

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING AND RECORDING NOISE COMPLAINTS AT MILITARY INSTALLATIONS



USACHPPM TECHNICAL GUIDE 044
January 2008



APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

This guide was prepared by the Operational Noise Program, Directorate of Environmental Health Engineering Division

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING AND RECORDING NOISE COMPLAINTS AT MILITARY INSTALLATIONS

1. **PURPOSE.** Army Regulation 200-1, Environmental Protection and Enhancement, directs installations to monitor, record, archive and address operational noise complaints. Although many installations follow this directive, few have a systematic method for recording the complaints. Consequently, much valuable information on the correlation of complaints with operational noise source and the locations from which the noise complaints originate is lost or scattered among various offices. The purpose of this guide is to aid installations in developing a systematic method for recording information on noise complaints and, more importantly, asking the right questions to obtain more useful information from those citizens who complain about operational noise. Adherence to the suggested procedures should provide a solid base for installation personnel to make decisions about the noise environment.

2. **IMPLEMENTING THIS GUIDE.** The heart of this guide is the suggested noise complaint questionnaire forms (See Appendix A, CHPPM Form 457 and CHPPM Form 458), but having a complaint questionnaire is only one step in the total process. Appendix A provides both long detailed and short questionnaire forms. These two questionnaire forms were developed to provide for both large installations with multiple activities and small National Guard training sites with limited activities.

a. The first step is letting the area residents know that the installation/garrison commander is concerned with their environment and wants to hear their concerns. This is essentially a public information effort. Publicizing a specific office or single point of contact to handle noise complaints and answer questions can improve community relations.

b. The second step is to make sure that noise complaints are routed to the proper office. The Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine's operational noise personnel have found that lack of standard operating procedures (SOP) for handling noise complaints leads to confusion about the seriousness of specific noise problems and a loss of useful information.

c. The third step is to make sure that forms, similar to the following samples in Appendix A, are locally developed, made available, and that the people responsible for completing them are trained. The suggested questionnaire forms contained in this guide are designed to cover most noise complaints that will be received by Army installations. The format is intended to aid the interviewer in asking the right questions by following a series of sequential steps. A privacy act statement in the questionnaire may be required depending on local policies.

d. The fourth step is to complete the follow-up through the appropriate office. This requires good coordination and communication among all involved offices. Appendices B and C contain samples of suggested follow-up memorandums intended to aid in locating the source of aircraft noise and blast noise complaints, respectively.

3. RETENTION OF RECORDS. See Army Records Information Management System (ARIMS) 2001b, Environmental Quality for the disposition of these records. By accumulating data on the response to Army noise over a long period; it will become possible to spot trends and problem areas.

4. WHEN PEOPLE CALL TO COMPLAIN. Complaints typically are made only by a small percentage of the people who are bothered by noise in their communities. People who call to complain are often angry because they feel that the negative impact on their lives has been too large. Remember, individuals may respond to the same sound in quite different ways, and their perception is their reality. Handling noise complaints is mainly reactive and can involve high-stress communication. If proactive community involvement did not prevent the caller from becoming excessively annoyed, the installation-community relationship requires repair. This is often possible by replying to complaints with an explanation of what training is responsible for the noise, why such training is necessary, how often it is scheduled, and how long the training will go on. Effective complaint management communication is challenging. Here are some suggested tips for dealing with callers:

- a. Understand the goal of complaint management and the limits of what you can do.
- b. Be courteous and honest.
- c. Demonstrate integrity and sensitivity to build trust.
- d. Let the caller know that a detailed log of complaints is kept and regularly reported to the command group; this lets the caller know that complaints are taken seriously.
- e. When appropriate, say: "Every effort will be made to correct the problem, mission permitting."
- f. Never selectively release information.
- g. Never lie or stretch the truth.
- h. Maintain current fact sheets and questions/answers to send to complainants.
- i. Investigate without delay.

j. Do not make promises you cannot keep.

k. Make a commitment to the caller to follow up (e.g., call back with more information) whenever necessary.

5. As with other noise management outreach, you should be careful not to sound defensive. As an installation representative, your response is considered installation policy. The proper handling of noise complaints can be used to educate the complainant about the importance of the installation's mission. Again, a detailed complaint log can provide useful information about noise impacts and help to plan future mitigation activities. In addition, such records should be kept for quality assurance purposes.

