

February 2024

Building and construction regulation in Copenhagen



Good advice for contractors, consultants and property developers

If you are a property developer, a contractor, or a consultant about to build, demolish or renovate, there are a number of rules with which you need to comply so as to subject the neighbours who live in the vicinity of your contracting and construction site to the fewest possible noise and dust nuisances.

Read about the rules of this regulation pertaining to building sites within the City of Copenhagen before you establish a building site and initiate contracting work.

On the first two pages, we have assembled the most important advice and rules pertaining to the organisation and operation of building sites.

Avoid noise nuisances

- Use machinery and work methods that will cause the least possible noise, and organise the building site in a way that will screen off noise
- The noise generated by your building and construction work must be within the noise-limit values – listed in appendix A.
- Music on building sites often represents a nuisance to neighbours. Be considerate when you play music – e.g. only indoors or use protective hearing devices incorporating a radio.

Avoid dust nuisances

- Organise the work site and use machinery that will subject the surrounding world to the least possible dust inconveniences. Take care to use appropriate covering, use screening and sprinkling – particularly during dry periods – so as to prevent the dust from spreading.

- If you are about to renovate façades, the work area must be thoroughly encased before you commence work on cleaning the façade. You can learn more about the rules in respect of façade renovation in s.6.

Comply with working hours

- Noisy and dusty building and construction work shall solely be permitted between 7.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. Monday to Friday; and between 8.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. on Saturdays. Find more examples of noisy activities under s.8
- Exceptionally noisy activities – for instance concrete cutting, the breaking up of concrete, or blast cleaning shall solely be permitted on weekdays between 8.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. You can find more examples of exceptionally noisy activities under s.9.
- Be sure to comply with the rules for working hours – this brings about fewer complaints and better relations with the neighbours

Notify the neighbours

- If your building activities are exceptionally noisy, you must – no later than 4 weekdays prior to the commencement of the work – notify the neighbours about what is going to happen and for how long you expect the exceptionally noisy work to go on.
- Likewise, you should notify the neighbours if you have been granted a deviation permit in respect of work carried out during odd hours, or in case of plans being changed or cancelled.
- In respect of major projects, you should continuously brief the neighbourhood on progress, delays etc. – for instance on a website for the project.

You need not give notification of emergency work

- In respect of emergency breakdown of power, water or internet cables taking place outside working hours, you are not required to notify the neighbours before you commence remedial work.
- But please remember that, subsequently and within the passage of 24 hours, you must apply for a dispensation. Here, you shall state the grounds for why the performance of the work outside the permitted working hours was urgent and necessary.
- If the work exceeds 24 hours, you must notify the neighbours as to the duration of the work.

Other helpful advice

- Remember to switch off the light when you leave the construction site. If the light needs to be switched on during the night, you should ensure that this will not cause any inconvenience to the neighbours.
- Please remember to tidy up – both inside and outside the construction-site area. Especially during periods of windy weather.

Specifically concerning asbestos

Work with asbestos is subject to national legislation and, hence, not an element in these present regulations. If, however, you are to take down and dispose of asbestos in connection of your building or construction work, you shall pay particular attention to the facts that:

- Work with asbestos must be reported to the Danish Working Environment Authority.¹
- Asbestos waste shall be reported to the municipality, packaged and disposed in respect of the provisions in force.²
- In so far as possible, a sheet of fibre cement roofing containing asbestos shall be taken down in its entirety.
- High-pressure washing of asbestos-containing materials shall solely be performed by firms holding a valid dispensation issued by the Working Environment Authority.

¹ Consolidated act on asbestos, Act no. 807 of 15/06/2023

² Consolidated act on waste, Act no. 2159 of 09/12/2020

Regulation for certain environmental circumstances in respect of building and construction work within the City of Copenhagen

This present regulation was prepared in respect of s. 20(2) and s. 24(2) of the Danish Ministry of Environment's consolidated act no. 844 of 23/06/2017 on the environmental regulation of certain activities (the Consolidated Act on Environmental Activity).

Adopted by the Copenhagen City Council on 29 February 2024

Scope of validity and definitions

S. 1(1) This regulation shall be valid within the area of Copenhagen City.

- (2) The rules of this regulation shall not exempt executing subcontractors from obtaining necessary authorisations, permits or dispensations from other authorities or other legislation, for instance waste, soil and sewage.

