

Sec. 3-5-24. - Noise control.

- (a) *Purpose.* This section is enacted to protect, preserve and promote the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Athens-Clarke County through the control of noise. It is the intent of this section to establish standards that will reduce excessive community noises, which are harmful and otherwise detrimental to individuals and to the community in the enjoyment of life and property and in the conduct of business.
- (b) *Sound measurement standards for law enforcement personnel.* For the purposes of this section 3-5-24, "plainly audible" shall mean any sound emanating from the specific sound-producing sources set forth below which can be heard from the distances set forth below, using the following sound measurement standards: Measurement shall be by the auditory senses of a person standing at a distance no less than the required minimum distance from the source of the sound. For music and other noise, words and phrases need not be discernable. For music and other noise, bass reverberations are included.
- (c) *Prohibited conduct.*
  - (1) *Restrictions of 300 feet for 7:00 a.m. through 11:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 7:00 a.m. through 12:00 midnight on Friday and Saturday.*
    - a. *Mechanical sound-making devices.* It is unlawful for any person or persons to play, use, operate, or permit to be played, used, or operated any radio receiving device, television, stereo, musical instrument, phonograph sound amplifier or other machines or devices for the producing, reproducing or amplifying of sound and/or noise at such a volume and in such a manner so as to create, or cause to be created, any noises or sounds which are plainly audible at a distance of 300 feet or more from the building, structure or vehicle, or in the case of real property, beyond the property limits, in which it is located, whichever is farthest, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 12:00 midnight on Friday and Saturday.
    - b. *Human-produced sounds.* It is unlawful for any person or persons to yell, shout, hoot, whistle, or sing on the public streets or sidewalks or on private property so as to create, or cause to be created, any noises or sounds which are plainly audible at a distance of 300 feet or more from the place, building, structure, or in the case of real property, beyond the property limits, in which the person is located, whichever is farthest, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 12:00 midnight on Friday and Saturday.
    - c. *Commercial advertising.* It is unlawful for any person or persons to use, operate, or permit to be used or operated any radio receiving device, musical instrument, phonograph, loud speaker, sound amplifier or other machine or device for the production or reproduction of sound which is cast upon the public streets or other public property for the purpose of commercial advertising or which serves to attract the attention of the public to any building, structure or vehicle in such a manner so as to create, or cause to be created, any noises or sounds which are plainly audible at a distance of 300 feet or more from the source of the sound cast upon the public streets or other public property or from the building, structure, or in the case of real property, beyond the property limits, in which it is located, whichever is farthest, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 12 midnight on Friday and Saturday.
    - d. *Party noise.* It is unlawful for any person or persons in charge of a party or other social event that occurs on any private property to allow that party or social event to produce noise in such a manner that such noise is plainly audible at a distance of 300 feet or more from the building or structure from which the noise is emanating or in the case of real property, beyond the property limits, on which the party or social event is located, whichever is farthest, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 12 midnight on Friday and Saturday. For the purposes of this subsection, a "person in charge of a party or other social event" shall mean any adult person who resides in or on the premises involved in such party or social event and is present at such party or social event. For the purposes of this subsection,

"noise" shall mean the same sounds, or any combination thereof, as described in paragraphs a. or b. above.

(2) *Restrictions of 100 feet for 11:00 p.m. through 7 a.m. Sunday through Thursday and 12:00 midnight through 7:00 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday.*

