

From the Ministries

KIGALI'S NEW NOISE REGULATIONS

Kigali's city authorities have passed new rules against noise pollution. The new regulations require bars, churches and events' organizers to guard against noise pollution in the city or suffer heavy fines. Bruno Rangira, the public relations and communication officer for the city of Kigali said that the regulations come after noise pollution had become a nuisance in the city suburbs especially at night. And to ensure the new regulations are adhered

to, hotlines for all the three districts in Kigali have been put in place for disturbed residents to call and report noise pollution in their neighborhoods. The new regulations now mean roadside music hawkers can no longer play loud music from their verandas to attract customers as the practice is in many Rwandan cities. This would be illegal under the new regulations and if reported could attract fines of up to RWF100, 000, more than \$150 dollars. Taipei tops of Taiwan's noise complaints.

TAIPEI TOPS OF TAIWAN'S NOISE COMPLAINTS

Taipei topped Taiwan's list for the number of nuisance cases reported last year, with noise pollution ranking first among the complaints, according to annual statistics released by the Environmental Protection Administration (EPA). A total of 227,931 nuisance cases were reported last year — an increase of 20,486 compared with 2011, the EPA's Bureau of Environmental Inspection said. The number of reported pollution cases has steadily increased since a national reporting system was established, from 85,768 cases in 1998 to more than 200,000 cases in the past two years, the bureau said. Statistics showed that Taipei ranked No. 1 in the number of

reported cases, with 61,618 cases last year, followed by New Taipei City with 55,821 cases and Greater Taichung with 25,718 cases. The three cities accounted for 62.85 percent of all reported cases nationwide. As for the categories of pollution, EPA statistics showed that noise pollution was the most frequently reported complaint, accounting for about 35 percent, followed by foul odors (26 percent) and poor environmental sanitation (24 percent). Taipei's Da-an District ranked No. 1 in all three aforementioned categories because many residents living in the mixed residential-commercial area in the district complain about loud noises from the stores, Environmental Inspection Deputy Inspector General Yang Su-er said.

NOISE COMPLAINT NUMBERS DOWN FOR YEAR

A total of 872 noise complaints were received by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (Otago, New Zealand) for the year ending April 2013, down 7% on the previous year. The type of complaints received varied from people noise to vehicles, but the majority were about recorded music, Lakes Environmental regulatory and corporate manager Lee Webster said. "There are no distinct suburbs or streets

which get the most complaints. However, the majority of complaints are from residential suburbs," he said. music hawkers can no longer play loud music from their verandas to attract customers as the practice is in many Rwandan cities. This would be illegal under the new regulations and if reported could attract fines of up to RWF100, 000, more than \$150 dollars. Taipei tops of Taiwan's noise complaints.

NOISE IN THE WILDERNESS ANNOYS

The number of visitors annoyed by the continual thud of aircraft flying over Fox and Franz Josef glaciers (New Zealand) has increased to almost one in four. The Department of Conservation's

aircraft monitoring survey showed that, although over half (61 per cent) of all visitors to the glacier valleys felt 'neutral' in terms of how aircraft had affected their visits, 24.8 per cent of respondents reported being 'annoyed'.

CHESTER COUNCIL QUIETEN BUSKERS

Complaints from the public and city centre traders have prompted Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) to issue a warning to buskers and street performers. CWaC introduced stricter rules covering street performers in 2011 after complaints from business leaders who said the noise and presence of buskers was damaging trade. Performers must only stay in the same place for an hour, are not allowed to actively request cash from passers-by and cannot use monuments or street furniture as part of the performances. Council officers and the police have the power to move offenders on and anyone who fails to

comply could face prosecution. Neil Denby, community safety warden for the council, said: "Chester welcomes buskers and public performers as long as they respect the local community they share the streets of Chester with. "The code of conduct has been set up to help performers and local businesses by ensuring buskers move locations after one hour and that their playing volume is of an acceptable and respectable level." Mr Denby organised two drop-in sessions at St Peter's Church near Chester Cross to remind buskers the code means they must keep noise to an acceptable level. CWaC devised the code of conduct for street entertainers to help them stay on the right side of the law.

QUEBEC TO START CHECKING EXHAUST NOISE

The authorities in Quebec, Canada, has initiated a project aiming to reduce the noise pollution: peace officers with proper training are to check the noise levels for mopeds, scooters and motorcycles. This pilot project is expected to start this spring and state officials declared that those found in violation of the current Highway Safety

Code (stating the maximal noise levels) are liable to a \$100 to \$200 fine. Those who will refuse to cooperate in measuring the noise level are liable to \$200 to \$300 fines. The measurement method was developed by a Laval University researcher, the Ministry of Transport and the Societe de l'Assurance Automobile Quebec.

