

A Sound Solution to Our Noisy World

Questions? Need to Report a Noise Violation?

Contact the Montgomery County
Customer Service Center at

- mc311.com
- Call 3-1-1
- Outside Montgomery County?
Call 240-777-0311
- TTY: 301-251-4850



File a Two-Party Noise Complaint at:
montgomerycountymd.gov/dep/noise

If the noise problem occurs outside
regular business hours, call the police
non-emergency line at 301-279-8000.

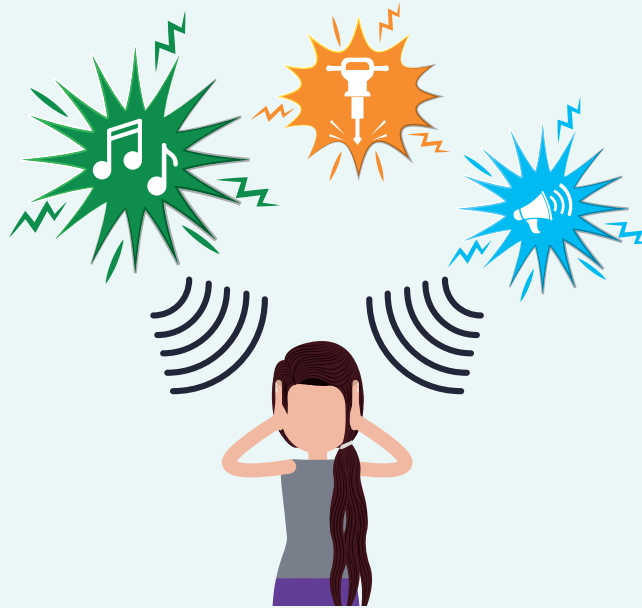


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To learn more about noise control, visit:
montgomerycountymd.gov/dep/noise



Noise Control: A Sound Solution



montgomerycountymd.gov/dep/noise



Sound is an everyday fact of life for most of us. However, when sound becomes noise (unwanted sound at constant high volumes), problems arise.

Noise can interfere with residential and business activities, and persistent exposure to noise can cause:

- Psychological stress
- Physical stress
- Damage to our hearing

While we cannot eliminate noise in our community, we can take steps to control it.

The County Noise Control Law:

The Noise Control Law promotes a more restful, pleasant environment throughout the County by establishing common sense guidelines for residents and businesses. It also provides remedies, including corrective orders, fines and criminal penalties.

The Montgomery County Noise Control Law is Chapter 31B of the County Code.

Key Provisions of the Law:

- Provides day/night sound level limits;
- Establishes “quiet hours”; and
- Defines sound that constitutes noise disturbance

The law does not cover noise from:

- Aircraft and railroads;
- Motor vehicles on public roadways; and
- Emergency operations by police, fire or public utilities.

What is a Noise Disturbance?

A noise disturbance, as defined by the law, is any sound that is:

- Unpleasant, annoying, or loud;
- Abnormal for the time or location; or
- Detrimental to health, comfort, property, or the conduct of business.

Under the law, it is unlawful to create a noise disturbance.

Maximum Allowable Noise Levels in Montgomery County*

	Daytime Weekdays: 7 am - 9 pm Weekends and Holidays: 9 am - 9 pm	Nighttime Weekdays: 9 pm - 7 am Weekends and Holidays: 9 pm - 9 am
Non-Residential Area	67 decibels	62 decibels
Residential Area	65 decibels	55 decibels

*Noise from construction activities is subject to different limits. See montgomerycountymd.gov/dep/noise

Guidelines for Good Neighbors

Solving Community Noise Problems:

Many noise problems can be resolved through the same methods used to solve other disputes. Tactful person-to-person communication is a good way to start.

Remember: self-monitoring and mutual cooperation are essential to stopping problems before they happen.

If that approach doesn't work, your tenant or community association may wish to adopt resolutions consistent with the County noise law, while taking steps to inform residents of the association's support for sanctions against noise.

What are "Quiet Hours"?

Weekdays: 9 pm to 7 am

Weekends and Holidays: 9 pm to 9 am

During "quiet hours" it is unlawful to create noises louder than 55 decibels at a residential receiving property line.

Common Types of Noise



Construction



HVAC Equipment



Music + PA Systems



Noisy Neighbors



Yard Maintenance + Leaf Blowers



Trash Collection

Each of us can play a part in reducing noise levels and being a good neighbor:

- Monitor the volume of televisions, radios, and other sound-producing equipment, especially during "quiet hours." Pay particular attention to bass controls.
- Avoid using power tools in your home, garage, or outdoors during "quiet hours."
- Check central and window air conditioning units periodically to ensure that they are operating as quietly as possible.
- Take good care of pets. Dogs left outside all day are likely to bark and disturb neighbors at home.
- Make sure your family and guests comply with "quiet hours."
- In multi-tenant settings, avoid performing noisy domestic activities, like operating appliances and exercise equipment or moving furniture during "quiet hours."

Businesses Can Be Good Neighbors, Too!

Businesses should try to limit the following to regular business hours:

- Construction and landscaping activities
- Loading and unloading goods and materials
- Use of electric sound and PA equipment
- Use of power equipment mounted on motor vehicles

Consider noise control when building, renovating, or buying/renting equipment.

If Disturbances Don't Stop

When noise disturbances continue despite attempts to resolve the problem, stronger actions may be warranted. This is especially true if the disturbances consistently occur during "quiet hours." (See box)



It's Illegal!

Among other provisions, the Noise Control Law makes it illegal to:

- Operate, or permit operation of, a radio, television, or other electronic sound-producing device on public or private property if the sound exceeds 55 decibels at the receiving property line in a residential noise zone.
- Create a noise disturbance.
- Allow an animal to create a noise disturbance.
- Load or unload material during "quiet hours" if the sound exceeds 55 decibels.
- Permit construction noise to exceed 75 decibels. (There are allowances for higher decibels levels under an approved Noise Suppression Plan.)
- Sell, buy, offer for sale, or use a leaf blower that has an average sound level exceeding 70 decibels at a distance of 50 feet.

Getting Compliance Help:

During business hours, Montgomery County specialists investigate complaints by using sound level meters to measure decibel levels at property lines.

After regular business hours, police respond to most noise complaints. While County specialists frequently use sound level meters, the law also allows police officers to issue citations for noise disturbance on their own judgment and with the testimony of witnesses, under the specific criteria stated in the law.

As many noise disturbances are not witnessed by an enforcement officer, the law allows residents to file a two-party noise complaint.

Two-Party Noise Complaints:

When signed by two or more adult witnesses to a noise disturbance, the Two-Party Noise Complaint allows an enforcement officer to initiate enforcement. The County has developed an affidavit, with instructions, that summarizes all of the facts necessary to initiate enforcement action.

To file a Two-Party Noise Complaint, visit: montgomerycountymd.gov/dep/noise

Upon conviction, violators of the Noise Control Law are subject to a civil penalty of up to \$500. Repeat offenders are subject to a fine of \$750, or criminal sanctions. Construction operations may be subject to a "stop work" order.