

# HOME ALONE!



Ah, Bliss - a holiday away from it all and the kids are now old enough to be left at home.

**But what are they up to?**

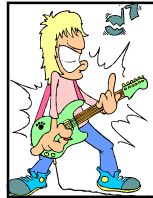
The first priority of any self-respecting teenager will be to organise a great party. The music's thumping, the windows are open and the revellers are singing along at the top of their voices. The problem is it's now 1:00 a.m. and the neighbours have called



the Police and Environmental Health. Problems can also arise in respect of inconsiderate playing of stereos, "loud" behaviour and band practices!



If an Environmental Health investigation proves the noise to be a statutory nuisance, an Abatement Notice will be served, breach of which could lead to court action.



## What Can You Do To Avoid Problems?

- Organise a responsible adult to closely supervise the children, for their benefit as much as your neighbours';
- Make sure your neighbours can contact the adult in the event of any problems; and
- Set firm ground rules with the children before you leave and check in while you're away.



**For further information relating to these issues please contact:**

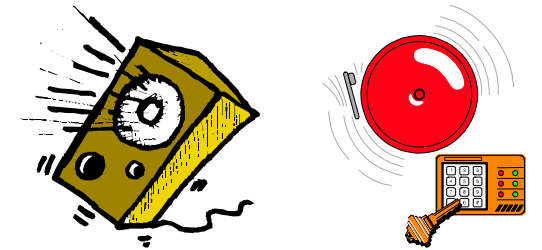
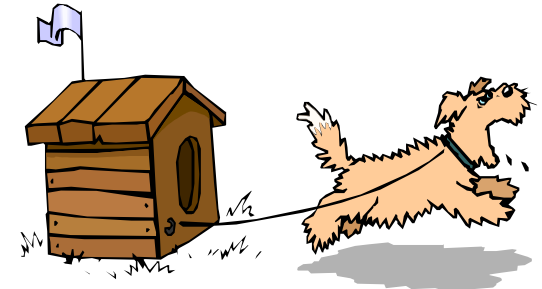
**Environmental Protection Service  
Stroud District Council  
Ebley Mill  
Westward Road  
Stroud  
Glos  
GL5 4UB**

**(01453) 754478**

**[www.stroud.gov.uk](http://www.stroud.gov.uk)**

**[environmentalhealth@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@stroud.gov.uk)**

**You Don't Have To  
Be At Home To  
Cause A Noise  
Nuisance**



# WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Preparing for your holidays can be a stressful time, with a lot of time and effort spent organising your travelling plans. However, many well-prepared people still forget their responsibilities to their neighbours and pets whilst they are away.



Excessive noise can still originate from properties when the occupants have gone on holiday. Faulty burglar alarms, barking dogs and home-alone teenagers having a party can all cause frustration and stress to neighbours.

Pets can also suffer when owners go on holiday. People may be unaware how lonely their pets are and the problems that they can cause when you leave the house.



Stroud District Council has a legal duty to investigate noise complaints. This means we have to investigate more than 650 complaints per year, with most of them coming in the summer holiday season. Similarly, the Animal Welfare team spend a great deal of time and effort investigating the suffering of pets left at home whilst their owners are on holidays,

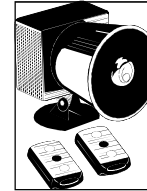
This leaflet provides simple precautions which can be put in place before you go on holiday to prevent the Council from having to take action in your absence.

# ALARMS



Activated burglar alarms can easily cause annoyance to neighbours and may lead to complaints. There are two methods which the Council can use to stop an alarm sounding:-

1. If the council considers the noise to be a statutory nuisance, a Notice can be served on you to stop the noise. If you are not available to silence the alarm the Council can get a warrant which allows them to break into your house and take steps to silence the alarm. You may also be prosecuted and, if found guilty, the court can impose fines of up to £5000 (for domestic properties).
2. If it considers the noise from your alarm to constitute an 'annoyance' (i.e. if the alarm sounds for more than 20 minutes continuously or more than one hour intermittently), the Council can enter your premises with an alarm engineer and proceed to disable the alarm from the outside of the house.



In both cases you may be invoiced for the cost of entering your home to silence the alarm.

## How to prevent coming home to a bill and a disabled alarm:-

- Nominate a key-holder who can enter your premises and switch off or reset the alarm if necessary;
- Ensure that your neighbours are aware of who the key-holder is and how they can be contacted; and
- Get your alarm serviced regularly. This prevents it from being activated by mistake.

The ideal key-holders are those who can arrive at your property ASAP.

# PETS

Many dog owners decide not to book their best friends into kennels during their holiday but opt for a trusted friend or family member to look after them. This may involve the dog staying at home and the carer popping in during the day.



Dogs are sociable animals and regard their owners as substitute family, so when some dogs are left alone for long periods they may become distressed. This can lead to destructive behaviour or continuous barking or howling, which in turn becomes very distressing for people who hear it.

In some cases the noise may constitute a statutory nuisance and a Notice may be served or your pet may be seized under The Animal Welfare Act.

- Nominate a responsible person to be the carer and ensure they have contact details, including your vet;
- Make sure they know the pet's usual routine;
- Ensure that they will spend time walking the dog, playing and generally fussing over it;
- It may be better for a dog to move in with the carer or *vice-versa*. If this is not possible, ensure your neighbours have the contact details of the carer
- Also remember to make arrangements for cats, fowl and small "furries" such as hamsters, rabbits, etc.

