

Noise from Drumming Practice in Domestic Premises



The Pollution Section of Environmental Health gets periodic complaints of noise nuisance from the playing of drums in houses and garages. Drums by their very nature are noisy, and the constant pounding, especially from someone learning to play can quickly cause annoyance to neighbours, and may well cause a Statutory Noise Nuisance. This information sheet outlines some practical steps that can be taken to reduce drum noise, and minimise the likelihood of Noise Nuisance complaints.

Practice pads

Practice pads are rubberised discs, that are placed on the top of the drum skins, and cymbals. The centre section responds to the drumstick with a similar feel & bounce as the actual drum head. The practice pad set can reduce the sound output of the drum set and cymbals by up to 90% (manufacturers claim). In addition a large pillow or old duvet can be placed inside the bass drum to deaden its sound.

With practice pads you can still practice on a full size kit to improve your technique, but without the loud noise, and the pads can easily be removed for gigs/rehearsals in a practice hall.

Complaints about your drum playing ability are up to you to fix.... so get practising.....quietly.

The drum kit can also be put on a thick rubber or a dense foam mat to reduce the noise transmitted into the floor and into neighbour's property through the structure of the building. Old underlay/carpet can be used as a cheap way of doing this.

Practice times

Talk to your neighbours and find out what the best time is for you to practice, so you can minimise any disturbance to them. Avoid practising early in the morning (before 9am) or in the evening and at night, when people are trying to sit down and relax (after 7pm). On weekends and Bank Holidays, people especially value their peace and quiet, so avoid, or keep to a minimum your practicing at these times.

Reduce the length of time you practice. Any more than thirty minutes at a time is likely to become annoying to your neighbours and may lead to a Nuisance. In most domestic situations it is unlikely that you can run a drum tuition business from home without causing a noise problem to your neighbours. We would advise that you keep a log of your practice times which can be cross referenced with that of the complainant.

Locating your drum kit

Try and set up your drum kit in a room away from party walls. When practising, ensure windows are kept closed to minimise the noise that

can be heard outside. Thick curtains may also help to prevent noise escaping. In the summer months, an electric fan can be used to keep cool while practising. Conservatories being predominantly glass have poor sound insulation properties, and should be avoided as a location for drum practice if at all possible.

Electronic drum kits

If you are contemplating buying a new or replacement drum kit, consider an electronic set. The advantages of electronic drum kits are;

- Electronic drums are virtually silent when played, however, you should still consider standing them on a noise-deadening surface as detailed above.
- Electronic drum sets are compact, lightweight and portable.
- With Electronic drums you can add digital effects that simulate the greatest concert hall settings
- Electronic drum kits offers hundreds of percussion sounds as well as drum sounds
- With electronic drums you can play as loud as you want using headphones
- Some electronic drum modules have dozens of songs built-in to play along with
- Many electronic drum modules can record your performances
- With an electronic drum set you can plug in a CD player and play along

Rehearsal Room

Although not practical on a daily basis, rehearsals wherever possible should be carried out in a studio or rehearsal room, especially when other band members are practising with you. You may be able to use a school or church hall free or for a nominal charge.

Drum Noise and the Law

Boston Borough Council has a statutory duty to investigate complaints about noise. In the event of a complaint, a letter will usually be sent to both parties asking for information to reinforce their case. This is usually done through completion of log sheets and communications with both parties. Officers will then consider the information and take

steps to solve the problem; these steps can range from informal discussions to prosecution.

In the event of a Statutory Noise Nuisance being established, an Abatement Notice will be served upon the person responsible, or the owner of the property. This can prohibit noise emanating from the premises and may carry a heavy fine should the notice be breached. Failure to comply with this Notice is a criminal offence and upon conviction, Magistrates may impose a fine of up to £5,000.

We also have powers to seize noise-making equipment, which is, or has been causing a noise nuisance. If you live in rented accommodation, it is also possible for your Landlord to evict you if you are in breach of your tenancy agreement if you have signed a Shorthold Tenancy Agreement.

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Other formats

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