

How to use your Opera noise recording machine

April 2012

The Opera noise recorder that has been installed in your premises is a type of very accurate tape recorder.

It is being used with your co-operation to record the noise you are experiencing at times when we cannot be present. We may use these recordings to refer your case to the Environmental Health Noise Patrol or they may be included as evidence in legal action that we may take against the perpetrator.

Using the Opera noise recorder

- When you hear the noise that is disturbing you, simply press the green on/off button marked "Audio" on the handset. A green light appears when the Opera noise recorder is recording.
- Remember that each time you switch on the recorder you must state: what the time is, the date and where the noise is coming from
- While recording continue your daily routine, i.e., keep the television/radio on, continue your conversation etc.
- To switch off the recorder just press the green on/off button marked "Audio" on the handset. This will now turn black showing that the recorder is turned off.
- We recommend that you record a number of 30 SECOND periods when the noise is happening. It is also important to record two 30 SECOND periods when there is no noise so the recorder can gain a sample of background noise. This allows us to compare the noise levels from normal to when you are disturbed.
- You must also fill out a record sheet each time you make a recording. Describe the noise you are hearing, how loud it is, where it is coming from and how long it has been on for.
- The recorder and the microphone are very sensitive and must not be moved, nor the power switched off. If either of these occur the recording system will switch off permanently and no recording will be made.

Frequently Asked Questions

What outcomes can I expect from using the Opera Machine?

The machine is designed to help collect evidence against an alleged perpetrator of noise nuisance, which will help us to reach a decision about the appropriate course of action to take. This evidence and any other evidence gathered e.g. noise diaries, will be used by the ASB Assistant to decide whether or not it is necessary to take further action. For instance they might recommend mediation, send a warning letter to the perpetrator or decide that there is insufficient evidence to take further action. Your ASB Assistant will discuss this decision with you and advise you of the various options that are available.

Can evidence gathered using the machines be used to commence legal proceedings?

Evidence gathered from Opera machines cannot be used on its own to commence legal proceedings. Noise nuisance must be witnessed first-hand by a representative from Islington Council. Evidence gathered from the Opera machines may be able to assist in a legal case as part of a larger body of evidence.

What sounds will the machine record?

The equipment is very sensitive and so will record everything you hear. However, the machines are less effective for recording impact noises, such as doors slamming or balls bouncing, than for consistent noise such as music. We do not recommend recording for long periods as it is more effective to record a number of 30 second recordings over a period of time so that we have a representative sample of the noise you are experiencing.

What else should I be doing?

As well as using the machine to record noises you should also keep a noise diary. The best evidence that can be collected is when the noise is witnessed first-hand by a member of Islington Council staff, so it's a good idea to call either your ASB Assistant, Tenancy Management Advisor, Public Protection Officer or Out of Hours Services in the event of loud or disruptive noise occurring. Recordings and noise diary logs should also be completed in these instances.

What should I do if the machine stops working?

If your machine stops working contact your Area Housing Office and they will be able to assist you. Do not tamper with or turn off the machine as this may damage the evidence already collected by the machine.

Contact details

Anti-social behaviour out of office hours hotline
020 7527 7272 (24 hours)

Highbury House Area Housing office

4-5 Highbury Crescent
London N5 1RN
Tel: 020 7527 5300
Email: highbury.house@islington.gov.uk

Holland Walk Area Housing Office

85-88 Holland Walk

London N19 3XS

Tel: 020 7527 7497

Fax: 020 7527 7407

Email: holland.walk@islington.gov.uk

Old Street Area Housing Office

41-47 Old Street

London EC1V 9HX

Tel: 020 7527 6524

Fax: 020 7527 6207

Email: old.street@islington.gov.uk