S. 2(1) The regulation shall apply in respect of temporary public or private building and construction works, for instance new construction, the demolition and renovation of buildings, the renovation of bridges and tunnels, road repair and track maintenance work, the clean-up of façades and constructions, etc.

- (2) The regulation comprises noise- or dust-generating activities in connection with building and construction work.

- (3) The regulation also comprises activities that are directly linked with building and construction works, such as e.g. the organisation of construction sites.

- (4) The regulation shall not apply in respect of non-commercial self-build processes and the renovation of own dwelling with the owner himself carrying out the work.

- (5) In case of doubt, the Copenhagen City's Technical and Environmental Administration shall decide what shall rate among building and construction activities.

Noise

- S. 3(1)** The executing contractor shall comply with the permissible limit values for noise exposure levels from building and construction work, cf. Appendix A.
- (2) Exceptionally noisy activities cf. s. 9 are exempt from the permissible limit values for noise exposure levels set out in appendix A, but comprised by the provisions on limited working hours, cf. s. 9.
- S. 4(1)** The Technical and Environmental Administration may require that the contractor carry out a noise measurement in connection with building and contracting activities in case it is discovered that such activities give rise to significant pollution of the surroundings. Measurements required by the administration shall be carried out by an authorised and accredited measurement firm. A list of accredited and authorized measurement firms is available on the Danish environmental protection agency's website.
- S. 5(1)** Regardless of the provision set out in s. 3, the choice of machinery, working methods, and organisation of the workplace shall be made with a view to the least possible noise inconveniencing of the neighbourhood.
- (2) Blast cleaning shall solely be permitted with the simultaneous supplement of water (wet method).
- (3) The Technical and Environmental Administration may require documentation demonstrating that the chosen machinery and work methods are the gentlest in respect of generated noise in the environment.
- (4) For the purpose of limiting noise levels, the Technical and Environmental Administration may require the application of alternative machinery and work methods.

Dust

S. 6(1) The choice of machinery, work methods and work site arrangement shall be made so as to generate the lowest possible levels in respect of dust, e.g. by way of covering and the sprinkling of water.

- (2) In respect of demonstrated dust nuisance, the Technical and Environmental Administration may require the encasement of scaffolding, refuse chutes and containers, or flexible screening in front of the workplace in question.
- (3) During dry periods, the contractor shall, at regular intervals, carry out sprinkling or other remedial measures in connection with dust-generating activities.
- (4) In connection with the cleaning of façade and constructions, work area and scaffolding must be tightly encased prior to the commencement of the cleaning. Such encasing shall consist of tarpaulin or plastic material to prevent the work from giving rise to significant dust or splatter nuisance in respect of the residents of the property, passers-by, and the surroundings, cf. appendix C.
- (5) In case of doubt, the Technical and Environmental Administration shall determine the extent of adequate water sprinkling, covering and other measures.

Working hours

S. 7(1) Noisy and dusty building and contracting work is permitted on weekdays Monday to Friday between 7.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. and on Saturdays between 8.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m.

S. 8(1) Regardless of the limits for noise exposure levels set out in appendix A, the following activities shall solely be permitted on weekdays from Monday to Friday between 7.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. and on Saturdays between 8.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m.:

- The use of electrical drilling and cutting machinery or similar tools
- The use of a tower crane and the similar
- The use of electrical lifting gear and the similar
- The use of pneumatic tools
- The assembly and dismantling of scaffolding
- The loading and unloading of building materials and waste
- Similar noisy activities.
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(2) In case of doubt, the Technical and Environmental Administration shall decide what shall be construed as noisy activities.

S. 9(1) Exceptionally noisy activities shall solely be permitted on weekdays, Monday to Friday between 8.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. Exceptionally noisy activities shall for instance be:

- The driving-in of sheet piles, piles or the similar
- The establishment of diaphragm walls, secant piles or ground Anchors
- Prolonged cutting and grinding activities, e.g. the cutting and grinding of concrete, asphalt cutting, metal cutting, or the similar
- Concrete demolition and crushing
- High-pressure washing and blasting in connection with façade treatment etc.
- The use of refuse chutes for the disposal of building materials and waste
- Similar exceptionally noisy activities

(2) In case of doubt, the Technical and Environmental Administration shall decide what shall be construed as exceptionally noisy activities.

