

Light & Noise

The purpose of these chapters

These chapters provide levels of noise and outdoor artificial light which can be emitted on a site measured at the boundary of either an adjoining site or, in the rural environment, a dwelling.

We have rules to control noise and artificial light levels to protect people's amenity values. However, we must strike a balance between enabling activities generating a degree of noise or light and protecting the characteristics of an area in a way that people expect and appreciate.

Placing a limit on the amount of noise generated by an activity ensures people are not unduly disturbed by noise, particularly at night-time. This must be balanced by the functional needs of certain activities.

Similarly artificial light spill and glare can cause adverse effects, particularly at night. The Proposed District Plan controls the level of light spill which is permitted in different zones. Lower levels are permitted in the rural zones to also protect dark sky values, and higher levels are provided for in commercial and industrial zones to reflect the purpose of those zones.

The rules exclude artificial light spill and noise which may be generated as part of an emergency response or by vehicles, trains and aircraft and traffic signals. There are also exclusions in respect of noise for temporary activities and day to day activities undertaken during the daytime.

Light Chapter

This chapter relates to emission of artificial outdoor lighting, including non-residential indoor lighting that spills outside. There are rules about how much light can spill onto an adjoining site, and to manage light at public sports courts and grounds. The rules require lights to be directed downward and shielded from above so that light shines below the horizontal.

What's the difference from the current District Plan?

In the Rural, Town Centre, Local Centre and Mixed Use Zones and Industrial Zones the levels of light spill permitted onto other sites will remain the same as the current District Plan. However, the hours of emission are omitted. In the Residential Zone a slightly higher light spill allowance is proposed - 8 Lux compared to 5 Lux. This reflects the difference in character between residential areas from rural areas where there is a greater need to protect dark sky values.

The Proposed District Plan introduces controls around light emission at sports courts and grounds. These controls include hours when lights may be on, levels of light spill onto other sites, and levels of luminous intensity, glare and colour temperature.

Noise Chapter

The Proposed District Plan contains permitted levels of noise for activities undertaken in the different zones in a similar manner to the current District Plan. There are different noise levels for daytime and night-time. However, the proposed increase in the number of zones has been accommodated to ensure noise limits are set for each zone.

What's the difference from the current District Plan?

In general, the residential and rural noise limits are similar as the current Plan. However, in certain zones (such as residential) the levels have been slightly reduced and in other zones they have been slightly increased (such as industrial). The levels are based on expert advice and aim to reflect the character and purpose of the zones whilst ensuring amenity values of people living next to or within the zones is respected.

Some of the existing noise exemptions have been rolled over into the Proposed Plan. However, the list of exemptions has been reduced to ensure that amenity values are appropriately managed. The rules include new requirements for noise from temporary events and temporary military events are subject to a wider range of controls. Helicopter landings associated with Gore Hospital are now exempt and noise from agricultural aviation is enabled subject to limits. Noise and vibration from construction activities are managed with limits on noise and vibration levels included.

The Noise chapter includes specific acoustic treatment requirements. These will apply to buildings used for sensitive activities, such as dwellings, in certain zones, buildings within the railway noise overlay and the State Highway noise overlay. These measures will ensure the amenity of future residents in locations where noise levels may be higher.

Resource consent examples

Below are some scenarios when you would need a resource consent under the Noise and Light Chapters:

- You have an outdoor light that creates a light spill with a higher lux than the Plan permits
- Your activity generates a higher noise level than the Plan permits
- You are undertaking a temporary event where the noise levels and duration will exceed the Plan limits.
- You want to build a dwelling in the Mixed Use Zone but you don't want to include acoustic treatment.

Links to the Proposed District Plan

This information sheet addresses a few of the key provisions in the Proposed District Plan. It should not be used as a definitive representation of content. To view actual Proposed District Plan content, please go to www.lets.talk.goredc.govt.nz

Make a submission

To find out how to submit on the Proposed District Plan, head to www.lets.talk.goredc.govt.nz.