

ORDINANCE NO. 17-1052

Amend Chapter 18 Article V to clarify noise control regulations

ARTICLE V. - NOISE CONTROL ORDINANCE

Sec. 18-131. - Title; scope.

This article shall be known as the "Noise Control Ordinance for the Town of Carolina Beach." It is recognized that excessive and unnecessary noise: (i) endangers the physical and emotional health and welfare of people who reside or vacation in the residential neighborhoods and on the beach strand of the town; (ii) interferes with legitimate family and recreational activities; (iii) depresses property and rental values; (iv) contributes to potentially violent confrontations among persons occupying neighboring properties or enjoying the beach strand; and (v) requires police and public safety resources to respond to such disturbances and confrontations.

This article shall be known as the "Noise Control Ordinance for the Town of Carolina Beach." It shall be unlawful for any person to create or assist in creating, or to permit the continuance of any unreasonably loud or disturbing noises in the town. Noise of such disturbing character, intensity of duration as to be detrimental to the quality of life or health of any individual is prohibited. This article shall apply to all sound, vibration, and noise originating within the corporate limits of the town. Nothing in this article shall be construed to limit or prevent the town or any person from pursuing any other legal remedies for damages or the abatement of noises in the town.

(Code 1986, § 10-4; Ord. No. 02-493, 1-8-2003)

State Law reference— Noise regulation, G.S. 160A-184; abatement of nuisances, G.S. 160A-193.

Sec. 18-132. - Definitions and standards.

(a) *Definitions.* All definitions used in this article not defined below shall be in conformance with applicable publications of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) or its successor body. The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Amplified sound means any sound or noise, including the human voice that is increased in volume or intensity by means of electrical power.

A-weighted sound level means the sound pressure level in decibels as measured on a sound level meter using the A-weighting network. The level so read is designed dB(A).

Construction means erection, repair, assembly, alteration, landscaping or demolition of any building or buildings in sight.

Decibel (dB) means a unit for describing the amplitude of sound, equal to 20 times the logarithm to the base ten of the ratio of the pressure of the sound measured to the reference pressure, which is 20 micronewtons per square meter.

Emergency work means any work performed for the purposes of preventing or alleviating physical trauma or property damage threatened or caused by an existing or imminent peril.

Motorized vehicle.

- (1) Generally. The term "motorized vehicle" means any vehicle as defined in G.S. 20-4.01(49), including, but not limited to:
 - a. Excursion passenger vehicle as defined in G.S. 20-4.01(27)(a);
 - b. Common carriers of passengers as defined in G.S. 20-4.01(27)(c);
 - c. Motorcycles and mopeds as defined in G.S. 20-4.01(27)(d), (d.1);
 - d. Truck tractors as defined in G.S. 20-4.01(48);
 - e. Farm tractors as defined in G.S. 20-4.01(11).
- (2) *Motor boat.* The term "motor boat" means any vessel which operates on water and which is propelled by a motor including, but not limited to, boats, barges, amphibious craft, water ski towing devices, and hover craft.

Noise means any sound or combination of sounds which, because of its volume or quality, tends to disturb reasonable persons of normal sensitivity or to interfere with normal human activity.

Noise disturbance means any unreasonably loud and raucous sound or noise <u>which exceeds the</u> <u>Maximum Sound Pressure Levels as stated in Section 18-133.</u>

- (1) Endangers or injures the health or safety of humans or animals;
- (2) Endangers or injures personal or real property; or
- (3) Disturbs a reasonable person of normal sensitivity.

Nuisance noise levels means noise levels which do not exceed the noise thresholds but create an irritating impact sufficient to disturb an individual's sleep pattern or the peace and quiet of a residential neighborhood.

Outdoor amplified sound means any sound using amplifying equipment whose sound is outside or whose source is inside and the sound propagates to the outside through open doors or windows or other openings in the building.

Person means any individual, association, firm, partnership or corporation.

Person responsible means an owner, occupant, employee, agent or any other person who is or appears to be responsible for a premises, dwelling, or business or a noise-producing machine or device.

Sound means any disturbance of the air or other medium that is detectable by the unaided human ear or which produces vibrations detectable by persons of normal sensitivity.

