



Loudoun County, Virginia

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News Release

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Board Adopts Amendments to County's Noise Ordinance; Enforcement Begins Sept. 1

The Loudoun County Sheriff's Office will begin to enforce the recent changes to county's noise regulations on September 1, 2016. The amendments to Chapter 654.02 of the county's Codified Ordinances were adopted by the Board of Supervisors during its July 13, 2016, public hearing.

The amendments to the ordinance prohibit some noise based on time of day or duration of sound. For example:

- Music may not be plainly audible and discernable within 100 feet or more from the sound's source during a private party or other similar non-governmental event between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- A horn or alarm on any motor vehicle, motorcycle, bicycle, or other vehicle on a street or in a public place cannot be sounded for more than 20 consecutive seconds except as a danger warning or as permitted by law.
- Spinning of tires and racing of engines in a motor vehicle or motorcycle are prohibited as well as the emission of noise created by the absence of a muffler.

The amendments exclude some sound generating activities from regulation, including agricultural operations; sounds from places of worship such as bells and chimes; sounds from emergency operations such as sirens; parades and fireworks and similar county-approved events; operations of a public facility; and school-sponsored or organized youth athletic contests or practices, or other school activities.

Violations of the noise ordinance range from a Class 3 misdemeanor, which carries a maximum fine of \$500, to a Class 1 misdemeanor, which carries a maximum penalty of twelve months in jail and a \$2,500 fine. Over the next several weeks the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office will conduct an education phase prior to any citations issued for violations of the ordinance. Warnings will be issued to educate residents on noise levels that are now in violation of the county code. During the education phase, repeat violators may be subject to a citation after their initial warning.

Since the Virginia Supreme Court struck down the noise ordinance of the City of Virginia Beach (which was very similar to the former Chapter 654.02) as unconstitutionally vague, the county has lacked an enforceable ordinance addressing noise. The amendments to Chapter 654.02 establish a clear definition of what constitutes noise, requiring that the sound be audible and discernable inside a residential dwelling. The amended regulations may be found [online here](http://www.sheriff.loudoun.gov/noise-ordinance). For more information about enforcement of the new regulations, visit www.sheriff.loudoun.gov/noise-ordinance.

MORE

The Board of Supervisors also is currently considering changes to the Noise Standards section of the county's Zoning Ordinance. Unlike the noise regulations enforced by the Sheriff's Office, the Zoning Ordinance primarily regulates noise from commercial and other non-residential uses. The Board is scheduled to take action on the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment at its business meeting on September 22, 2016. More information is online at <https://www.loudoun.gov/NoiseZOAM>.

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