

Common Ambient Noise Examples

Sound	Approx. dB(A)	What it feels like
Rustling leaves / quiet room	30 dB	Very quiet, barely noticeable
Normal conversation (3–5 ft away)	60 dB	Easy conversation level
Dishwasher / office background noise	65 dB	Clearly audible, not disruptive
Busy street traffic (from sidewalk)	70 dB	Constant, noticeable background
Vacuum cleaner	70–75 dB	Loud but common indoors
Car passing by (25–50 ft away)	70–80 dB	Briefly loud, then gone
Lawn mower	85–90 dB	Loud, sustained, ear protection recommended
Baby crying (close range)	90–95 dB	Very loud, piercing
Motorcycle / loud truck	95–100 dB	Disruptive, dominant sound
Live amplified music / concert	100–110 dB	Extremely loud, potential hearing damage

Environment	Approx. dB(A)	What's happening
Quiet café / fine dining	55–60 dB	Soft conversation, background music
Casual sit-down restaurant	60–65 dB	Normal conversation, dishes, kitchen noise
Busy restaurant (peak hours)	65–70 dB	Raised voices, full dining room
Very busy / poor acoustics	70–75 dB	Conversations start to compete

Helpful context for policy discussions

- 55 dB(A) ≈ normal daytime residential background
- 65 dB(A) ≈ common urban activity
- 70 dB(A) ≈ where sound starts to feel intrusive
- 85 dB(A)+ ≈ prolonged exposure can damage hearing