- a. *Mechanical sound-making devices.* It is unlawful for any person or persons to play, use, operate, or permit to be played, used, or operated any radio receiving device, television, stereo, musical instrument, phonograph sound amplifier or other machines or devices for the producing, reproducing or amplifying of sound and/or noise at such a volume and in such a manner so as to create, or cause to be created, any noises or sounds which are plainly audible at a distance of 100 feet or more from the building, structure, or motor vehicle or in the case of real property, beyond the property limits, in which it is located, whichever is farthest, between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Sunday through Thursday and between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 7:00 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday.
- b. *Human-produced sound.* It is unlawful for any person or persons to yell, shout, hoot, whistle, or sing on the public streets or sidewalks or on private property so as to create, or cause to be created, any noises or sounds which are plainly audible at a distance of 100 feet or more from the place on public streets and sidewalks, or in the case of private real property, beyond the property limits, on which the person is located, whichever is farthest, between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Sunday through Thursday and between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 7:00 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday.
- c. *Commercial advertising.* It is unlawful for any person or persons to use, operate, or permit to be used or operated any radio receiving device, musical instrument, phonograph, loud speaker, sound amplifier or other machine or device for the production or reproduction of sound which is cast upon the public streets or other public property for the purpose of commercial advertising or which serves to attract the attention of the public to any building, structure or vehicle in such a manner so as to create, or cause to be created, any noises or sounds which are plainly audible at a distance of 100 feet or more from the source of the sound cast upon the public streets or other public property or from the building, structure, or in the case of real property, beyond the property limits, in which it is located, whichever is farthest, between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Sunday through Thursday and between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 7:00 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday.
- d. *Party noise.* It is unlawful for any person or persons in charge of a party or other social event that occurs on any private property to allow that party or event to produce noise in such a manner so as to such noise is plainly audible at a distance of 100 feet or more from the building or structure from which the party noise is emanating or in the case of real property, beyond the property limits, on which the party or social event is located, whichever is farthest, between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Sunday through Thursday and between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 7:00 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday. For the purposes of this subsection, a "person in charge of a party or other social event" shall mean any adult person who resides in or on the premises involved in such party or social event and is present at such party or social event. For the purposes of this subsection, "noise" shall mean the same sounds, or any combination thereof, as described in paragraphs a. or b. above.

(3) *Restrictions for areas within apartments, condominiums, townhouses, duplexes, or other such residential dwelling units.* Except for persons within commercial enterprises that have an adjoining property line or boundary with a residential dwelling unit, it is unlawful for any person to make, continue, or cause to be made or continued any noise in such a manner as to be plainly audible to any other person a distance of five feet beyond the adjoining property line wall or boundary of any apartment, condominium, townhouse, duplex, or other such residential dwelling units with adjoining points of contact.

For the purposes of this subsection, "noise" shall mean human-produced sounds of yelling, shouting, hooting, whistling, singing, or mechanically-produced sounds made by radio-receiving device, television, stereo, musical instrument, phonograph sound amplifier or other machines or devices for the producing, reproducing, or amplifying of sound, or any combination thereof.

For the purposes of this subsection, "property line or boundary" shall mean an imaginary line drawn through the points of contact of (1) adjoining apartments, condominiums, townhouses, duplexes or other such residential dwelling units with adjoining points owned, rented, or leased by different persons; or (2) adjoining common areas or adjoining exterior walls. Said property line or boundary includes all points of a plane formed by projecting the property line or boundary including the ceiling, the floor, and the walls.

- (4) *Exclusions.* The prohibitions of this section shall not apply to the following:
- a. Noises and/or sounds caused to be made by manufacturing, governmental, or commercial entities in the normal course of their business;
  - b. Noises and/or sounds emanating from any official University of Georgia event on University of Georgia property or any official Clarke County School District event on Clarke County School District property;
  - c. Noises and/or sounds that are permitted by a special event permit pursuant to section 6-5-6; provided, however, that the producer or coordinator of the special event must comply with the terms, restrictions and conditions of the special event permit;
  - d. Noises or sounds made by domestic animals, which noises or sounds are controlled by section 4-1-4
  - e. Noises or sounds made by wireless telecommunication facilities, the noise levels of which are controlled by section 9-18-6 A.10.;
  - f. Noises or sounds caused by industrial uses in the Employment-Industrial (E-I) and Industrial (I) zones established in the Zoning Code, the noise levels of which are controlled by section 9-11-5 A.1.h.;
  - g. Sound volumes produced by radio, tape player, or other mechanical sound making device or instrument from within a motor vehicle on a street or highway, which sound is controlled by the O.C.G.A. § 40-6-14; or
  - h. Noises or sounds made by law enforcement and other public safety officials performing their public functions.
- (5) *Time restrictions on use of landscape maintenance motorized Devices such as leaf blowers, lawn mowers, or chain saws.* It is unlawful for any person to use or operate any noise-generating, motorized landscape maintenance devices, including but not limited to leaf blowers, lawn mowers, or chain saws, within any residential zoning district or in areas within 300 feet of any residential zoning district from 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. except that within the agricultural-residential zone no person shall use or operate any such devices within 300 feet of any residential dwelling on adjacent property between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- (6) *Construction noise.* Between the hours of 11 p.m. and 6 a.m., construction noise of any type, including, but not limited to, noise caused by the erection (including excavation), demolition, alteration, or repair of any building, as well as the operation of any earth-moving equipment, crane, saw, drill, pile driver, steam shovel, pneumatic hammer, hoist, automatic nailer or stapler, or any similar equipment, shall not be plainly audible within any residential zoning district more than 100 feet beyond the property boundary of the property from which the noise emanates.

