

Neighborhood Noise



BELLEVUE
**CONFLICT
RESOLUTION**
CENTER



Laws change frequently and vary from city to city and from state to state. This information should not be construed as legal advice.

Saturday morning, around dawn. After a long, hard week, you're enjoying one of the great pleasures in life, sleeping in. Suddenly, a neighbor starts up his chainsaw. Across the back fence, someone is using their power washer. You try covering your head with the pillow, but sleep is now a distant dream. Discouraged and cranky, you get up to face the day.

Noise problems often cause irritation and frustration. They can also be hard to resolve. Laws and ordinances protect us from some noise disturbances. But many people are reluctant to call the authorities on their neighbors. And some bothersome noises may be within legal limits, a fact that probably won't make the noise less disturbing.

Going to the authorities over a noise problem can be tricky. Your neighbors may see your actions as hostile. Neighborly relations can deteriorate. Another problem with going to the authorities is that the remedy may not help you. For example, if you are a night owl who gets up around 10 a.m., the standard "quiet time" may not be quiet enough. Or, you may succeed in reducing the number of pets your neighbor can keep, only to learn that the neighbor is getting rid of their quiet cat, while keeping their three barking dogs.

Tips on approaching conflict:

1. **Assess** the situation.
2. **Request** a time to talk.
3. **Share**, not just tell.
4. **Know** what you'll say.
5. **Listen** respectfully, as you would want to be heard.
6. **Be open** to different solutions.
7. **Make an agreement**, at least about the next step.
8. **Thank** the other person for working with you.

What does the law say?

- [Bellevue Municipal Code, Title 9.18: Noise Control](#)
- Report stationary noises, like a generator, to CodeCompliance@bellevuewa.gov
- Report animal noises to [RASKC](#)
- Report party and other noises to [Bellevue Police](#)

Contact Us:

[Intake Form](#)
425-452-4091

bcrc@bellevuewa.gov
BellevueWA.gov/resolve

One option is to negotiate directly with your neighbor. This may not be easy – and we don't recommend trying this right after you've been woken up on Saturday morning. Nor should you wait through months and months of mounting frustration. However, if you prepare yourself and carefully pick the time to speak with your neighbor you may negotiate a solution that addresses your situation. Sometimes raising awareness can be helpful.

If you decide that you want to negotiate with your neighbor, but aren't sure how to start the conversation, call the Bellevue Conflict Resolution Center. We can coach you on how to talk with your neighbor, or we can talk to your neighbor for you to learn more about what is important to them and what changes they might be willing to make.