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**APPENDIX A
LONG / DETAILED
NOISE COMPLAINT QUESTIONNAIRE**

**LONG / DETAILED
NOISE COMPLAINT QUESTIONNAIRE**

The proponent of this form is MCHB-TS-EON

Instructions:

This questionnaire is to be used whenever a person contacts your office concerning operational noise problems. The form contains a series of steps, each involving questions to be asked of the inquirer, along with directions to be followed for various types of answers. Begin with Step 1. (Always thank the complainant for calling when you end the interview.)

STEP 1.

Question: Are you calling to obtain information or to make a formal complaint?

- Information
- Complaint

- IF INFORMATION, PROVIDE THE FACTS, TERMINATE INTERVIEW, AND FILE THIS FORM.
- IF COMPLAINT, GO TO STEP 2.

STEP 2. READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO THE INQUIRER:

"IN ORDER TO HELP US AVOID FUTURE NOISE DISTURBANCES, WE HAVE DEVELOPED A SERIES OF QUESTIONS DESIGNED TO PINPOINT THE EXACT CAUSE OF YOUR COMPLAINT. I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU SEVERAL QUESTIONS."

INSERT PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT HERE.

Question: Are you willing to answer some questions about your complaint?

- Yes
- No

- IF YES, GO TO STEP 3.
- IF NO, TERMINATE INTERVIEW AND FILE THIS FORM.

STEP 3. GATHERING BASIC DATA:

Question: What is your name, address, and telephone number?

Question: Where are you located in relation to our post?

North Northeast

East Southeast

South Southwest

West Northwest

Question: When did the annoying noise occur?

FILL IN DATE _____

FILL IN TIME _____

Question: What was making the noise? (CHECK ANSWER(S))

Aircraft

Explosion

Trucks

Buses

Machinery

Motorcycles

Other: _____

IF AIRCRAFT IS CIRCLED, GO TO STEP 4.A.
IF EXPLOSION IS CIRCLED, GO TO STEP 4.B.
IF ANYTHING ELSE, CONTINUE.

Question: Is the noise source military or civilian?

Military

Civilian

Question: Describe the source of noise (such as large Army truck without adequate muffler).

Question: If a motor vehicle, what was its make? Color? Other distinguishing features?

TERMINATE INTERVIEW AND FILE THIS FORM.

STEP 4.A. FOR AIRCRAFT ONLY.

Question: Where were you when the aircraft flew over?

Indoors

Outdoors

Question: How did the noise affect you?

Startled me

Woke me

Frightened the pet

Disturbed livestock

Woke a child

Rattled the house

Interfered with conversation

Interfered with TV/radio

Question: How many times did the disturbance occur?

Once

Twice

3 to 7 times

7 to 15 times

More than 16 times

Question: Did you see the Plane?

Yes

No

IF YES, GO TO STEP 4.A.1.
IF NO, TO TO STEP 4.A.2.

STEP 4.A.1. VISUAL DESCRIPTION OF AIRCRAFT.

Question: Which of the following best describes the design of the aircraft?

- Helicopter With one rotor With two rotors Unknown
- Jet With one engine With two engines With four engines Unknown
- Plane With one propeller With two propellers With four propellers Unknown

Question: What color was the aircraft? _____

Question: Did it have a Red Cross or any other marking?

Question: In what direction was the aircraft flying?

- North Northeast
- East Southeast
- South Southwest
- West Northwest
- In circles

Question: Any other intonation about the incident?

STEP 4.A.2. AUDITORY DESCRIPTION OF AIRCRAFT.

Question: What kind of aircraft do you think made the noise?

- Small helicopter
- Large helicopter
- Small jet
- Large jet
- Small propeller-driven
- Large propeller-driven plane

Question: What do you think the aircraft was doing?

- Landing
- Taking off
- Passing by
- Circling

TERMINATE INTERVIEW AND GO TO STEP 5.A.

STEP 4.B. FOR BLASTS AND EXPLOSIONS ONLY:

Question: Where were you when the noise disturbed you?

- Indoors
- Outdoors

Question: How did the noise disturb you?

- Rattled windows
- Startled me
- Woke me
- Frightened the pet
- Disturbed livestock
- Woke a child
- Shook the house
- Cracked plaster
- Broke a window
- Other _____

Question: How many blasts were disturbing?

- 1
- 2
- 3 to 7 times
- 7 to 15 times
- More than 16 times

Question: How closely spaced were these explosions?

