

Making Some Noise About Noise

February 2011

Birds, cars, neighbors, lawnmowers, airplanes – all contributors to the barrage of noise we hear every day. Noise is measured in “decibels”, with normal human conversation measuring about 70 decibels and a chain saw nearly double at about 130 decibels.

Living near industrial facilities like those in Alberta’s Industrial Heartland can add to our daily dose of noise. Most often, industrial site noise is from typical sources such as vehicles, machinery, and equipment operation. Sometimes, unfamiliar noise is heard from industrial sites due to temporary construction, routine maintenance, training or drills. It is important to note that occasionally, changes in the community (tree is removed, house is built) or seasons (leaves come down in fall) cause sound to bounce differently and be heard in places it wasn’t before.

A newly developed “Regional Noise Management Plan” is currently being implemented to help manage noise effectively in the region. It is the first of its kind in North America and adopts best practices in noise management. Each industrial company taking part in the plan is responsible for implementing the plan independently. Under the ERCB’s Amended Noise Control Directive D-038, a noise management plan must identify noise sources, assess current noise mitigation programs, assess effectiveness of noise control devices, and outline methods of noise measurement, best practices, and continuous improvement. The plan must incorporate input from all affected persons, including local neighbors, industry, and local government. Once the Regional Noise Management Plan is operational, annual reporting is required to ensure compliance. Planned and random audits will be undertaken to confirm effectiveness and to track and report progress.

If you are ever curious about loud noise or alarms from industrial facilities, call the UPDATEline at 1-866-653-9959. It is a 24 hour telephone information line for the community to access. Industrial companies post recorded messages about noise, as well as other industrial site activities.

*Brought to you by **Life in the Heartland**, a partnership aimed at improving access to information, contacts, and resources for residents in and around Alberta’s Industrial Heartland. For more information, visit www.lifeintheheartland.com or email info@lifeintheheartland.com.*