

## Practical Tips and Resources for California Tenants Dealing with Noisy Neighbors

Dealing with a noisy neighbor can be frustrating, especially when it interferes with the peace and comfort you experience at your rental. While Tenant Law Group does not typically handle noisy neighbor cases, we have prepared this document to offer you some practical tips to assist you in remedying the situation:

### 1. Check Your Building's Rules & Regulations *(if the Noisy Neighbor Lives in the Same Building)* or Local Noise Ordinances *(if the Noisy Neighbor Does Not Live in the Same Building)*.

- **Building Rules & Regulations:** Building-wide rules and regulations often accompany lease agreements. If the neighbor lives in the same building, check your lease to see if any Rules & Regulations are attached. If so, look for any specific rules about noise levels and quiet hours. Rules & Regulations for buildings typically include restrictions on quiet hours, especially at night.
- **Local Noise Ordinances:** If the neighbor does not live in the same building, Building Rules & Regulations would not apply. Research your city's or county's noise ordinances, which typically regulate noise levels and quiet hours (e.g., between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.). You can usually find this information on your city's website or by contacting the local government.
- **Quiet Enjoyment:** Under California law, tenants have a legal right to quietly enjoy their rental unit. Excessive noise that disrupts your living conditions violates this right.

### 2. Document the Noise

- **Keep a Log:** Write down when the noise occurs, how long it lasts, and how it impacts your daily life. Include dates, times, and descriptions of the type of noise (e.g., loud music, shouting, etc.).
- **Record Evidence:** If possible, take audio or video recordings of the noise so that you have evidence if you later complain to your landlord or authorities.
- **Buy a Decibel Meter:** You can use a decibel meter to track just how far above the reasonable range the noise you are dealing with is.

### 3. Communicate with Your Neighbor

- **Take a Polite Approach:** Sometimes, the neighbor may not be aware how their noise is affecting you. Consider approaching them politely or leaving a note explaining the issue and gently reminding them of any Rules & Regulations, if applicable.
- **Share a Written Request:** If you aren't comfortable with a face-to-face conversation, you can write a polite note/letter or email outlining the problem. If you write a letter, make a photocopy or take a picture of it before leaving it under your neighbor's door.



Discover more information by scanning the QR code.

#### 4. If Your Neighbor Won't Stop, Notify Your Landlord in Writing

- **Send a Complaint & Request Action:** If the problem persists and your overtures to your neighbors are unsuccessful, prepare a writing (e.g., letter or email) to your landlord detailing the issue and asking the landlord to remedy the situation as soon as possible. Be sure to state that it is interfering with your ability to quietly enjoy your rental unit. Share any relevant documentation, such as your log of incidents. It is ultimately your landlord's responsibility to remedy the issue, so do not feel obligated to propose a solution.
- **Health & Safety Concerns:** If the noise is causing health issues (e.g., sleeplessness), mention this to your landlord.

#### 5. If Your Landlord Does Not Respond Timely, Send Another Writing

**Send a Follow-Up Complaint Requesting Action:** If your landlord has not addressed the issue in a reasonable period (e.g., a few days to a week, depending on the severity of the problem), prepare another writing to your landlord. In this one, re-explain the issue, indicate that you had made a prior request, add that it is interfering with your ability to quietly enjoy your rental unit, and ask your landlord again to remedy the situation by a date certain. Again, share any relevant documentation, such as your log of incidents. If the noise has continued to create health issues for you or another roommate or family member in your rental unit, mention this as well.

#### 6. Explore Mediation Options

- **Mediation Services:** If talking to your neighbor and landlord doesn't still resolve the issue, consider mediation. Many cities in California offer free or low-cost mediation services to help resolve disputes between tenants and neighbors.
- **Neighborhood Dispute Resolution Programs:** Look into local neighborhood mediation programs, which can help tenants and neighbors come to a peaceful resolution.

#### 7. File a Noise Complaint

**Contact Local Authorities:** If the noise violates a local noise ordinance, you can file a complaint with the city or county code enforcement officer or health department. In extreme cases, you may need to involve law enforcement, especially if the noise is excessive or occurs during restricted hours.

#### 8. Seek Legal Help

- **Legal Aid:** If the issue persists and your landlord does not take appropriate action, seek legal advice. Many tenant rights organizations in California can provide free legal advice or representation.
- Examples include Tenants Together, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA), and Bay Area Legal Aid.



