Department of Finance and Administrative Services
Tip 5502
Seattle Regulations
— part of a multi-departmental series on City services, permits and regulations

Seattle Nightlife Noise Ordinance

March 2, 2018

In 2010, the City of Seattle launched the Seattle Nightlife Initiative, which resulted in the Nightlife Disturbance Ordinance (Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 25.08.501). The director of the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections authorizes the Seattle Police Department and the Department of Finance and Administrative Services to enforce SMC Chapter 25.08.501, interpreted by SDCI's Director's Rule 12-2011.

Nightlife disturbance rules

- The sound ordinance is in effect from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m.
- During a noise reading, doors and windows inside the occupied dwelling must be closed.
- The sound level meters used to take a noise reading must be type 2.
- Sound readings must be measured from inside the receiving dwelling unit for enforcement staff to issue a written warning and/or citation. Sound readings taken from outside a dwelling unit may be used by enforcement staff to issue a verbal warning.
- Outside a dwelling unit, allowable sound readings are 80 dB (C).
- Taken from inside an occupied dwelling unit, allowable sound measurements are up to 65 dB (C).
- If our investigation determines a violation has occurred, will issue a warning to the business. The warning places the business under probation for one year.
- If a violation occurs while the business is under probation, we will issue a first citation of $1,000.
- After the first citation is issued, we will issue a $2,000 citation for each subsequent violation while the business is under probation.

Process for noise complaints

1. Someone contacts the Customer Service Bureau, Seattle Police Department or FAS' Regulatory Compliance and Consumer Protection division with a complaint about a business' sound levels.
2. We will take a sound level reading from inside the complainant's residence, with doors and windows shut.
3. If we find a business to be in violation of allowable sound levels, we will issue warnings and/or citations, in accordance with the nightlife disturbance rules.
4. If a business receives a citation, it may appeal the citation to the hearing examiner's office. The appeal process can be found on the citation.

We do not enforce Seattle Municipal Code sections that cover loud noises from horns, sirens, motor vehicles, musical instruments, human voices, car stereos or official special events. For questions related to these noises, contact the Seattle Police Department non-emergency line at 206-625-5011.

For questions about barking dogs and other animal noise, call the Seattle Animal Shelter at 206-386-7387.

For questions about noises from construction, mechanical equipment or a commercial facility in the Seattle city limits, contact the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections at 206-615-1394.

Request a noise reading or make a complaint

To request a noise reading or to make a complaint, submit a service request online at **http://www.seattle.gov/noisereadingrequest**.

www.seattle.gov/fas

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