Sound-amplifying equipment means any device for the amplification of the human voice, music or any other sound, including juke boxes, stereos and radios.

Sound level means the weighted sound pressure level obtained by the use of a sound level meter and frequency weighting network, such as A, B, or C as specified in American National Standards Institute Specifications for sound level meters (ANSI S1.4-1971, or the latest approved version thereof). If the frequency weighting employed is not indicated, the A-weighting shall apply.

Sound level meter means an instrument which includes a microphone, amplifier, RMS detector, integrator or time averager, output meter, and weighting network used to measure sound pressure levels.

Sound pressure level means 20 times the logarithm to the base ten of the ratio of the RMS sound pressure to the reference pressure of 20 micronewtons per square meter.

- (b) *Standards*. Standards, instrumentation, personnel, measurement procedures and reporting procedures to be used in the measurement of sound as provided for in this section shall be those as specified herein:
 - (1) Sound level measurement shall be made with a sound level meter using the A-weighting scale, set on "slow" response.
 - (2) Sound level meters shall be of at least Type Three meeting American National Standard Institute Incorporated (ANSI) S1.4-1971 requirements. The entire sound measurement system shall be serviced and calibrated and operated as recommended by the manufacturer. Persons using the sound level meters shall be trained in sound level measurement and the operation of sound level measurement.
 - (3) The Town Manager or his designee (Chief of Police) shall issue a general order adopting standards and procedures for sound level measurements and enforcement consistent with this article.

(Code 1986, § 10-5; Ord. No. 00-454, 6-13-2000; Ord. No. 02-493, 1-8-2003)

Sec. 18-133. - General prohibitions.

Except as allowed in this article, no person shall willfully engage in any activity on any premises or public area in the town which produces or constitutes a noise disturbance on occupied neighboring premises or public area. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, a sound or noise shall be deemed a noise disturbance if, when measured as prescribed herein, it exceeds the level set forth below:

- (1) Residential area. 65dB(A) (daytime level) between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m., or 55dB (nighttime level) between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- (2) <u>Central business district; barbor business; mixed use; and industrial.</u> <u>Commercial Districts.</u> 75 dB(A) (daytime level) between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m., or 65 dB(A) between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. On Friday and Saturday, the daytime levels shall remain in effect until 12:00 midnight.
- (3) This section shall not apply to activities for which permits have been issued pursuant to section <u>18-138.</u>

(Code 1986, § 10-6; Ord. No. 02-493, 1-8-2003)

Sec. 18-134 Unreasonably loud noises prohibited.

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person to create or assist in creating, or to permit the continuance of any unreasonably loud or disturbing noises in the town between the hours of 9:00 pm and 7:00 am. Noise of such character, intensity and duration as to be detrimental to the quality of life or health of any individual is prohibited. Unreasonably loud and disturbing noise is limited to noise that is loud, raucous and disturbing and heard upon the public streets, in any public park, in any public building or upon the grounds thereof while in use, in any church or hospital or upon the grounds thereof. Factors to consider in determining whether a violation exists include, but are not limited to:

- i. The volume of the noise;
- ii. The intensity of the noise;
- iii. Whether the nature of the noise is usual or unusual;
- iv. Whether the origin of the noise is natural or unnatural;
- v. The volume and intensity of the background noise, if any;
- vi. The proximity of the noise to residential sleeping facilities;
- vii. The nature and zoning of the area within which the noise emanates;
- viii. The density of the inhabitation of the area within which the noise emanates;
- ix. The time of the day or night the noise occurs;
- x. The duration of the noise; and
- xi. Whether the noise is recurrent, intermittent, or constant.

(b) Scope. This article shall apply only to sound, vibration, and noise originating within a residential zoning district within the corporate limits of the Town. Nothing in this article shall be construed to limit or prevent the town or any person from pursuing any other legal remedies for damages or the abatement of noises in the town.

(c)The complaints of two (2) or more persons, at least one (1) of whom resides in a different home from the other complaining person or persons, or the complaint of one or more persons, when combined with the complaint of the investigating police officer or a duly authorized investigating person, shall constitute a valid determination of an Unreasonably loud noise.