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## 9. Request a Transfer or Break the Lease (as a last resort)

- Request to Move: If the noise is unbearable and your landlord is unable or unwilling to help, you may ask to transfer to another unit within the building.
- Breaking the Lease: Severe and ongoing noise disturbances may be a breach of your right to quiet enjoyment of the rental unit, which would be grounds for you to negotiate breaking the lease without penalty. However, it's a good idea to seek legal advice before taking this step.

Here is a list of legal organizations who may be able to provide you with free legal advice to help you address the harassment issues at your rental unit.

## **Tenant Law Group Legal Aid Resources List**

### **Statewide Resources:**

#### *California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA)*

Offers legal services to low-income residents in rural areas.

- Website: [www.crla.org](http://www.crla.org)
- Phone: 1-800-337-0690

#### *LawHelpCA.org*

An online directory of legal aid offices and self-help resources.

- Website: [www.lawhelpca.org](http://www.lawhelpca.org)

#### *Tenants Together*

A statewide tenant rights organization offering legal advice and resources.

- Website: [www.tenantstogether.org](http://www.tenantstogether.org)
- Phone: 1-888-495-8020

#### *California Courts Self-Help Center*

Provides online resources and guidance for tenants.

- Website: [www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp.htm)

#### *California Civil Rights Department*

Provides online resources, dispute resolutions, and possible legal help for certain protected class tenants in California.

### **Northern California:**

#### *Bay Area Legal Aid (Bay Legal)*

Provides legal services to low-income tenants in seven Bay Area counties.

- Website: [www.baylegal.org](http://www.baylegal.org)
- Phone: 1-800-551-5554

#### *Legal Assistance for Seniors (Oakland)*

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Offers legal aid to older adults facing housing issues in Alameda County.

- Website: [www.lashicap.org](http://www.lashicap.org)
- Phone: 1-510-832-3040

*East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC)*

Provides legal services to tenants in Alameda County.

- Website: [www.ebclc.org](http://www.ebclc.org)
- Phone: 1-510-548-4040

*Legal Aid of Marin*

Offers legal aid to low-income residents in Marin County.

- Website: [www.legalaidmarin.org](http://www.legalaidmarin.org)
- Phone: 1-415-492-0230

*Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County*

Provides free legal assistance to tenants in San Mateo County.

- Website: [www.legalaidsmc.org](http://www.legalaidsmc.org)
- Phone: 1-650-558-0915

**Central California:**

*Central California Legal Services (CCLS)*

Offers free legal services in Fresno, Merced, Tulare, and nearby counties.

- Website: [www.centralcallegal.org](http://www.centralcallegal.org)
- Phone: 1-800-675-8001

*Inland Counties Legal Services (ICLS)*

Provides legal aid for tenants in Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

- Website: [www.inlandlegal.org](http://www.inlandlegal.org)
- Phone: 1-888-245-4257

*Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance (GBLA)*

Provides free legal services to tenants in Kern County.

- Website: [www.gbla.org](http://www.gbla.org)
- Phone: 1-661-325-5943

*California Indian Legal Services (CILS)*

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Offers legal assistance to Native American communities across California, including tenants' rights.

- Website: [www.calindian.org](http://www.calindian.org)
- Phone: 1-800-829-0284

***Southern California:***

*Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA)*

One of the largest legal services organizations in Southern California, serving low-income tenants in Los Angeles.

- Website: [www.lafla.org](http://www.lafla.org)
- Phone: 1-800-399-4529

*Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County (NLSLA)*

Provides legal aid to tenants in the San Fernando, Antelope, and San Gabriel Valleys.

- Website: [www.nlsla.org](http://www.nlsla.org)
- Phone: 1-800-433-6251

*Public Counsel (Los Angeles)*

Offers free legal services to tenants in Los Angeles County, with a focus on housing rights and eviction defense.

- Website: [www.publiccounsel.org](http://www.publiccounsel.org)
- Phone: 1-213-385-2977

*Community Legal Aid SoCal (formerly Legal Aid Society of Orange County)*

Provides legal aid to tenants in Orange and southeast Los Angeles counties.

- Website: [www.communitylegalsocal.org](http://www.communitylegalsocal.org)
- Phone: 1-800-834-5001

*Legal Aid Society of San Diego (LASSD)*

Helps low-income tenants in San Diego County with eviction and other housing issues.

- Website: [www.lassd.org](http://www.lassd.org)
- Phone: 1-877-534-2524

*Bet Tzedek Legal Services (Los Angeles)*

Provides free legal assistance, including housing and tenant rights.

- Website: [www.bettzedek.org](http://www.bettzedek.org)
- Phone: 1-323-939-0506