



Technology for a Quieter America

Committee on Technology for a Quieter America, Division on Engineering and Physical Sciences, National Research Council

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Exposure to noise at home, at work, while traveling, and during leisure activities is a fact of life for all Americans. At times noise can be loud enough to damage hearing, and at lower levels it can disrupt normal living, affect sleep patterns, affect our ability to concentrate at work, interfere with outdoor recreational activities, and, in some cases, interfere with communications and even cause accidents. Clearly, exposure to excessive noise can affect our quality of life.

As the population of the United States and, indeed, the world increases and developing countries become more industrialized, problems of noise are likely to become more pervasive and lower the quality of life for everyone. Efforts to manage noise exposures, to design quieter buildings, products, equipment, and transportation vehicles, and to provide a regulatory environment that facilitates adequate, cost-effective, sustainable noise controls require our immediate attention.

Technology for a Quieter America looks at the most commonly identified sources of noise, how they are characterized, and efforts that have been made to reduce noise emissions and experiences. The book also reviews the standards and regulations that govern noise levels and the federal, state, and local agencies that regulate noise for the benefit, safety, and wellness of society at large. In addition, it presents the cost-benefit trade-offs between efforts to mitigate noise and the improvements they achieve, information sources available to the public on the dimensions of noise problems and their mitigation, and the need to educate professionals who can deal with these issues.

Noise emissions are an issue in industry, in communities, in buildings, and during leisure activities. As such, *Technology for a Quieter America* will appeal to a wide range of stakeholders: the engineering community; the public; government at the federal, state, and local levels; private industry; labor unions; and nonprofit organizations. Implementation of the recommendations in *Technology for a Quieter America* will result in reduction of the noise levels to which Americans are exposed and will improve the ability of American industry to compete in world markets paying increasing attention to the noise emissions of products.

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