

Noise pollution, causes of noise pollution, Effects of noise pollution, Control of noise pollution

1. Noise pollution

Noise can be defined as unwanted sound.

Or

Disturbing or excessive noise that may harm the activity or balance of human or animal life. The sound is pleasant or not depends upon its loudness, duration, rhythm and the mood of person.

Not all sound is considered noise pollution. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines noise above 65 decibels (dB) as noise pollution. To be precise, noise becomes harmful when it exceeds 75 decibels (dB) and is painful above 120 dB.

Therefore, it is recommended noise levels be kept below 65 dB during the day and indicates that restful sleep is impossible with nighttime ambient noise levels in excess of 30 dB.

2. Causes of noise pollution

There are many sources of noise pollution, but here are some of the main ones:

2.1. Traffic noise

Traffic noise accounts for most polluting noise in cities. For example, a car horn produces 90 dB and a bus produces 100 dB.

2.2. Air traffic noise

There are fewer aircraft flying over cities than there are cars on the roads, but the impact is greater: a single aircraft produces 130 dB.

2.3. Construction sites

Building and car park construction and road and pavement resurfacing works are very noisy. For example, a pneumatic drill produces 110 dB.

2.4. Catering and night life

Bars, restaurants and terraces that spill outside when the weather is good can produce more than 100 dB. This includes noise from pubs and clubs.

2.5. Animals

Noise made by animals can go unnoticed, but a howling or barking dog, for example, can produce around 60-80 dB.

3. Effects of noise pollution

Loud noise can damage human health in many ways, particularly in the very young and the very old. Here are some of the main ones:

3.1. Physical

Respiratory agitation, racing pulse, high blood pressure, headaches and, in case of extremely loud, constant noise, gastritis, colitis and even heart attacks.

3.2. Psychological

Noise can cause attacks of stress, fatigue, depression, anxiety and hysteria in both humans and animals.

3.3. Sleep and behavioral disorders

Noise above 45 dB stops you from falling asleep or sleeping properly. Remember that according to the World Health Organization it should be no more than 30 dB. Loud noise can have latent effects on our behavior, causing aggressive behavior and irritability.

3.4. Memory and concentration

Noise may affect people's ability to focus, which can lead to low performance over time. It is also bad for the memory, making it hard to study. Interestingly, our ears need more than 16 hours' rest to make up for two hours of exposure to 100 dB.

4. Solutions to reduce noise pollution

4.1. Awareness of noise pollution

International bodies like the WHO agree that awareness of noise pollution is essential to beat this invisible enemy. For example:

- Avoid very noisy leisure activities,
- Opt for alternatives means of transport such as bicycles or electric vehicles over taking the car, Do your housework at recommended times,
- Insulate homes with noise-absorbing materials, etc.
- Educating the younger generation is also an essential aspect of environmental education.

4.2. Regulatory measures by Government

- Governments can also take measures to ensure correct noise management and reduce noise pollution. For example:
- protecting certain areas from noise like parts of the countryside, areas of natural interest, city parks, etc.
- Establishing regulations that include preventive and corrective measures like mandatory separation between residential zones and sources of noise like airports, fines for exceeding noise limits, etc.
- Installing noise insulation in new buildings,
- Creating pedestrian areas where traffic is only allowed to enter to offload goods at certain times.