- Close like machine gun
- Several all at once
- 5 to 10 minutes apart
- More than 10 minutes apart

Question: How long did the disturbance last?

- Less than 5 minutes
- 5 to 30 minutes
- 30 minutes to 1 hour
- 1 to 2 hours
- 2 to 4 hours
- 4 to 8 hours
- All day
- All night

Question: Any other information about the incident:

TERMINATE INTERVIEW AND GO TO STEP 5.B.

STEP 5.A. WEATHER DURING AIRCRAFT NOISE COMPLAINT.

CALL THE AIR FORCE WEATHER DETACHMENT OR NEAREST WEATHER STATION FOR A DESCRIPTION OF THE WEATHER DURING THE COMPLAINT PERIOD. CIRCLE THE DESCRIPTION WHICH BEST FITS THE WEATHER WHEN THE ANNOYANCE OCCURRED:

WEATHER EXT. _____

- Overcast, poor visibility
- Cold and clear
- Warm and hazy
- Other _____

RECORD THE DIRECTION AND SPEED OF SURFACE WIND _____

MAKE A COPY OF THIS FORM, FILE ORIGINAL, AND SEND COPY TO AVIATION UNIT COMMANDER AND/OR AIRFIELD COMMANDER ALONG WITH MEMORANDUM (SEE TG 044, APPENDIX B).

STEP 5.B. WEATHER DURING BLAST NOISE COMPLAINT.

IF AVAILABLE, CALL THE DIVISION ARTILLERY METEOROLOGICAL DETACHMENT AND ASK WHETHER A RADIOSONDE BALLOON RUN HAS OCCURRED WITHIN 4 HOURS OF THE REPORTED ANNOYANCE. IF A COMPUTER MET MESSAGE IS AVAILABLE, FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FOR ALTITUDES UP TO 3500 METERS:

DIVISION ARTILLERY METEOROLOGICAL DETACHMENT EXT. _____

ALTITUDE (meters)	TEMPERATURE (°F)	WIND SPEED (mph)	WIND DIRECTION
SURFACE			
200			
500			
1000			
1500			
2000			
2500			
3000			
3500			

OR CALL THE AIR FORCE WEATHER DETACHMENT OR NEAREST WEATHER STATION FOR A DESCRIPTION OF THE WEATHER DURING THE TIME OF ANNOYANCE. CIRCLE THE MOST APPROPRIATE DESCRIPTION OF THE WEATHER AT THE TIME, SUCH AS:

AIR FORCE WEATHER DETACHMENT EXT. _____

- Steady wind of 5-10 mph with gusts in direction of complainant
- Clear with layering of smoke or fog
- Day following a day when large extremes of temperature (about 20°C) occurred between day or night
- Generally high barometer reading with low temperature
- Other _____

MAKE A COPY OF THIS FORM, FILE ORIGINAL, AND SEND COPY TO RANGE CONTROL DIVISION ALONG WITH MEMORANDUM (SEE TG 044, APPENDIX B).

STEP 6.

REVIEWED BY (Name/Rank/Unit): _____ Date _____

RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION:

SHORT NOISE COMPLAINT QUESTIONNAIRE

**SHORT
NOISE COMPLAINT QUESTIONNAIRE**
The proponent of this form is MCHB-TS-EON

1. PERSON TAKING COMPLAINT: _____

2. DATE COMPLAINT TAKEN: _____

3. TIME OF COMPLAINT: _____

4. COMPLAINT INFORMATION:

a. Complainant Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone Number: _____

b. Direction complainant is located from the training site: _____

c. When did the disturbance occur?
Date: _____
Time: _____

d. Noise Source: Aircraft Explosion Vehicles
 Other _____

e. How did the noise effect you?

<input type="checkbox"/> Startled me	<input type="checkbox"/> Woke me	<input type="checkbox"/> Rattled the house
<input type="checkbox"/> Frightened pet	<input type="checkbox"/> Disturbed	<input type="checkbox"/> Interfered with conversation
<input type="checkbox"/> Interfered with TV/radio	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	_____

f. How many times did the disturbance occur?

g. How long did the disturbance last?

h. Any other information about the incident?

