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Trends

## Decibel Hell: The Ear-Splitting Things That Will Disturb Your Home's Value

By Yuqing Pan | Jan 19, 2017



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There's *sublime* noise—Beethoven's Seventh, a baby's first words, the opening chords to "A Hard Day's Night"—and then there's *terrible* noise. The blaring of fire engine sirens. The roar of airplanes landing and taking off. Drunken crowds at popular sports bars. Presidential "Thank You" rallies. A constant racket can cause stress, disrupt sleep, lead to high blood pressure. Or worse.

It's no wonder that people want to pay less for homes near known culprits like fire stations and airports. But just how much less?

Our data team examined nine major noise factors and calculated the price difference between homes within a certain radius of that cacophonous source and the median price of homes in the rest of that ZIP code. (Of course, jet engines are far louder than cars, so we adjusted the affected range accordingly. Plus, no one lives within 0.1 mile of an airport.)

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So what's the leading offender to sensitive ears? Airports—sellers of homes within a 2-mile radius will knock off 13.2% of the going rate in the rest of the ZIP code. In fact, transportation is responsible for the top three noisemakers, including railway tracks (12.3%) and highways (11.3%).

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To be fair, we can't say that noise is the *only* reason for the discount. Noisy locations are often busy ones (see churches and schools), and therefore come with parking and privacy issues—but in many cases, it *is* a major factor.

And we also weren't able to quantify the impact of another common disturbance: noisy neighbors.

And most of these tranquility-busters also have an upside. After all, it's convenient to be able to easily jump on a plane, train, or highway to get to work or take a trip. And while a 24-hour supermarket comes with a 5.1% discount for nearby properties, a food store in general lifts home prices by 3.4%.

Homes within 0.1 mile of a school are discounted 4.3%, but if they're a little farther out, 1 mile to as much as 5 miles, families will pay an 8.6% premium for the convenience.

And while a nearby fire station may keep you up at night if the engines are called out frequently, you'd not only pay 1.8% less for your home, you'd also get a deal on home insurance, according to the Insurance Information Institute.

So don your noise-cancellation headphones, and let's dive into the data!

## Home Price Discounts for Noise Disturbances



### Airport

Discount: **13.2%**  
(within 2 miles)



### Railway track

Discount: **12.3%**  
(within 0.1 mile)



### Highway

Discount: **11.3%**  
(within 0.1 mile)



### Busy road

Discount: **9.5%**  
(within 0.1 mile)



### Hospital emergency room

Discount: **7.6%**  
(within 0.5 mile)



### Busy church \*

Discount: **5.2%**  
(within 0.5 mile)



### 24-hour supermarket

Discount: **5.1%**  
(within 0.1 mile)



### School

Discount: **4.3%**  
(within 0.1 mile)



### Fire station

Discount: **1.8%**  
(within 0.1 mile)

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\* With average weekly attendance of 2,000 persons or more, as defined by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research

*Data sources: realtor.com®, Federal Aviation Administration, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Office of Highway Policy Information, GreatSchools.org, Hartford Institute for Religion Research, Department of Agriculture, Google Places API, municipal fire departments, Nielsen*

Yuqing Pan, a Stanford graduate with a multimedia journalism background, writes data-driven stories for realtor.com.

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