

We welcome your feedback about noise



Do you wish to make a complaint or voice a concern about noise effects of our operations?

We welcome your feedback

We acknowledge that human sensitivity to noise differs from person to person. Even when noise levels are within compliance with consent conditions they can at times create annoyance for some residents. We need you to let us know about this so we can assess whether there is anything we can do to lessen the effects. We welcome your feedback.

We are only a phone call away. Please phone our community engagement line immediately if noise effects are annoying. We will log your call and record as much information as we can from you at the time. Our initial response will be to send an environmental technician within an hour to operate a sound monitor at your property boundary.

We will correlate the monitoring data with the information you provided and we will endeavour to contact you within 24 hours to inform you of the results and discuss the next steps to be taken. Our internal actions and our response to you will be recorded. However, in the majority of cases, where we can pinpoint the source of the noise, we are able to resolve the issue before this.

What if there is no resolution? What is the next step?

The regulatory authority responsible for noise issues is Hauraki District Council (HDC). The HDC Manager of Planning and Environmental Services is the person to contact if you are not satisfied with the actions of OceanaGold Waihi to work towards resolving your grievance.

Sound monitoring in Waihi

In Waihi baseline sound monitoring began before the Martha mining operation started in 1987. A substantial database has been compiled and this is on-going. Monitoring sites have varied as mining activities have moved so that the measurement points fairly represent the most exposed residences.

A network of monitoring sites established around the mining operations provides results which are submitted to HDC on a quarterly basis. Independent monitoring is also carried out by HDC on occasions.

The conditions of consent require that sound monitoring is carried out in accordance with the relevant New Zealand standards for noise, and that representative samples are recorded. Because wind affects noise measurements, the NZ standards require that for all outdoor measurements an approved wind

shield is to be used. Similarly the standards acknowledge that measurements cannot normally be made if the wind speed exceeds five metres per second.

Managing noise

We employ several measures to manage noise effects such as:

- Equipment selection and maintenance and driver training
- Construction of noise bunds
- Limiting the height of stockpiles
- Acoustic cladding around conveyor belt and potentially noisy machinery
- Closed board fencing
- Acoustic (Hebel) noise wall on some sections of the perimeter noise bund
- Planting a screen of vegetation
- Restricting operating hours for various activities or operations

Noise limits

Conditions relating to hours of work and noise are specified in the Mining Licence and the HDC Land Use Consents. While the conditions vary depending on what work is being carried out, and the time of day that the activity is taking place, the permitted conditions (abridged) relating to hours of work and noise are outlined in the following table:

Background information about noise

Response to noise is determined by a variety of factors such as time of day and year, duration, purpose and personal factors.

Noise levels are affected by a number of factors:

- Steady, light to moderate winds produce higher noise levels downwind and lower noise levels upwind from a given source.
- Winds of higher velocity increase background levels due to air turbulence around buildings, houses, etc., or movement of trees, and obscure other noise sources.
- Temperature inversions, particularly during winter.
- Low cloud cover is sometimes reported to 'reflect' sound waves thereby increasing their intensity on the ground
- Background noise from such sources as traffic, residential activities, cicadas, birds, cattle, flowing water and wind can also have a cumulative effect on noise levels.
- Individual response and tolerance to differing noise types and levels.

The OceanaGold Waihi community engagement line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call 0800 WAIHIGOLD (0800 924 444)

Noise Complaint Procedure