5. THANK THE CALLER FOR CALLING AND INFORM HIM/HER THAT THE COMPLAINT WILL BE FORWARDED TO THE PROPER AUTHORITY, i.e., RANGE CONTROL OR AIRFIELD COMMANDER

6. DESCRIBE THE WEATHER DURING THE TIME OF THE COMPLAINT:

7. FILE ORIGINAL AND SEND COPY TO APPROPRIATE OFFICES.

8. REVIEWED BY (Name/Rank/Unit): _____ Date _____

9. RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION:

10. COMPLAINT CLOSED WITH CALLER (IF REQUIRED)

_____ Date _____

Name/Rank/Title

APPENDIX B
AIRCRAFT FOLLOW-UP FORM MEMO



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY CENTER FOR HEALTH PROMOTION AND PREVENTIVE MEDICINE
5158 BLACKHAWK ROAD
ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND MD 21010-5403

OFFICE SYMBOL

Date

MEMORANDUM FOR Commander, Fort Dusty (STEW-AF), Army Airfield,
Ft Dusty, NM XXXXX-XXXX

SUBJECT: Aircraft Noise Complaint Follow-up

1. Enclosed is a copy of a complaint received concerning aircraft noise. Please review the record of complaint, answer the following questions, and return the information to this office. The information may be of assistance in future planning to avoid noise complaints through effective land-use controls.

a. Were any Army aircraft flying near the complaint's location during the complaint period?

___ Yes (If yes, go to b) ___ No (If no, go to d)

b. Who was flying the Army aircraft?

___ Active Duty ___ Reserve ___ National Guard

c. What type of Army aircraft was it?

Rotary-wing

Fixed-wing

- ___ UH-1
- ___ UH-60
- ___ OH-58
- ___ OH-6
- ___ CH-46
- ___ CH-47
- ___ CH-63
- ___ AH-1
- ___ AH-64

- ___ C-12
- ___ C-14
- ___ C-21
- ___ C-130
- ___ C-5
- ___ C-17
- Other _____

Readiness thru Health

Note: This suggested format is intended to elicit relevant information as to the possible cause of the noise complaint.

OFFICE SYMBOL
SUBJECT: Aircraft Noise Complaint Follow-up

d. If this was not an Army and/or military aircraft, what type of aircraft do you believe was actually responsible for the complaint (based on information provided in Steps 4.A.1 and 4.A.2 attached)?

e. Was the aircraft flying a standard route? ____ Yes ____ No

f. What was its route and altitude (AGL) at the time of the complaint?

2. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Fred Jones, Public Affairs Office, ext. X-XXXX

FOR THE COMMANDER:

JOHN SMITH
Chief
Public Affairs Office

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APPENDIX C
BLAST NOISE COMPLAINT FOLLOW-UP



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY CENTER FOR HEALTH PROMOTION AND PREVENTIVE MEDICINE
5158 BLACKHAWK ROAD
ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND MD 21010-5403

OFFICE SYMBOL

Date

MEMORANDUM FOR Commander, Fort Dusty, (STEW-RC), Range Control,
Ft Dusty, AZ XXXXX-XXXX

SUBJECT: Blast Noise Complaint Follow-up

1. Enclosed is a copy of a complaint received concerning blast noise. Based on the time and duration of the disturbance, and the number of disturbing blasts and their pattern, it may be possible for your office to identify the probable cause of the complaint.
2. Please review the location of the complainant and the location of various range activities at the time of the complaint, check all applicable items in the following list, provide the distance to the complainant in meters and return the information to this office.

a. Did any of the following occur?

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Firing of 81mm or greater mortar, | Distance? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Firing of 105mm howitzer or greater, | Distance? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Firing of 25mm or greater gun, | Distance? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Firing of 105mm or greater tank gun, | Distance? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Firing of TOW, Dragon or Hellfire missile, | Distance? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Firing of Javelin, THADD, Patriot missile, | Distance? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Impact of HE round from above weapons, | Distance? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Detonation of an explosive charge, | Distance? _____ Size? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Firing of shape or cratering charge, | Distance? _____ Size? _____ |

b. In your opinion, were any of the sources checked above actually responsible for the complaint? If yes, which weapon (s)?

Readiness thru Health

Note: This suggested format is intended to elicit relevant information as to the possible cause of the noise complaint.

OFFICE SYMBOL
SUBJECT: Blast Noise Complaint Follow-up

c. If not, what do you think is the probable cause of the complaint?

3. If you have any questions please contact Mr. Fred Jones, Public Affairs Office, ext. X-XXXX

FOR THE COMMANDER:

JOHN SMITH
Chief
Public Affairs Office