Dispensation

S. 10(1) For a restricted period, the Technical and Environmental Administration may permit building and contracting works, which cannot comply with the permissible exposure levels within the time limits specified in s. 7, to be carried out within the said time limits.

- (2) In exceptional cases (owing to safety, traffic-related or constructional circumstances), the Technical and Environmental Administration may permit noisy building and contracting works to be carried out outside the time limits specified in s. 7 and, further, grant exemption from the provisions set out in ss. 7, 8 and 9.
- (3) Any application for dispensation from noise limits or from working hours shall be substantiated and forwarded to the Technical and Environmental Administration.

An application for dispensation shall be sent to the Technical and Environmental Administration via the municipality's website, www.kk.dk. prior to the commencement of the work. The work can first be commenced when a dispensation has been granted.

- (4) No dispensation shall be required in the event of urgent or emergency work necessitated by the consideration of the security of supplies, public health or the infrastructure, cf. appendix B.
- (5) The executing contractor must subsequently forward documentation to the Technical and Environmental Administration in respect of the necessity and nature of the work that has been carried out. In case of prolonged urgent or emergency work, neighbours and other affected parties shall be notified, cf. s. 11.

In case of doubt, the Technical and Environmental Administration shall decide what can be rated as urgent or emergency work.

- (6) In dispensation matters, the Technical and Environmental Administration may define particular terms in respect of the performance of the work.
- (7) A copy of the dispensation shall at all times be kept at the workplace to be produced on request.

- (8) If a dispensation is not used, the Technical and Environmental Administration shall be notified thereof via stoej@kk.dk.
- (9) A dispensation may be cancelled in case the prerequisites for the received dispensation are incorrect or no longer present.

Briefing the neighbours

S. 11(1) In the event of a contractor's exceptionally noisy activities cf. s. 9, or if the Technical and Environmental Administration has granted permission to exceed the exposure levels for noise set out in appendix A or has dispensed from the provisions set out in ss. 7, 8 and 9, the executing contractor shall inform neighbours and other affected parties of the nature of the work, the permitted working hours and the planned duration.

Also, the briefing of neighbours must contain contact information in respect of the person who is in charge of the building site.

The time-limit for the briefing of neighbours shall be no later than 4 weekdays prior to the commencement of the work.

- (2) In particular circumstances, the Technical and Environmental Administration may dispense from the length of the time-limit.
- (3) The Technical and Environmental Administration may require the contractor to forward a copy of the neighbour briefing together with documentation in respect of the limitation of the notification scope.
- (4) In particular circumstances, the Technical and Environmental Administration may determine the limitation of the notification scope.
- (5) Likewise, the notified residents shall be further notified, if previously briefed activities are changed or cancelled.

Instructions

S. 12(1) The regulation shall not prevent the Technical and Environmental Administration from making further demands in respect of s.42(1-4) of the Environmental Protection Act on pollution-limiting measures, cf. s. 20(5) of the Consolidated Act on Environmental Activity.

Decision and complaint

S. 13(1) Decisions made in pursuance of this regulation cannot be appealed against to a higher authority, cf. s. 21(2) of the Consolidated Act on Environmental Activity.

(2) Regardless of the provision set out in subsection (1), decisions may be complained about in respect of plants owned or operated by the municipality, comprising plants of which the city council has considerable influence in respect of the operational planning, cf. s. 23 of the Consolidated Act on Environmental Activity.

Penalty clauses

S. 14 Unless a higher penalty is deserved in pursuance of other legislation, he who:

1. without permission, operates noisy activities outside the permitted periods of time, cf. ss. 7, 8, 9 and 10,
2. without permission exceeds the limit values for noise exposure levels set out in appendix A, cf. s. 3,
3. fails to make arrangements for the purpose of reducing noise and dust nuisances, cf. ss. 4 and 5,
4. fails to brief neighbours and others, cf. s. 11,
5. violates terms for dispensation or instructions having been ordered in respect of ss. 10 and 12.

shall be punished by fine.

Coming into force

S. 15 This regulation shall come into force on 29 February 2024.

Appendix A

Exposure levels for noise from building and construction work

With the exception of the maximum value, the limit values for noise exposure levels are stated as the equivalent, A-weighted noise level – expressed in dB(A).

