

Media release

Environment Protection Authority



GPO Box 2607 Adelaide SA 5001
250 Victoria Square Adelaide SA
T (08) 8204 2000 F (08) 8204 2020
Country areas 1800 623 445

Public consultation on rail noise guidelines

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The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is seeking public comment on draft guidelines for the assessment of noise from new rail operations.

The proposed guidelines have been developed in response to the State Government's announcement to improve and expand rail infrastructure in South Australia.

EPA Air and Noise Manager, Kelvyn Steer said the proposed guidelines focus on new and upgraded rail operations and apply to light rail, passenger and freight rail networks in the State.

"The EPA is developing these guidelines to ensure that rail operations are developed in a way that reduces the impact of rail noise on the community", said Mr Steer.

"The guidelines will not only benefit the community but will also assist planners to assess noise and vibration impact on houses and other sensitive land uses".

The proposed guidelines outline:

- regulatory requirements for railway owners, rollingstock operators and relevant developers
- noise and vibration criteria for development assessment and compliance
- recommended noise and vibration prediction routines
- recommended noise and vibration measurement practices
- rail noise and vibration mitigation practices.

Existing rail operations are not covered by the proposed guidelines as some railways were designed many years ago and are not able to meet modern specifications.

The EPA will continue to manage any noise issues from existing rail operations by requiring rail operators to comply with an Environment Improvement Program (EIP).

The EIP sets a number of requirements on the operator, including:

- a wagon monitoring program
- a maintenance and servicing program
- industry workshops to enable operators to compare noise control mechanisms
- six monthly reporting to the EPA on the progress of the EIP
- close liaison with local council.

The consultation period for the draft guidelines for the assessment of noise from rail operations ends 13 July 2010. The draft guidelines can be viewed on the EPA website at www.epa.sa.gov.au