

Chapter 189: Noise

[HISTORY: Adopted by the Special Town Meeting of the Town of Harwich 5-5-2009 by Art. 1; amended in its entirety 5-3-2011 STM by Art. 20. Subsequent amendments noted where applicable.]

GENERAL REFERENCES

Peace and good order — See Ch. 214.

§ 189-1 Definitions; regulations; exemptions; special permits; violations and penalties.

[Amended 5-7-2012 ATM by Art. 23]

A. Definitions. As used by this bylaw, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

PLAINLY AUDIBLE

Any sound from a source regulated by this bylaw that can be detected above routine or normal ambient background noise by unaided human hearing.

SOUND AMPLIFICATION SYSTEM

Any fixed or portable system to operate or amplify sound, including, but not limited to, phonograph, radio, television, stereo, record player, tape player, cassette player, compact disk player, digital music player, "boom box," or loud speaker.

- B. It shall be unlawful for any person or persons to cause or allow any noise which emanates from any building, boat, structure, vehicle, premises, or any sound amplification system, which is plainly audible at a distance of 150 feet from any such building, boat, structure, vehicle, premises or sound amplification system. The fact that the noise is plainly audible at a distance of 150 feet from the building, structure, vehicle, boat, premises or sound amplification system in which or from which it originates shall constitute prima facie evidence of a violation of this section. Each such act, which constitutes a violation of this section, which either continues or is reported more than 30 minutes after the issuance of a warning or citation to cease said activities, shall be considered a separate offense and shall be prosecuted as a separate offense in accordance with § 189-1E.
- C. Sounding horns excessively. It shall be unlawful to sound or use automobile, truck or other motor vehicle horns or similar signaling devices upon the public streets, alleys, parking lots, or thoroughfares of the Town in excess of those signals necessary for the preservation of safety and is a violation of this bylaw at anytime.
- D. For the purposes of this bylaw, noises which disturb the reasonable quiet, comfort, repose, or health of others shall include loading or unloading activities, use of power tools and equipment, use of lawn or landscaping equipment, loud outcries, and other loud or boisterous noises which are not specifically exempted by § 189-1F and which are plainly audible at a distance of 150 feet from their source between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., except as otherwise indicated as outlined in § 189-1B.
- E. Procedure upon violation. It shall be the duty of any police officer of this town to order any person or persons so acting as to violate the provisions of this bylaw to cease any prohibited activities which are specified in this bylaw, and if the person or persons so ordered does not forthwith obey, the officer may issue a noncriminal citation with a fine of \$150 for the first violation and \$300 for each subsequent violation.
- (1) If the person or persons responsible for violation(s) of this bylaw cannot be determined, then the person in lawful custody and/or control of the premises where the violation(s) occurred, including but not limited to the owner, lessee, manager, or occupant of the property, may be deemed responsible for the violation(s).
 - (2) Any person or persons who commit, in the presence of a police officer, a violation of this article, which amounts to a breach of the peace or anticipatory breach of the peace, may be arrested without a warrant.
 - (3)

Whoever violates any provision of this bylaw may be penalized by indictment or on complaint brought in the District Court. Except as may be otherwise provided by law and as the District Court may see fit to impose, the maximum penalty for each violation or offense shall be \$300.

- (4) The Town may enforce this bylaw or enjoin violations thereof through any lawful process, and the election of one remedy by the Town shall not preclude enforcement through any other lawful means.

F. Exemptions. The following uses and activities shall be exempt from the noise level regulations:

- (1) Any law enforcement motor vehicle equipped with any communication or signaling device necessary in the performance of law enforcement duties.
- (2) Any fire apparatus, ambulance, rescue, or emergency response vehicle in performance of their public safety responsibilities.
- (3) Any emergency vehicle equipped with any communication device necessary in the performance of any emergency procedures.
- (4) Any highway maintenance, water department, or public utilities vehicle utilizing an amplified communications system in the performance of their responsibilities.
- (5) Announcing systems at sanctioned sporting or other authorized public events.
- (6) Noises of safety signals, warning devices and emergency pressure relief valves during public emergencies.
- (7) Noises resulting from any authorized vehicle(s) responding to an emergency call or acting in time of emergency.
- (8) Noises resulting from activities of a temporary duration permitted by law and/or for which a license or permit has been granted by the Town.
- (9) Parades, music festivals, public gatherings, and events for which the Selectmen have issued a permit.
- (10) Bells, chimes or carillons, or their amplified, recorded, or other electronic substitution while being used for religious purposes, in conjunction with religious services or to denote time intervals between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.
- (11) Snow removal from private parking lots, drives, roadways, and other vehicle- or pedestrian-traveled surfaces.
- (12) Noises for which the Board of Selectmen has granted a special permit.
- (13) Noise resulting from activities of any agricultural operation.

G. Application for special permit.

- (1) Application for a permit for relief from the noise level designated in this chapter on the basis of undue hardship may be made to the Board of Selectmen.
- (2) Any permit granted by the Selectmen shall set forth all conditions pertaining to the specified noise and a reasonable time limit for its abatement.
- (3) The holders of licenses to provide alcoholic beverages and/or entertainment shall comply with any noise allowances and/or restrictions imposed upon such licenses, and in the case of a conflict between individual license allowances or restrictions and this bylaw, the terms of the license shall apply, and a violation of any such allowances or restrictions shall also constitute a violation of this bylaw.

H. Severability clause. If any part of this bylaw is deemed to be contrary to state or federal law by the Attorney General, that part can be severed without affecting any other part of this bylaw.