



**City of Seattle**  
**Department of Construction and Inspections**  
**Outdoor Sound Monitoring In The City of Seattle**

**Noise Management and Mitigation Plan**

Section 25.08.590.D of the Seattle Municipal Code (“SMC”) requires that a temporary noise variance applicant submit the following:

- A description of the exterior sound level limits of Chapter 25.08 expected to be exceeded, estimates of the amounts by which these levels are expected to be exceeded and by what equipment, the exterior sound level limits that will be in effect during the variance, the time periods during which the pre-variance exterior sound level limits may be exceeded, and the expected sources of the sound during each of the time periods (e.g., types of equipment or activity causing the exterior sound level limits to be exceeded);
- Measures and provisions to be taken to avoid exceeding the exterior sound level limits of this Chapter 25.08;
- Provisions to mitigate sounds that exceed the exterior sound level limits and that cannot otherwise be avoided; and
- A process for informing the public in the affected areas about the provisions of the variance.

Applications that do not contain this information will be determined to be incomplete, and will not be processed until a complete application is filed and accepted the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (“SDCI”).

**Noise Impact Mitigation**

SMC 25.08.590.E authorizes the SDCI Director to impose conditions and mitigate the adverse impacts of granting a temporary noise variance. The following will normally be conditions of a temporary noise variance approval:

**Third-Party Noise Monitor Authority**

- The event organizer shall hire a third-party noise monitor (“monitor”) who shall be responsible for monitoring set-up and dB levels during the special event;
- The monitor shall:
  - The event organizer gives the monitor the authority and control that is described here;
  - Be able to control the concert and not be dissuaded in controlling the concert by the audio engineer, promoter, or the crowd;
  - Be capable of setting up noise monitoring equipment and enforcing the signed agreement;

- Have the authority to turn down or turn off the amplified sound; and
- Clearly communicate with the sound engineer regarding permitted noise level limits and the repercussions for exceeding the permitted noise level limits that may include terminating the concert and civil penalties.

### **General Equipment Setup**

- Line array speakers and sub woofers shall be mounted above the stage and be directed at the audience;
- The stages shall be located on site in a manner that directionally points the amplified sound away from residential receivers or if that cannot occur, the stages are located in the best possible position to directionally point the sound away from residential receivers; and
- There shall be an established decibel limit for the venue.

### **Laptop Computer With Approved Software**

- Monitors shall use a laptop computer with Smaart Live. An applicant may use substantially similar software if the applicant has obtained SDCI's approval to use the software at an event before a temporary noise variance application is filed for the event. In order to obtain SDCI's approval, the applicant must demonstrate to SDCI that the software is substantially similar to Smaart Live.

The advantage of the computer and software is the dB levels are visible to everyone in the sound booth. If the sound level is being exceeded, visibility of the data should make it clear to everyone that the sound should be turned down. The computer will log the event and timing of all sound levels, which must be available if SDCI receives a noise complaint. The data log will validate whether the amplified sound exceeded the noise level established for the event and at what time.

### **Case-by-Case Temporary Noise Variance Review**

Chapter 25.08 SMC contains an objective standard that was created for the Concerts on the Pier series. This noise level may not work for all outdoor events. The applicant's review of each location and need for noise-level modification that is best suited to the event's location is expected to occur. As an example, the noise level set in the code for the Concerts on the Pier will not work in Memorial Stadium. SDCI set the limit of 98dB at 100 feet for Memorial Stadium, which was specifically modified for Bumbershoot. The same case-by-case review and noise impact mitigation process will be required for each event. Based on SDCI's case-by-case review of a permit application, it may impose additional conditions as authorized by SMC 25.08.590.E in order to mitigate the adverse impacts of granting a variance.

### **Violations and Enforcement**

Permit applicants or other persons responsible for violating Chapter 25.08 or temporary noise variance permit conditions may be subject to event termination, civil penalties, or criminal prosecution as provided for in Chapter 25.08 SMC.