(Code 1986, § 10-4; Ord. No. 02-493, 1-8-2003)

inreasonably loud noise.

Sec. 18-13<u>5</u>4. - Measurement of sound level.

In determining sound levels pursuant to this article, the standards, instrumentation, personnel, measurement procedures, and reporting procedures shall be as specified herein; and all terminology not defined herein or in section 18-132 shall be in conformance with the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

- (1) Sound level measurement shall be made with a sound level meter using the A-weighting scale, set on slow response.
- (2) Sound level meters shall be serviced, calibrated and operated as recommended by the manufacturer and in accordance with regulations prescribed by the police department. Persons using the sound level meter shall be trained in sound level measurement and the operation of sound level measuring equipment.
- (3) Except as otherwise specified, sound level measurements shall be made from within the boundary line of any improved and occupied property; where this is impracticable, the measurement shall be taken at the exterior wall of the principal structure on such property. In the case of an elevated or directional sound, compliance with the prescribed limits shall be required at any elevation on the property.
- (4) Except as specified in subsection (7) of this section, the sound measurement shall be averaged over a period of at least one minute for purposes of determining the sound level. Sound levels may not exceed the prescribed level by more than three decibels at any time during the measurement period.
- (5) During measurement, the microphone shall not be positioned so as to create any unnatural enhancement of the measured sound. A windscreen shall be used when appropriate.
- (6) Traffic noise and noise from other sources not connected with the sound being measured shall not be considered in taking measurements.
- (7) In the case of noise that is impulsive or is not continuous, the measurement shall be taken over a period of time of at least one minute. Any such sound or noise that exceeds the prescribed level more than two times in a minute shall be deemed to exceed the prescribed sound levels.
- (8) In the case of outdoor entertainment, including live or recorded speech, music, or other sound, whether or not a permit is required for the activity, sound level measurements shall be made as prescribed in this section. In no case, however, shall the decibel level of such activity exceed the levels allowed pursuant to this article when measured at a point 100 feet away from the source of the sound and beyond the boundary line of the premises from which the noise emanates.

(Code 1986, § 10-6.1; Ord. No. 02-493, 1-8-2003)

Sec. 18-13<u>6</u>5. - Noises prohibited; nuisances.

- (a) *General prohibitions.* It shall be unlawful to create, cause or allow the continuance of any loud, disturbing noise, particularly during nighttime, which prevents or unreasonably interferes with neighboring residents' reasonable use of their properties. Such noise may include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - (1) *Yelling, shouting, whistling or singing.* Yelling, shouting, whistling or singing on the public streets or private property at nighttime.
 - (2) *Loading operations.* Noise resulting from loading, unloading, opening or otherwise handling boxes, crates, containers, garbage cans, or other similar objects during nighttime.
 - (3) Repair of motor vehicles. Noise resulting from the repair, rebuilding or testing of any motor vehicle during nighttime.
 - (4) Radio, phonograph, television, or musical instrument. Noise resulting from the playing of any radio, phonograph, musical instrument, television, or any such device, particularly during nighttime.
 - (5) *Nuisance noise*. Nuisance noise which does not exceed the noise threshold but creates an irritating impact sufficient to disturb an individual's sleep pattern or the peace and quiet of a residential neighborhood.
- (b) *Specific prohibitions*. The following acts are prohibited and shall be considered nuisance acts:
 - (1) *Horns and signaling devices.* The intentional sounding of any horn or signaling device on any street or public place continuously or intermittently, except as a danger or emergency warning.
 - (2) *Motor vehicles.* Operating or permitting the operation of any motor vehicle or motorcycle not equipped with a muffler or other device in good working order so as to effectively prevent loud or explosive noises therefrom.
 - (3) *Exterior loud speakers.* Operating or permitting the operation of any mechanical device or loudspeaker, without a permit to do so, in a fixed or movable position exterior to any building, or mounted in/on any motor vehicle or watercraft in such a manner that the sound therefrom is in excess of the maximum decibel level as described in section 18-133.
 - (4) *Power equipment.* Operating or permitting the operation of any power saw, sander, drill, grinder, leaf blower, lawn mower, or other garden equipment, or tools of a similar nature, outdoors during nighttime.
 - (5) *Explosives.* The use or firing of explosives, firearms, fireworks or similar devices which create impulsive sound.
 - (6) *Security alarms*. The sounding of a security alarm, for more than 20 minutes after being notified by law enforcement personnel.
 - (7) *Animals and birds.* The keeping of any animal or bird that frequently or for long periods of time makes noises that tend to disturb others.