TAMPA COUNCIL TO REVISE NOISE RULES

Tampa City Councilman Frank Reddick has proposed revising the city's noise rules to give police more leeway for ticketing noisy neighbors. Under the proposal, police could use a standard known as "plainly audible" to decide whether the sound coming from a house, business or parking lot is too much. Reddick wants to set the limit at 50 feet. If an officer can clearly hear the

music or other sounds from 50 feet away, the makers could get a ticket. The proposal would loosen the current standard for enforcing noise rules. Police have to measure the sound in decibels with a noise meter, but the Tampa Police Department has just one for each of its three districts. In many cases, by the time an officer retrieves the noise meter and responds to a call from the public, the noise maker has moved on or turned down the volume.

**SILENCING TRAIN HORNS TOO
EXPENSIVE FOR CITY**

An estimated \$3.4 million price tag to silence the high-decibel train horns that sound along the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railway spur track that runs through the east side of Batavia (IL) has proven too costly for the city. The City Services Committee has placed a proposal on hold after realizing chances were minimal for receiving sufficient funding through the Illinois Commerce Commission in Springfield. In response to years of complaints about the whistle blasts, the city hired consultants to prepare conceptual cost estimates and preliminary engineering for upgrades

and improvements to create “quiet zones” at eight public grade crossings. The slow-moving freight trains, running five to six days a week, sound their whistles from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. City Engineer Noel Basquin said Rempe-Sharpe & Associates of Geneva submitted a \$6,800 proposal to prepare a grant application seeking state funding through the ICC. “Staff discussed the potential funding would be in the range of 25 percent to 30 percent and that is an estimate, it could be lower,” Basquin said. Basquin said staff recommended the city not apply given the likelihood of receiving a minimal amount of state assistance.

A419 CAMPAIGNERS WANT CHEAP AND NOISY ROAD SURFACE TO BE REPLACED

Residents living near a busy road which runs between Wiltshire and Gloucestershire have begun a campaign against surface noise. They are calling for a concrete section of the A417/A419 to be resurfaced. The campaigners said noise from the dual carriageway had been a problem since it was built in 1998 and efforts to improve it had so far failed. The A417/A419 bypass runs from the village of Latton near Cricklade, Wiltshire, to Cirencester in the Cotswolds. “This is about righting a wrong,” said Liberal Democrat councillor Paul Hodgkinson, chairman of the A419 Noise Action Group. “Since the completion of the dual carriageway, people living along this section of the road have suffered excessive noise pollution. This massively disruptive problem to everyday life is caused not just by the sheer weight of traffic but by the surface used - concrete.” Mr Hodgkinson added the financial decision to use concrete, rather than more environmentally-friendly asphalt, “has brought misery to thousands”. The group wants the Highways Agency, which is responsible for the section, to replace the concrete with a “quieter and more suitable” material.

WHY WAS RESIDENTIAL BUILDING ALLOWED SO CLOSE TO INDUSTRY?

A noise complaint from a Wincanton resident has led civic leaders to question why homes were built so close to the town's business park. The row erupted after a homeowner on the 21-acre New Barns Farm housing estate complained to South Somerset District Council about noise levels coming from Rochford Garden Machinery, based on the nearby business park. Environmental Health officers said the noise created by the testing of chainsaws at Rochford could have "the potential to become a nuisance". They claimed to observe noise levels of approximately 70 decibels in the resident's living room. Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, businesses could face fines of more than £20,000 per offence if they are in breach of noise regulations. The revelations have caused fury among Wincanton's business owners who have demanded to know why sound checks were not carried out before plans for the New Barns Farm housing estate were first approved in 2006. District councillor Nick Colbert claimed the Environment Agency wrote to South Somerset District Council's planning department in 2005 recommending sound testing should be undertaken before any houses were built. He said: "If it had, the houses would almost certainly have been built further away and acoustic barriers put in place to mitigate the sounds from the business park. Testing should have been carried out as advised, and the housing positioned in a location where there was no conflict." John Smith, chairman of Wincanton Businesses Together, said a buffer zone should have been built between the sites. He said: "There should always be a safe strip of land between any business park and residential estate. The two simply don't go together. Surely the planners or relevant authority should have conducted tests to gauge the average noise levels from the business park? This has the scent of checks not being done when they should have."



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