

# Honking adds 2-5 decibels to noise pollution: Study

Manka.Behl@timesgroup.com

Vehicular traffic contributes to more than 50% of the total urban noise. A research conducted by National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (Neeri) revealed that honking contributes additional 2 to 5 decibels in the cumulative vehicular noise pollution. Aimed at developing a traffic noise model under diverse traffic conditions in metropolitan cities, the study is one of the few that considers honking as an important parameter for predicting traffic noise levels.

Senior scientist Ritesh Vijay and scientist Asheesh Sharma of Neeri's Cleaner Technology and Modelling Division carried out the study during which traffic noise levels, speed, volume, honking and road dimensions at eight sampling points on NH-7 in the city were measured. Noise levels were also measured at 64 traffic intersection points at peak traffic hours — 9.30am to 10.30am and 6pm to 7pm. "We recorded

## DEAFENING LEVEL

the total number of horns blown in one minute by different categories of vehicles. The results clearly showed that honking has a significant impact on traffic noise assessment," says Vijay.

The traffic noise at various sampling points was more than the Central Pollution Control Board's ambient air quality standards. "The level varied from 71.3 dB (A) to 79.3 dB (A)," says Sharma. The board's prescribed limits for day time are 75 dB (A) for industrial areas, 65 for commercial, 55 for residential and 50 for silent zones.

Maximum honking was recorded near Sitabuldi, tells Sharma. "We found that motorists honked the most at traffic congestions. Blowing horns is not going to clear the jam," he adds.

Neeri conducted another study on national highway, major and minor city roads to assess honking impact in urban traffic environment of Nagpur. No statistical relationship could be found between traffic volume and noise level. Vijay adds, "For instance, 50 vehicles will not produce as much noise



## I PROMISE NOT TO HONK

If you're exasperated by the continuous honking on the road, you can make a difference, starting with yourself. Take a pledge to not honk excessively.

Visit [www.toinohonkingdrive.com](http://www.toinohonkingdrive.com) for a lot more. Take it up as a buddy challenge. Let us know how you are going about it. If you're a school, college or office, inform us if you plan to or have already carried out any activity to sensitize your students or staff. And make it a habit, not just a one-day activity.

## Traffic cops worst affected by honking

Traffic cops are major victims of vehicular noise pollution. This was also observed by scientists while conducting the study. According to the occupational safety and health standards, permissible noise exposure for eight hours a day (continuous or a number of short term exposures) is 90dB (A). Traffic cops at times have to work for extra hours, thus becoming prone to irritation and other health ailments caused due to noise pollution. "Gastro-related problems, indigestion, hypertension, insomnia, cardiac and psychological problems are common to many of them," says ENT surgeon Dr Naresh Agrawal. He said noise maskers and earplugs on-duty should be made must for traffic cops.

as 10 would if the latter are honking more." He adds that maximum honking was observed on highways. "Parts of highways are daily routes of many urban commuters," says Vijay.