- (8) *Construction*. Construction, construction preparation, building and operation of construction or building equipment.
- (9) *Motor vehicles.* Operation of any motor vehicle so as to cause the tires to squeal or screech unnecessarily.
- (10) *Model cars.* Operation of model cars, boats or airplanes, go carts, mini bikes or all-terrain vehicles or other unlicensed toy or recreational vehicles or devices powered by an internal combustion engine.

(Code 1986, § 10-7; Ord. No. 00-454, 6-13-2000; Ord. No. 02-493, 1-8-2003)

Sec. 18-136. - Commercial entertainment.

- (a) Without limiting the applicability of any other provision of this article, no commercial establishment shall play, operate, or cause to be played or operated, any amplified or nonamplified musical instrument or sound reproduction device in a manner that causes a noise disturbance on any neighboring premises or public area. For the purpose of this section, a noise disturbance shall be presumed to exist where the sound or noise caused by any activity described herein is plainly audible within any occupied structure not the source of the sound or noise or within any public area more than 66 feet from the property line of the commercial establishment during the days and times set forth below:
 - (1) For structures located in residential zoning districts, this presumption shall be effective at all hours.
 - (2) For structures and public areas located in non-residential zoning districts, this presumption shall be effective from 11:00 p.m. until 7:00 a.m. (except that the beginning time for the presumption shall be 1:00 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday).
- (b) This section shall not apply to activities for which permits have been issued pursuant to section 18-139.

(Code 1986, § 10-7.1; Ord. No. 02-493, 1-8-2003)

Sec. 18-137. - Owner and occupant responsibility.

- (a) Penalties for violations of this article may be assessed against persons responsible for the premises or device producing or causing the noise disturbance.
- (b) An owner of any premises subject to this article who is not also an occupant of the premises shall be responsible for any actions by tenants, guests, or other licenses that constitute second or subsequent violations of this article; provided, that no absentee owner shall be liable unless notified of first or previous violations of the article, and further provided that such first or previous violations pursuant to this subsection shall be effected by registered or certified mail. No absentee owner may be subjected to criminal liability under this section, but shall be subject to civil penalties and equitable relief as provided in section 18-140. This section shall in no way relieve any other person from responsibility for violations of this article.

(c) The person responsible for any premises shall be responsible and liable for any violations of this article by tenants, guests, or licenses on the premises if the person responsible is actively or constructively present at the time of the violation.

(Code 1986, § 10-7.2; Ord. No. 02-493, 1-8-2003)

Sec. 18-1378. - Exceptions.

The following are exempt from the provisions of this article:

- (1) Sound emanating from regularly scheduled outdoor events with a permit.
- (2) Construction operations from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays and between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturday; such work is prohibited on Sunday for which building permits have been issued, or construction operations not requiring permits due to ownership of the project by an agency of government; provided all equipment is operated in accord with the manufacturer's specifications and with all standard mufflers and noise reducing equipment in use and in proper operating condition. Any exceptions to this provision must comply with the process and procedure by which permits to exceed limits may be obtained.
- (3) Noises resulting from safety signals, warning devices and emergency pressure relief valves.
- (4) Noises resulting from any authorized emergency vehicle when responding to any emergency call or acting in time of emergency.
- (5) Any other noise resulting from activities of a temporary duration permitted by law and for which a license or permit therefor has been granted by the town in accordance with the above. Regulations of noises emanating from operations under permit shall be according to the conditions and limits stated on the permit and contained above.
- (6) Unamplified and amplified sound at street fairs conducted by or for the town.
- (7) All noises coming from the normal operations of properly equipped watercraft.
- (8) All noises coming from the normal operation of motor vehicles properly equipped with the manufacturer's standard mufflers and noise-reducing equipment.
- (9) Noise from lawful fireworks and noisemakers on federal holidays.
- (10) Noises resulting from lawn mowers, agricultural equipment, and landscape maintenance equipment used between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. on weekdays, and between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. on weekends, when operated with all manufacturers standard mufflers and noise-reducing equipment in use and in operating condition.
- (11) Noises resulting from sound amplification equipment used in conjunction with telecommunications systems on business properties to notify employees of that business of incoming phone calls, providing that this system is used only between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., and that any speakers attached to the system are oriented toward the interior of the property.
- (12) Noises resulting from emergency work necessary to restore property to a safe condition following a fire, accident or natural disaster, or to restore public utilities, or to protect persons or property from an imminent danger.