The equivalent, corrected noise level equals the average noise value over a reference time interval, which is 8 hours for the day period; 1 hour for the evening period; and half an hour for the night period.

Limit values for noise from building and construction work		
Limit values for noise exposure, measured outdoors at the closest residence that is most subjected to severe noise exposure.	Weekdays, Monday to Friday 7.00 a.m.-6.00 p.m., and Saturdays 8.00 a.m.-2.00 p.m.	70 dB(A)
	Other time intervals	40 dB(A)
	Maximum value (peaks) at night (10.00 p.m.-7.00 a.m.)	55 dB(A)
Limit values for building transmitted noise, measured indoors in dwelling rooms and offices	Weekdays, Monday to Friday 7.00 a.m.-6.00 p.m., and Saturdays 8.00 a.m.-2.00 p.m.	55 dB(A)
	Office premises outside these time intervals	40 dB(A)
	Dwelling rooms outside these time intervals	25 dB(A)
	Maximum value at night (10.00 p.m.-7.00 a.m.) in dwelling rooms	40 dB(A)

Appendix B

Definition of force majeure

Any work that can be planned shall not be construed as force majeure.

Security of supplies shall be construed as:

- The breakdown of sewage, water, electricity, heat, communication infrastructure, etc.

Public health shall be construed as:

- The clearing or demolition, e.g. in connection with fire
- Building up vaccine centres, emergency hospitals, etc.

Infrastructure shall be construed as:

- The breakdown of roads, railroads, locks, etc.

In case of doubt, the Technical and Environmental Administration shall decide what shall be construed as force majeure.

Appendix C

Provisions in connection with the renovation of façades

The executing contractor must ensure compliance with all provisions in force.

In particular applicable to blast cleaning

- Neither blast cleaning agent nor blasted material must be led through the sewage system.
- In case there is a risk that blast cleaning agent and blasted material gets in contact with the soil, measures shall be taken to protect the soil.
- Any blasted material as well as all spent blast-cleaning agents shall be removed immediately after the completion of the work. Blast cleaning agent and blasted material must only be swept or shovelled while moist.
- The performance of sandblasting without the addition of water shall solely be permitted when – through covering and ventilation (vacuum) – it is ensured that the work will not give rise to significant dust and spattering nuisances for residents and surroundings.
- The spent blast cleaning agent must be handled and disposed of in pursuance of the provisions for the handling and disposal of cake and sandblasting agents in force at all times. Information about these provisions is available on kk.dk

In particular applicable to chemical cleaning

- Firm remains from chemical cleaning shall be collected and disposed of as hazardous waste.
- Rinsing water from the clean-up must be of a pH value between 6 and 9 when arriving at the sewer.
- The Technical and Environmental Administration may demand that the executing contractor analyse the rinsing water for the purpose of determining the pH value.
- In particular circumstances, the Technical and Environmental Administration may require the contractor's obtainment of wastewater permission prior to the rinsing water being carried towards sewers.
- Rinsing water from chemical cleaning shall be handled and disposed of in pursuance of the provisions for the discharge of wastewater. Information about these provisions is available on kk.dk

In particular applicable to the clean-up of old paint on windows etc.

- If the paint contains lead, the entire scaffolding shall be encased in plastic. For instance, a flexible screening may be established in front of the workplace in question.
- Window frames shall be stripped of old paint in a workshop, or on site in a container that has been especially adapted with exhaust for this purpose.
- Paint stripping shall be collected and disposed of as hazardous waste.
- Windowsills and other permanent parts shall be cleaned to avoid that old paint is scattered into the surroundings.
- All cleaned and sanded material on scaffolding etc. shall be collected by way of vacuum cleaning and disposed of as hazardous waste.
- The scaffolding shall be subject to daily cleaning by way of vacuum cleaning.
- Completing sanding operations shall solely take place by way of tools that are equipped with vacuum cleaning.
- Waste material from the stripping of windows etc. shall be handled and disposed of in pursuance of the provisions for the disposal of waste in force at all times. Information about these provisions is available on kk.dk

Contact the Technical and Environmental Administration
via stoej@kk.dk, in case of questions.