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# Horror horns make city sick

Risha Chitlangla | TNN

**New Delhi:** Noise pollution is an inescapable part of living in Delhi. We may believe that we are immune to the constant assault that is the sound of car horns, but the fact remains that it is adversely affecting our health. From hearing loss to sudden change in behavioural pattern, doctors say noise pollution is just adding to existing stress levels.

Thankfully, the first day of the coming year will be observed as No Honking Day, an initiative of an NGO and Delhi traffic police to sensitize drivers in the Capital. According to doctors, those who spend a lot of time on the Capital's roads suffer from fatigue, lack of concentration, irritability, tinnitus (constant ringing sounds) and gradual hearing loss, among other health problems. "Over exposure to loud noise can result in temporary or permanent hearing loss. If a person is exposed to high frequency sounds, then he might suffer from tinnitus of high frequency. But it is a reversible condition. A person when exposed to more than 80 decibels of sound for eight hours a day, five days a week, can suffer from temporary or permanent hearing loss," said Dr Deepak Sarin, senior consultant, ENT, Artemis Healthcare Institute.

Meanwhile, psychiatrist say those who honk incessantly at traffic signals knowing well that the vehicle before cannot move, reflects a lot about their personality. "This is how they are conditioned. It is the culture of Delhi that is to be blamed. When stuck in traffic jams, they keep honking. There is no logical flow of thought, they have to honk at traffic signals so they do it," said Dr Sanjay Pattanayak, senior consultant, psychiatry, Rockland Hospital.

Doctors add that a busy, stressful lifestyle is to be blamed for the way most people behave while driving. The already existing pressure just double due to poor infrastructure and the resultant jams. "Adding to the situation are these honkers. And noise pollution is known to trigger aggression. On a no honking day, people have to be educated about the side effects of it. We have to sensitize people and ensure that it is implemented properly," said Dr Sameer Parikh, chief, department of mental health and behavioral sciences, Max Healthcare. Noise pollution often triggers road rage. Experts say people are as it is low on patience and loud noise often results in extreme reactions.

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## BLARING AWAY

### The law

Unauthorized use of horns is punishable under Sections 177 and 190 (2) of Motor Vehicles Act, Sections 115 and 120 of Central Motor Vehicles Rules and Sections 21 (i) and 21 (ii) of the Rules of Road Regulations

### Silence zones

100 metres around hospitals, educational institutions, residential areas and courts

### Honking etiquette

- At traffic signals, give the vehicle in front some time to react. Blowing the horn the minute it turns green only adds to frayed tempers
- Honking is prohibited at night. Make use of the dipper



### Penalties

- Use of horn in silence zone | **Rs 100**
- Use of horn at intersections | **Rs 100**
- Using shrill horn | **Rs 500**
- Silencer not working | **Rs 500**
- Honking unnecessarily | **Rs 100**

- If you are driving slowly in the overtaking lane (extreme right) and the driver behind honks to get ahead, give way
- Bikers tend to honk and squeeze their bike anywhere, not realising that honking does not give them an immediate right of way



In Delhi, it's always a quest to get ahead, for a better car, a bigger flat. The same is true on roads as we are always trying to beat the other guy to the next stop, and honking is instrumental in that. Honking is a way of venting anger

Dibakar Banerjee | FILMMAKER

I have been driving without a horn in my car for the past two years, since it developed some technical fault. And I feel it has made me a better and more cautious driver for I know that I can't blow the horn and suddenly stop the car

Maxwell Pereira | FORMER JOINT CP (TRAFFIC)

