

## Environmental Guideline on Multi-purpose hall, including wedding hall



### Department of Environment

The purpose of this environmental guideline is to provide guidance to prospective developers to operate their multi-purpose hall on the basis of self-adherence and to assist Local Authorities at the Building and Land Use Permit stage.



## 1.0 Background

A multi-purpose hall refers to a building or room which serves to accommodate different types of events or activities, such as wedding ceremonies, receptions, social gatherings, religious activities, seminars, conferences and meetings. The activities involved usually entail provision of adequate parking space as well as amenities such as kitchen, store, changing rooms, lobby, stage, dancing floor and toilet blocks.

Multi-purpose halls, in particular wedding halls, operate mostly during the weekends and late at night and may involve very noisy activities such as entertainment, dancing and singing. Depending on the location, the operation of a multi-purpose hall may be associated with several environmental nuisances which need to be mitigated to avoid inconveniences to the surrounding neighbourhood. Major issues of concern relate to:-

- Site selection
- Noise
- Vehicular movement
- Solid wastes
- Wastewater
- Poor housekeeping – pests, rodents, flies, odour and sanitary nuisances
- Energy and water consumption

## 2.0 Objectives of the guideline

This guideline is meant to ensure that prospective developers:-

- adopt appropriate mitigating measures to safeguard the environment.
- comply with provisions of relevant laws/ regulations/standards.
- adopt eco-friendly practices to optimize use of resources.

## 3.0 Applicable Legislation

The construction and operation of a multi-purpose hall, including a wedding hall does not warrant a Preliminary Environmental Report (PER) Approval or an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Licence. It requires, amongst others, a Building and Land Use Permit under the Local Government Act 2011. The construction and operation of a multi-purpose hall has to be carried out in accordance with the provisions under the Planning Policy Guidance and Outline Planning Scheme.

### **Note:-**

*The development must comply with relevant provisions of the Local Government Act 2011, the Town and Country Planning Act 1954, the Building Control Act 2012, the Planning and Development Act 2004, the Food Act 1998, Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service Act 2013, as subsequently amended and all applicable guidelines and regulations.*

## 4.0 Location and Siting

*The selection of the site for a multi-purpose hall should be determined on the basis of associated activities that are proposed e.g. catering, the size of the hall, number of persons to be accommodated and the existing development context of the site.*

- (i) New multi-purpose halls including wedding halls should preferably not be allowed in predominantly residential areas.
- (ii) The existing development context of the site should be compatible with the activity.

- (iii) At the design stage of new multi-purpose halls, consideration to be given to the site lay-out, with a view to preventing noise disturbance. In particular, attention should be paid to the location of entrances, exits, windows, car parks and access roads.
- (iv) The site should not be located within any Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) and its prescribed buffer zone as per ESA Study 2009 such as wetland, steep slope and in areas that are likely to be affected by hazards such as inland flooding, landslide and storm surges, amongst others.
- (v) On site wastewater disposal facility such as septic tanks and absorption pits/leaching fields shall be located not less than 30 m from any water course as per Rivers and Canals Act 1863.
- (vi) Existing natural drains and watercourses on or in the vicinity of the site shall not be tampered with.

## 5.0 Mitigation of Environmental Impacts

### 5.1 Noise abatement

Noise is one of the major environmental impacts that results from the operation of a multi-purpose hall, in particular wedding hall. The four sources of noise that are associated with the operation of a multi-purpose hall are:-

- Loud music
- Parking and movement of vehicles
- Electric motors and other equipment
- Walking and shouting by people gathered around the premises of the hall

As such, necessary precautions shall be taken to ensure noise emitted is within permissible limits as per the Environmental Standards for Noise Regulations under the Environment Protection Act (EPA) which stipulates:-

Industrial Noise		Neighborhood Noise	
Time	Noise exposure limits	Time	Noise exposure limits
07.00-21.00 hrs.	60 dB (A) $L_{eq}$	07.00-18.00 hrs.	60 dB (A) $L_{eq}$
21.00-07.00 hrs.	55 dB (A) $L_{eq}$	18.00-21.00 hrs.	55 dB (A) $L_{eq}$
		21.00-07.00 hrs.	50 dB (A) $L_{eq}$
1) A tonal character adjustment of +5 dB (A) should be applied to the measured value where the noise has a definite continuous note such as a whine or hiss. 2) Noise measurements shall, as far as practicable, be effected one metre from the nearest opening of any residential building facing the noise source and at 1.5 metres above the ground or floor level.			

Mitigating measures include:-

- No installation of loudspeaker/amplifier/woofer/noise generating equipment outside the building (within the open area)
- No noisy activities such as dancing, bar activities, events carried out outside the hall building, in case it would represent a nuisance to the surrounding environment
- Soundproofing of the multi-purpose hall, as applicable
- Appropriate management measures to abate noise from traffic and associated activities.
- Within residential settings, the hours of operations should be determined by the respective Local Authority depending on context of site and nature of activity proposed.