- (13) Noises resulting from the provision of government services.
- (14) Noise resulting from the provision of sanitation services.

(Code 1986, § 10-8; Ord. No. 00-454, 6-13-2000)

Sec. 18-1389. - Permit to exceed limits.

- (a) *Who may apply*. A person or group of persons may produce or cause to be produced sound in excess of those limits established in section 18-133 only during the hours specified in section 18-133, and only if a permit to exceed the limit for the time and place of the activity has been previously issued by the Town Manager.
- (b) *Application for permit.* Any person or group of persons desiring a permit shall apply as provided herein, and shall provide all information required.
- (c) *Timeliness of application.* The business manager or authorized agent or any person or group of persons desiring a permit for a live musical group or individual to perform out-of-doors using sound-amplifying equipment must make application 48 hours prior to the activity for which the permit is requested.
- (d) Action by Town Manager. The Town Manager or his designee will act upon all requests for permits.
- (e) *Consideration by Town Manager.* In considering and acting on all permits pursuant to this article, the Town Manager or his designee shall consider, but shall not be limited to, the following, in issuing or denying such permit:
 - (1) The timeliness of the application;
 - (2) The time of the event;
 - (3) Other activities in the vicinity of the location proposed;
 - (4) The frequency of the application;
 - (5) The effect of the activity on the residential areas of the town;
 - (6) Impact on surrounding areas;
 - (7) Previous experience with the applicant; and
 - (8) Previous violations, if any, of the applicant.
- (f) *Application requirements.*
 - (1) A permit application will require the payment of an administration fee pursuant to the town's annually adopted rate and fee schedule.
 - (2) The Town Manager or his designee may require that no sound speakers shall be set up more than ten feet above the ground.
 - (3) The Town Manager or his designee may require that the permit holders change the arrangement of loud speakers or the sound instruments so as to minimize the disturbance to surrounding areas resulting from the position or orientation of the speakers or from atmospherically or geographically caused dispersal of sound beyond the property line.

- (4) The Town Manager may require that the permit holder notify at least one adult at every residential address within 250 feet of the site of the proposed sound source that a permit has been issued. Such notification must be in writing and be given 24 hours prior to the starting time of the permitted activity.
- (g) *Cooperation with police*. Permit holders shall cooperate with the police department in enforcing this article, by having the permit holder available at the site of the event during the entire time for which a permit has been issued and capable of assisting the police in enforcing this article. Failure of such permit holder to be present or to assist the police in complying with this article will be cause for immediate revocation of said permit and cessation of permitted activity.
- (h) Denial of permit. The Town Manager or his designee may deny a request to exceed the limits or to operate sound-amplifying equipment to any individual, group, organization, or musical group who has held a permit to exceed normal noise levels within the previous six months, with or without a permit. All permits issued pursuant to this article shall contain a statement of the penalties for violations set forth herein.

(Code 1986, § 10-9; Ord. No. 00-454, 6-13-2000; Ord. No. 02-493, 1-8-2003)

Sec. 18-1<u>39</u>40. - Violations.

(a) Penalties for violations of this article may be assessed against the owner of the premises, the occupant of the premises, persons responsible for the premises or the device producing or causing the noise.

(b) An owner of any premises subject to this article who is not also an occupant of the premises shall be responsible for any actions by tenants, guests, or other licensees that constitute second or subsequent violations of this article; provided, that

(1) No absentee owner shall be liable unless notified of first or previous violations of the article,

(2) Such first violation or previous violation shall have occurred within the previous twelve-month period.