A variance from the above-referenced hours of operation for construction noise may be requested, in writing, at least 48 hours prior to the proposed construction operation, for consideration by the Director of the Building Inspections and Permit Department. Such a request shall state:

- 1) The reasons that support a claim of urgent need based on specific loss or inconvenience for such a variation from the allowable work hours;
- 2) The impact that the denial of this request would have on the applicant's project and the surrounding properties;
- 3) The steps which have been taken by the applicant to communicate those needs and impacts to owners of surrounding and nearby properties;

- 4) The steps that have or will be taken to limit the impact of the proposed activity upon surrounding and nearby properties; and
- 5) The possible risks to public health and safety.

If the Director finds that the application adequately demonstrates the urgent need for a variance from the above allowable work hours, adequately provides for mitigation of the impact upon surrounding and nearby properties, and poses no additional risk to public health and safety, then permission shall be granted for a variance to alter the allowable work hours during one ten-day period.

The prohibitions of this subparagraph (6) shall not apply to government road, water, sewer, stormwater construction or maintenance projects or to utility company construction or maintenance projects.

(7) *Commercial Entities near Single-Family Residential Zoning Districts.*

- a. Notwithstanding any provisions of this section concerning noises and/or sounds caused to be made by commercial entities in the normal course of their business, the provisions and prohibitions of paragraph (c), "Prohibited Conduct," subparagraph (1), concerning "Restrictions of 300 feet for 7:00 a.m. through 11:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 7:00 a.m. through 12:00 midnight on Friday and Saturday" and its subparts a. through c. shall apply to noises and/or sounds generated by a commercial entity that are plainly audible within any single-family residential zoning district more than 300 feet beyond the property boundary of the property from which the noises and/or sounds emanate.
  - b. Notwithstanding any provisions of this section concerning noises and/or sounds caused to be made by commercial entities in the normal course of their business, the provisions and prohibitions of paragraph (c), "Prohibited Conduct," subparagraph (2), concerning "Restrictions of 100 feet for 11:00 p.m. through 7:00 a.m. Sunday through Thursday and 12:00 midnight through 7:00 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday," and its subparts a. through c. shall apply to noises and/or sounds generated by a commercial entity that are plainly audible within any single-family residential zoning district more than 100 feet beyond the property boundary of the property from which the noises and/or sounds emanate.
- (d) *Registration of outdoor entertainment events.* Registration is required of all outdoor entertainment events that have commercial entertainment and/or electronic amplification. Registration of the event must be 72 hours prior to the event, and must be by the person or persons responsible for the event. Registration is to be with the Athens-Clarke County Police Department, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., on an application specified by the chief of police and shall include the organization sponsoring the event, the location, the date and time of the event, and security provisions. Registration shall not be accepted for events that include the hours between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Sunday through Thursday, and between 12:00 midnight and 7:00 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Failure to register may result in a fine, forfeiture of the right of future registrations, or both. Registration does not exempt the person or persons registering the event from ensuring that the event complies with the requirements of this section. Failure to register shall be a violation of this subsection.
- (e) *Penalties.* Any person violating the provisions of this section shall be punished as provided by section 1-1-5
- (f) *Severability clause.* A determination of the invalidity or unconstitutionality by a court of competent jurisdiction of any clause, sentence, paragraph, subsection or part of this section shall not affect the validity of the remaining parts of this section.

(Ord. of 9-16-91, § 1; Ord. of 5-1-2001, § 1; Ord. of 3-4-2003, § 1; Ord. of 8-5-2003, § 1; Ord. of 11-5-2008, §§ 1, 2; Ord. of 5-4-2010, § 1)

**Cross reference**— Disorderly conduct generally, § 3-5-1.