

Ask Miss Behaviour

Hello, and Happy Winter! Miss Manners has been under the weather (literally—she slipped on some ice and ended up covered in six inches of snow; we had to send the dogs out after her) so I, her ugly hateful cousin Miss Behaviour, have volunteered to take over for this edition. Today's topic is "Silence is Golden, Especially Between the Hours of Midnight and Eight in the Morning."



Dear Miss Behaviour:

I live in a very noisy part of the co-op. All evening long, and during the weekends, all I hear in my hallway is barking dogs, crying babies, happy shouting pre-schoolers and neighbours talking outside their doors. I yell at the dogs and the children and have left nasty anonymous notes on doors up and down the hall but it hasn't stopped, and now everyone hates me. Why?? They're the inconsiderate ones, not me! What can I do?

Miserable Over Rude, Obnoxious Noise

Dear M.O.R.O.N.,

You can move, that's what you can do. Here's the thing: if you live in a large city, and particularly if you live in a large, diverse community like ours that welcomes families and pets, you are going to hear some noise from time to time. Babies, dogs and small children all make noise as a natural part of their lives, and will not suddenly be quiet just because you yell at them. Our neighbours are welcome to talk in the hallway, the elevator and the lobby as these are common spaces. (They aren't welcome to sleep or undress in the hallway, but that's another story.) It is impossible to find a place in Toronto where there is no noise whatsoever, but you are welcome to try. Please let us know if you succeed, so we can all bring our babies, children, dogs and neighbours and come live there with you.

Sincerely, MB

The Occupancy By-law, By-law #12 outlines the "rules and guidelines of membership within our co-op."

Dear Miss Behaviour:

My next-door neighbour is a bee-YOTCH. I complain to the office every time she plays her stupid Lady GaGa songs really loud when I'm trying to watch the Ghost Whisperer. Then she complains when I turn up Two and a Half Men so that I can listen to it while I'm vacuuming. Now she's making the windows rattle with her Michael Buble and I'm peeling the paint with Gossip Girl so that I don't have to hear it, and I don't think the front office wants to take our calls anymore. Can you move me to another part of the building away from her? I'd like a place with more storage, a new fridge and better light for my hibiscus. *So Over My Endless Nightmare Enduring Relentless inVasion of my Environment*

Dear S.O.M.E. N. E. R. V. E.

Despite what you may have heard, the co-op is not in the business of relocating members from one unit to another as a method of resolving their personal conflicts or helping them 'trade up' to a better apartment. If you are complaining to the staff or the board about the conduct of another member, that member or others better not have a good reason to complain about you. All complaints should be directed to the office in writing and include names (if possible) and times and dates. Disturbances within the co-op and other breaches of the bylaws are serious business and will lead to serious consequences. I suggest you both quiet down and smarten up, or you may both find yourselves relocated onto the street.

Much love, MB

Dear Miss Behaviour:

My downstairs neighbour is complaining that I make too much noise. I don't know what he's talking about! It's true that I like to try on my many pairs of high heels at two in the morning, runway-walking from the kitchen to the front door and back again, and then I like to build bookshelves, throw my dishes on the floor, call my mother and scream at her about my horrible life, dance to Milli Vanilli and watch war movies at top volume until I fall asleep on the couch at 6 a.m.—but what's wrong with that? No one can hear me, and if they can then they're obviously awake so I can't be bothering them. Besides, I pay housing charges too! I have rights! The guy downstairs is clearly crazy, so I'm going to ignore him. What can he do anyway? Idiot. *Emotionally Volatile in Central Toronto*

Article 5.2 of the Occupancy by-law says that members must not make or allow any noise, nuisance or other act that disturbs other members of the co-op community

Dear E. V. I. C. T.,

I'm on the co-op's board of directors, and if we haven't heard about you by now, I'm sure we will very shortly. As I recall, the office has received several complaints about you from different neighbours, and you have been given a number of written warnings that you have chosen to ignore. You have also refused to answer the door when our security staff has responded to calls in the middle of the night. The next step is for the co-op to begin the process of revoking your membership and obtaining a writ of possession. You will be asked to appear before the board. Failure to sign a performance agreement correcting your behavior will compel the co-op to proceed with termination of membership and occupancy.

If you agree to enter into a performance agreement and, if you breach the agreement, the co-op will then begin eviction proceedings. Some people think that you can't be evicted for making noise. Some people are wrong. My best advice for you is to hang up the heels and let everyone around you live in peace. They'll be much happier and, since you'll still be living here, so will you.

Best always, MB

Dear Miss Behaviour:

I don't know what to do, so I'm turning to you for help. The family across the hall is scaring me—they fight all the time, sometimes screaming at the top of their lungs and slamming, smashing and breaking things. These aren't typical fights—I'm sure that someone is being hurt, or will be hurt soon. All of the other neighbours seem to be ignoring it. I think they don't want to get involved. Is this something I should call the office about? *Frightened Even After "Rock of Love"*

Dear F. E. A. R.,

Domestic assault and abuse are not private family matters. They are criminal acts. You should let the office know about the situation, but the best thing you can do is call the security number and, if you believe someone is in imminent danger, including yourself, call the police emergency number (9-1-1). Security staff will intervene if possible, and will fill out an incident report to advise the building staff; the police will deal with any potentially dangerous situation, making arrests and taking people into custody if necessary. Needless to say, anyone committing these or other crimes may be evicted from the co-op.

Supportively, MB

- Residents and employees must not commit violence against another person in the co-op find out more by referring to article 5.7 of the Occupancy by-law.
- If a member is a victim of domestic violence, he or she can ask the board to evict anyone who has committed domestic violence against them; this is done in accordance with article 5.8 of the Occupancy by-law.
- If you witness a crime being committed on co-op property (damage to Property, drug dealing ect.) please call 911 and record details regarding the occurrence. The Co-op can and will evict members who commit any illegal act or break laws (as permitted in article 5.3 of the Occupancy By-law)

[Bleecker Street Co-operative Homes](#)

All units should have a green By-law binder, if you do not please inform Anna Brooks