(3) Notice of any first or previous violations pursuant to this paragraph shall be effected by registered or certified mail.

(4) No absentee owner may be subjected to criminal liability under this section, but shall be subject to all civil penalties and equitable relief.

(c) This section shall in no way relieve any other person from responsibility for violations of this article.

(d) *First offense.* Any person who violates any portion of this article shall receive an oral order to cease or abate the noise immediately, or within a reasonable time period.

- (c) Nighttime offenses/ subsequent offenses. If a second violation occurs within 60 days of the first offense or if an offense occurs during nighttime, an oral order to cease or abate need not be issued prior to issuing a citation for violation of any portion of these above-mentioned sections.
- (d) *Civil penalty*. If the order to cease or abate the noise is not complied with, or if a second violation occurs within 60 days of the first offense or if an offense occurs during nighttime, a person or persons responsible for the violation may

<u>Violators shall</u> be subject to a civil penalty pursuant to the town's annually adopted rate and fee schedule. Violators may be issued a written citation which must be paid within five fourteen (14) days of the issue date and time. The Town Attorney, or his designee, is authorized to file a civil action on behalf of the town to collect any unpaid citations, and the Police Chief, or his designee, is authorized to verify and sign complaints on behalf of the town in such civil actions. A police officer or other employee duly authorized to enforce this article may issue a citation for violation of these above-mentioned sections.

- (e) Remedies. This article may also be enforced through equitable remedies issued by a court of competent jurisdiction.
- (f) *Criminal penalty.* In addition to, or in lieu of, such civil penalties or other remedies, violation of this article shall constitute a misdemeanor pursuant to G.S. 14-4 and 160-175, as amended, punishable for each violation by a fine pursuant to the town's annually adopted rate and fee schedule. A police officer or other officer enforcing subject matter jurisdiction or other duly authorized noise control officer may initiate the criminal process as provided by law.

(Code 1986, § 10-10; Ord. No. 00-454, 6-13-2000; Ord. No. 00-460, 8-8-2000)

State Law reference— Noise regulation, G.S. 160A-184; sale, etc., of pyrotechnics, G.S. 14-410 et seq.; abatement of nuisances, G.S. 160A-193.

Sec 18-140 Appeals

Any person issued a civil citation under the provisions of this section may appeal the issuance of such citation to the Carolina Beach Chief of Police ("Chief of Police"). An appeal shall be perfected in accordance with the following:

(1) An appeal shall be taken by giving written notice of appeal to the Chief of Police within 14 calendar days of the date of issuance of the civil citation. In determining the 14 calendar days within which such appeal may be taken, the date of the civil citation shall not be counted.

(2) Such written notice must be received by the Chief of Police no later than 5:00 p.m. on the fourteenth day of the appeal period. If the fourteenth day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or holiday recognized by the town, the time for filing such appeal shall be extended to 5:00 p.m. on the next day which is not a Saturday, Sunday or holiday.

(3) A copy of the citation issued to the appealing party shall be attached to such written notice of appeal.

(4) The written notice of appeal shall set forth the grounds for the appeal, include other information that the appealing party believes supports its position and must include the name, email address, mailing address and telephone number of the appealing party.

(5) Within 15 calendar days of receipt of the written notice of appeal, the Chief of Police shall issue a written decision. The Chief of Police may uphold the citation, dismiss the citation or reduce the citation to some lesser offense. Provided, that the Chief of Police may not impose any penalty greater than that set forth in the citation from which appeal was taken. The written decision of the Chief of Police will be emailed or mailed by first class mail to the appealing party within five days of issuance to the email address or mailing address of the appealing party shown on the written notice of appeal.

(6) The decision of the Chief of Police shall be final.

(7) If the Chief of Police upholds the citation or takes other action that requires the appealing party to make payment to the town, such payment must be made within 14 days of the date of the written decision of the Chief of Police. If the appealing party fails to make payment within that time, the town shall undertake enforcement action as appropriate.

Dan Wilcox, Mayor

Attest: Kimberlee Ward, Town Clerk

Date Approved