

NOISE

PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE:

Noise can be a significant environmental problem and there is extensive documentation as to its effect on health. The effects of excessive noise include hearing loss and non-auditory physiological responses such as cardio-vascular effects, effects on the fetus and arousal responses, as well as stressor responses. Excessive noise may also interfere with performance and disturb sleep.

ROLE OF THE HEALTH OFFICER:

New Hampshire has no laws concerning acceptable noise levels with the exception of RSA 266. This law sets a level for measurable noise levels from motorcycles. Towns may also have their own local ordinances for other sources of noise, or noise levels, which would then be enforceable by the health officer.

Health officers may inspect and request or recommend that the person(s) responsible for noise alter their actions to lower the noise level. However, without a specific state law or local ordinances, the health officer would not be in a position to order someone to reduce a noise level.