

# Noise on the Tidal Thames

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The tidal Thames is a working, commercial river, vital to London's success: The Mayor of London has a duty under the Greater London Authority Act of "promoting and encouraging the use of the River Thames safely, in particular for the provision of passenger transport services and for the transportation of freight" (section 41(5)(d)). Accordingly, over 8.5 million people travel on the Thames each year and the Mayor's River Action Plan seeks to ensure that we all make better use of the River Thames and other navigable waterways for freight as well as passengers. The River Thames is also a vital transport artery carrying freight to and from the city. The amount of freight moved on the Thames through the capital has trebled in the last four years. In 2013 over 11 million tonnes of cargo was moved by barge and boat - taking about 900,000 lorry movements off London's roads each year.

Issues regarding noise on London's navigable waterways include the powering of vessels; tourist and party boats, piers and moorings; wharves and boatyards. The scale and nature of issues and solutions can vary widely. Competing uses, such as leisure (tourism and party boats) and recreation, heritage, freight transport, infrastructure projects and regeneration, all need to be considered and balanced – as do the needs of those living and working adjacent to the river. Due to the nature of marine operations, and the hours of work often relating to the tidal cycle, noise cannot be eliminated entirely from operations on the water, but there are a number of codes of practice available to operators and these should be followed to minimise noise as far as practicable.

Various agencies have powers to regulate noise on the Thames:

- The Maritime and Coastguard Agency requires the fitting of noise limiters for navigational safety purposes, notably to prevent interference with on-board communication.
- The London Port Health Authority undertakes launch-based patrols and works jointly with riparian [riverside] London Boroughs, the Passenger Boat Association, London River Services, the Port of London Authority and the Metropolitan Police to deal with noise on the tidal Thames.
- The London Port Health Authority has general powers to investigate complaints about excessive noise on the river; the riparian Boroughs have powers under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to address nuisance being caused within their areas - however, due to the transient and intermittent nature of the problem it is often difficult to investigate.
- Transport for London (TfL) requires operators using its piers to adhere to ensure that nuisance is not caused.
- Boats used for recreation are regulated under the Licensing Act 2003 for alcohol and some entertainment, granted by the local authority in which they dock. Licenses include conditions requiring that public nuisance is prevented.

If there is a persistent, repeated noise problem, please contact your local Borough's Environmental Health Department and copy the London Port Health Authority into that email. Below is a list of the riparian Boroughs' contact details, along with that of the London Port Health Authority. When lodging a complaint it is important that as much information as possible is provided, as detailed on the Diary of Disturbance which can be found on the webpage.

London Port Health Authority	<a href="mailto:porthealth.denton@cityoflondon.gov.uk">porthealth.denton@cityoflondon.gov.uk</a>
LB Havering	<a href="mailto:environmental.health@havering.gov.uk">environmental.health@havering.gov.uk</a>
LB Bexley	Go to Bexley BC home page and search for noise/nuisance
LB Barking & Dagenham	<a href="mailto:3000direct@lbbd.gov.uk">3000direct@lbbd.gov.uk</a>
RB Greenwich	<a href="mailto:noise.team@royalgreenwich.gov.uk">noise.team@royalgreenwich.gov.uk</a>
LB Newham	<a href="mailto:Corporate.Complaints@newham.gov.uk">Corporate.Complaints@newham.gov.uk</a>
LB Lewisham	<a href="mailto:noiseandnuisance@lewisham.gov.uk">noiseandnuisance@lewisham.gov.uk</a>
LB Tower Hamlets	<a href="mailto:environmentalhealth@towerhamlets.gov.uk">environmentalhealth@towerhamlets.gov.uk</a>
LB Southwark	<a href="mailto:noiseandnuisance@southwark.gov.uk">noiseandnuisance@southwark.gov.uk</a>
City of London	<a href="mailto:publicprotection@cityoflondon.gov.uk">publicprotection@cityoflondon.gov.uk</a>
LB Westminster	<a href="mailto:noiseteam2@westminster.gov.uk">noiseteam2@westminster.gov.uk</a>
LB Lambeth	<a href="mailto:noise@lambeth.gov.uk">noise@lambeth.gov.uk</a>
RB Kensington & Chelsea	<a href="mailto:environmentalhealth@rbkc.gov.uk">environmentalhealth@rbkc.gov.uk</a>
LB Wandsworth	<a href="mailto:esd@wandsworth.gov.uk">esd@wandsworth.gov.uk</a>
LB Hammersmith & Fulham	<a href="mailto:environmentalprotection@lbhf.gov.uk">environmentalprotection@lbhf.gov.uk</a>

London Port Health Authority	<a href="mailto:porthealth.denton@cityoflondon.gov.uk">porthealth.denton@cityoflondon.gov.uk</a>
LB Richmond upon Thames	<a href="mailto:commercialeh@richmond.gov.uk">commercialeh@richmond.gov.uk</a>
LB Hounslow	<a href="mailto:pollution@hounslow.gov.uk">pollution@hounslow.gov.uk</a>