### 5.2 Vehicular movement

Vehicular movement will be determined by the size of the hall, types and frequency of events and activities being accommodated. Traffic to and fro the site may cause traffic congestion or excessive noise potentially leading to complaints. Narrow roads/ accesses create traffic jams and inconveniences to other road users specially the inhabitants.

Necessary precautionary measures should be taken to avoid such nuisances.

Mitigating measures include:

- Existing and proposed access roads should be capable of adequately serving the traffic generated and should be according to norm in order to allow two way traffic.
- Provision should be made for adequate parking, loading and unloading facilities.
- Car parking areas should not be permitted alongside main roads or other busy roads.
- The environment and amenity of the area should not be compromised through traffic or parking problems as well as dust and exhaust nuisances.
- Access for Disabled Persons - The improvement of access and provision of facilities to ease the passage of mobility impaired people should be considered as an integral part of the design.

### 5.3 Solid waste management

Activities within a multi-purpose hall may generate significant volumes of solid wastes. For example, cooking activities could generate both organic and non-organic solid wastes. These wastes require proper handling and disposal as they may give rise to sanitary nuisances, such as odours, flies, rodents and other pests.

Mitigating measures include:-

- Domestic solid wastes to be regularly collected in bins or waste handling receptacles and disposed of to the satisfaction of the Local Authority.
- All putrefying wastes should be stored in leak/ rodent proof and airtight containers under chilled conditions until removal for disposal.
- Wastes generated should not be dumped on any bareland, premises or in any watercourse including drains and canals.

### 5.4 Wastewater management

Wastewater generated on-site arises from domestic purposes and washing of premises. Wastewater from washing of premises may be contaminated with detergents and solid suspended solids, which if discharged without treatment will potentially pollute watercourses.

Mitigating measures include:-

- Provision of appropriate on-site wastewater disposal facility such as septic tanks and associated absorption pits/leaching fields as applicable or disposal into the public sewer system to the satisfaction of the Wastewater Management Authority.

**Note:-** *In case on-site wastewater disposal system is to be considered , then same shall be as per the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) of the Ministry of Housing and Lands dated November 2004.*

- Installation of grease traps or oil water separators for removal of floatable solids, as applicable.

**Note:-** *Maintenance of the grease trap or oil water separator is to be carried out by the owner / promoter.*

### 5.5 Poor housekeeping – rodents, birds, flies, odour and sanitary nuisances

Poor housekeeping of the halls can result in the proliferation of rodents, birds, flies, odour and sanitary nuisances. Odours may be released from cooking as well as from inappropriate storage and disposal of wastes. Abatement measures should be taken to avoid such nuisances.

Mitigating measures include:-

- The premises should be kept clean and tidy at all times with good housekeeping and proper ventilation.
- The building and facilities of the hall should satisfy the sanitary requirements.
- Provision of extractors and hoods to reduce odours from frying and other cooking operations.

- Odour controlling equipment such as scrubber, activated carbon filter to be incorporated in the hood system.
- Installation of bait stations/ traps to control pests and rodents.

### 5.6 Other mitigating measures

- Necessary precautions should be taken to avoid disturbance to the neighbourhood by way of noise, traffic, odour or dust during construction and operation phase.
- Provision for a proper drainage scheme for surface run-offs including run-off from surface water from any tarred areas, to avoid any risks of flooding/water-logging of site and adjoining areas to the satisfaction of the Local Authority.
- Provision of permeable ground surfaces for parking and other outdoor areas to reduce surface water run-off.

### 5.7 Eco-friendly Measures and Sustainability

The design, construction and maintenance of buildings have a tremendous impact on energy consumption, water consumption, productivity and health of people and nature. Best environment friendly practices and initiatives need to be adopted during the construction and operation of multi-purpose halls, such as:-

- Adoption of sustainable building designs (provision of sunshades/ awnings to prevent heating of the buildings, provision of double glazed openings to promote insulation for buildings, esp. with metal roof )
- Provision of adequate green spaces /areas , Planting of trees/ ornamentals on site
- Renewable energy source (solar water heaters and photovoltaic cells); energy efficient appliances (fridges, ovens, Air Conditioners); energy-saving devices (LED lamps)
- Ozone and climate friendly products
- Waste segregation for recycling and composting
- Rain water harvesting for washing of premises

#### Note:

- 1) Relevant organisations need to be consulted with regard to fire, food hygiene, traffic implications amongst others prior to embarking on the project to ensure compliance with their respective laws/regulations/standards.
- 2) Non-compliance with standards for noise is an offence under the EPA.

*Copies of this guideline are available at the Department of Environment and on the website of the Ministry at <http://environment.govmu.org>; the government's portal at <http://www.govmu.org>, including the websites of Local Authorities.*