

NOISE COMPLAINTS

Note: Information provided by the Community Alliance of Tenants is for general educational use only. It is not a substitute for the advice of an attorney.

Are you having noise problems with your neighbors?

There is nothing specific in Oregon landlord-tenant law that regulates neighbor-to-neighbor activity or noise. So if the offending noise is coming from another tenant, try talking to that neighbor first. Most noisemakers don't realize they are disturbing others.

It pays to keep good relations with your neighbors – you never know when you'll need them!

Be aware that normal "kid noise" (such as a baby crying or kids playing) is protected under federal and state Fair Housing (anti-discrimination) law. In other words, families with kids can't be penalized for noise that arises from children's normal activity.

If you feel uncomfortable talking with your neighbors, or if talking with them hasn't worked, **try writing your neighbor a letter**. In the letter:

- Be calm and polite
- Document the specific incidences of noise
- Negotiate a compromise, if possible
- Keep a copy of the letter!

You can also try the free and professional mediation services that many communities offer. Mediation is a voluntary process where people with disputes come together, sit down with a mediator, and talk about ways to solve their dispute. In Portland, the number of the **Neighborhood Mediation Center** is **823-3152**. (Call the Oregon Dispute Resolution Commission for other referrals: (503) 378-2877)

You can usually call the police to make a complaint about noise. In **Portland**, the **Police Bureau** focuses on responding to complaints between 10:00 pm and 7:00 am. The **non-emergency** number for the **Portland Police** is **823-4636**.

Check to see if your city or county has a noise ordinance. Ask if there is enforcement of the ordinance. In **Portland**, you can call **Noise Control Hotline** at **823-7350** and make a complaint about commercial/industrial noise, noise across property lines, or noise from televisions, stereos or other machinery that can be heard from outside the unit. If the noise is bothersome to other neighbors, have them call and complain as well.

Both the **Portland Police** and the **Noise Control Office** prioritize their responses based on their workload. They may not be able to respond to your complaint **so try talking or writing to your neighbor first!**

If the letter and/or mediation don't work, try resolving the problem with your landlord. Ultimately, your landlord is responsible for ensuring the peaceful enjoyment of the premises for all the tenants. Your landlord is also responsible for enforcing any rules they might have around noise. Write your landlord a "repair request letter", and include copies of the letter(s) you sent to your neighbors and any additional documentation of the noise and your attempts to resolve the problem.

You can also try asking your landlord to move you to another unit or to install floor and wall carpets or other materials that might help absorb sound.

As long as you complain to your landlord in a reasonable manner at reasonable times, you are protected against retaliation. For example, your landlord can't raise your rent or threaten to kick you out because you've complained to them or have called the police about a noise problem.