

3.12 NOISE

3.12.1 - OVERVIEW

The Resource Management Act requires Council to "control the emission of noise and the mitigation of the effects of noise". Noise pollution creates an all invading source of intrusion into an environment and can adversely affect people's well-being. These effects are often hard to define precisely but regard must be had to the incidence of noise from any activity.

Noise may occur from a wide variety of sources in both the rural and urban environment. Industry, transport, recreation, and households can all create noise that may influence a persons well-being by, for example, preventing sleep, inducing stress, disturbing concentration or interfering with communication.

There are situations where it may be impracticable to reduce noise levels and where related to domestic or seasonal rural activity of relatively short duration, noise may be acceptable. These activities would generally exceed any otherwise reasonable noise standards. As they are generally of short duration, they are often best left to be resolved by those involved. However, inconsiderate actions may require intervention by Council to ensure that unreasonable or excessive noise is abated.

The controls imposed by this Plan do not remove the possible requirements of other noise control legislation such as the Health Act 1956 and the Building Act 1991.

3.12.2 - THE ISSUES

The following are considered to be the significant noise issues facing the Southland District.

- **The Southland District has a relatively "quiet" amenity.**

Explanation

The Southland District is relatively free from major industry, high traffic volumes, and large urban centres and is largely a rural environment. Consequently the District is considered to have a quiet and peaceful amenity.

- **Noise generated by some industrial and agricultural type activities can adversely impact on residential activities.**

Explanation

Some industrial and agricultural activities can generate significant noise levels and are consequently incompatible with residential areas which have a quiet background noise level.

- **Noise can impact on species.**

Explanation

Noise can disturb indigenous species preventing them feeding, roosting and in extreme situations, may prevent them breeding. In the case of birds, noise can drive them away.

3.12.3 - OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Objective NSE.1

To protect the District's amenity values and the well-being of the District's people, and indigenous fauna from the adverse effects of noise.

Policy NSE.1

To avoid or mitigate the adverse effects of noise on

- The well-being of the people of the District; and**
- The amenities of the District.**
- Significant habitats of indigenous fauna.**

Explanation

Noise can greatly impact on the amenities of the District and the general well-being of the District's people. Council's goal is to reduce this impact to an acceptable level.

(Refer Rules NSE.1 to Method NSE.6, and Resource Areas of Section 4)

Policy NSE.2

To define areas of the District in which particular performance standards for noise apply and differentiate between night and day where appropriate.

Explanation

Because the District is comprised of several distinct environments within which community expectations are varied, it was not considered appropriate that a single noise standard be developed for the entire District.

*Applying specific noise performance standards to any particular environment should minimise adverse effects on people's well-being.
(Refer various Resource Areas of Section 4)*

Policy NSE.3

To minimise the adverse effect that noise generated from airports can have, while ensuring that the viability of the District's airports is not threatened.

Explanation

*Airfields are a major transportation facility which have an important role in terms of the economic and social well-being of the District. The continuing operation of the District's airfields can be severely affected if activities which are sensitive to noise (eg residential uses), are established adjacent to them. Council proposes to investigate the establishment of an airport noise boundary which should avoid potential problems. Noise within that boundary would be controlled by the New Zealand Standard 6805 : 1992.
(Refer Method NSE.5)*

Policy NSE.4

To monitor noise trends throughout the District.

Explanation

*Noise levels have been measured throughout the District to establish general background noise levels. This enables Council to measure the performances of activities against accepted amenity levels. Monitoring of noise will continue throughout the District to assess the effectiveness of this Plan.
(Refer Section 2.3 Monitoring)*

3.12.4 - METHODS AND RULES

The following methods apply throughout the District and are intended to complement the specific provisions of particular areas.

Rule NSE.1 - Measurement

- (a) Except where otherwise stated, all noise will be measured and assessed in accordance with the requirements of NZS 6801:1991 Measurement of Sound and NZS 6802:1991 Assessment of Environmental Sound.
- (b) The measurement period shall be not less than 15 minutes and the L_{10} level in dBA is defined as that level of sound equalled or exceeded for 10% of the measurement period.

Reason

Recognised noise assessment and measurement techniques are to be used to ensure consistency is achieved and doubt is removed from the process.

Rule NSE.2 - Construction Noise

Noise resulting from construction which is ancillary to the principal use of the site shall meet with the limits recommended in, and shall be measured and assessed in accordance with, New Zealand Standard NZS 6803:1984 The Measurement and Assessment of Noise from Construction, Maintenance and Demolition Work. Any activity that does not comply with this rule shall be considered as discretionary activity in accordance with the criteria set out in Method NSE.6.

Reason

Construction site noise is often thought of as only a temporary inconvenience although major developments may take several years. Noise from such projects can often be a serious problem, however Council considers that existing New Zealand Standards are adequate to control this activity. The abatement procedures for excessive noise is available where such noise is becoming a major problem.

Rule NSE.3 - Vibration

Vibration emanating from a site shall meet the limits recommended in, and shall be measured and assessed in accordance with, New Zealand Standard NZS 4403:1976 Code of Practice for Storage, Handling and Use of Explosives.

Reason

Vibration from the operation of machinery or the use of explosive devices can be a nuisance. Once again, the New Zealand Standards are seen as an adequate control with abatement notice procedures controlling excessive noise problems.

Method NSE.4 - General Responsibilities

Every occupier of land or water and every person carrying out an activity on land or water, shall adopt the best practicable option to ensure emission of noise from that land or water activity does not exceed a reasonable level.

Where Council considers there to be unreasonable noise emission in terms of Sections 326 and 327 of the Act, Council may exercise the powers available under those sections.

Reason

Section 16 of the Act imposes a duty on people to avoid creating unreasonable noise. Council recognises that many noises generated by domestic or seasonal rural activity of relatively short duration may exceed normal background noise levels and in some instances will create excessive noise as defined by Section 326 of the Act. Where a complaint is received in terms of Section 327 of the Act, Council will carry out its duties in terms of that section. It is considered appropriate to note these provisions in the Plan to draw the public's attention to their responsibilities in terms of noise generation.

Method NSE.5 - Airport Noise Boundaries

To investigate in conjunction with Airport operators, Airways Corporation of New Zealand Limited, the development of an airport noise boundary and outer control boundary, for the District's airfields.

Reason

While airfields and airports are essential to the economic and social well-being of the District's people, noise emission from these facilities can be excessive relative to what is expected in the rural area and can be objectionable to people living and working in the vicinity of such facilities. In order to protect the viability and efficiency of a major transportation resource of the District, noise sensitive activities within the vicinity of these facilities may need to be controlled, and Council proposes to investigate the creation of an air noise boundary that establishes performance standards for activities located within it.

Method NSE.6 - Resource Consent Criteria

In considering any resource consent application for a reduction of maximum noise levels stipulated throughout the Plan, Council shall have regard to the following matters:

- The maximum noise levels of the proposed activity.
- The frequency the noise activity takes place.
- The length of time that the noise continues.
- The special characteristics of the noise.
- The likely adverse effects of noise on other activities in the locality (including cumulative effects).
- Any possible means of mitigating the effects of the noise.
- The objectives for noise control.

In granting any consent, the Council may impose conditions including maximum noise levels and the days, and times during the day, in which noise may be created and the requirements for the mitigation of the effects of the noise.

Reason

There may be instances where reduction can be given from the noise performance standards because of the special characteristics of the type of noise being emitted. This rule gives Council a flexibility in regard to such activities and the procedure to be followed in the reduction of any noise performance standard will be that specified in the relevant resource area.