



PPG 24 Noise Exposure Categories



Principles and specific guidelines on noise and planning issues are given in the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance 24: Planning and Noise.

PPG24 represents published government guidance on planning and noise and contains the criteria most widely used in the UK for determining the suitability of sites for housing. PPG24 sets out a range of Noise Exposure Categories, defined by ranges in noise level, each of which indicates advice to consider during the planning stage for noise sensitive developments close to existing noise sources.

| Noise Exposure Category (NEC) | | Free-field noise levels corresponding to the Noise Exposure Categories for new dwellings $L_{Aeq,T}$ dB | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | | Road Traffic / Mixed Sources | | Rail Traffic | | Air Traffic | |
| | | 07:00 – 23:00 hrs | 23:00 – 07:00 hrs | 07:00 – 23:00 hrs | 23:00 – 07:00 hrs | 07:00 – 23:00 hrs | 23:00 – 07:00 hrs |
| A | Noise need not be considered as a determining factor in granting planning permission, although the noise level at the high end of the category should not be regarded as a desirable level. | <55 | <45 | <55 | <45 | <57 | <48 |
| B | Noise should be taken into account when determining planning applications and, where appropriate, conditions imposed to ensure an adequate level of protection against noise. | 55-63 | 45-57 | 55-66 | 45-59 | 57-66 | 48-57 |
| C | Planning permission should not normally be granted. Where it is considered that permission should be given, for example because there are no alternative quieter sites available, conditions should be imposed to ensure a commensurate level of protection against noise. | 63-72 | 57-66 | 66-74 | 59-66 | 66-72 | 57-66 |
| D | Planning permission should normally be refused. | >72 | >66 | >74 | >66 | >72 | >66 |

Noise Levels: the noise level(s) ($L_{Aeq,T}$) used when deciding the NEC of a site should be representative of typical conditions.

Night Time Noise Levels (2300h-0700h): sites where individual noise events regularly exceed 82dB L_{Amax} (S time weighting) several times in any hour should be treated as being in NEC C, regardless of the $L_{Aeq,8h}$ (except where the $L_{Aeq,8h}$ already puts the site in NEC D).

Aircraft noise: daytime values accord with the contour values adopted by the Department of Transport which relate to levels measured 1.2m above open ground. For the same amount of noise energy, contour values can be up to 2dB(A) higher than those of other sources because of ground reflection effects.

Mixed sources: this refers to any combination of road, rail, air and industrial noise sources. The "mixed source" values are based on the lowest numerical values of the single source limits in the table. The "mixed source" NECs should only be used where no individual noise source is dominant.

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