an issue.

Noise management is an important aspect of construction activity and Watercare’s obligations to minimise affects are taken seriously. Project information, including contact phone numbers, are displayed at most construction sites. Customers can also contact Watercare on (09) 442 2222.