

NOISE ORDINANCE SUMMARY

In July 2017 the Board of Commissioners adopted an ordinance updating the Township’s noise regulations. These regulations establish updated decibel limits for both residential and commercial areas as shown in the table below, along with specific exceptions. Noise levels are regulated as follows:

Maximum A-Weighted (<i>instrument-measured</i>) Sound Pressure Levels (SPL) 8 a.m.—8 p.m. Daytime / 8 p.m.—8 a.m. Nighttime			
Zoning District of Receiving Property	Time of Day	Maximum sound decibel limits (dBA)	Average sound decibel limits (dBA)
Residential (R)	Daytime	57	52
	Nighttime	52	45
Non-residential (C)	Daytime	67	62
	Nighttime	62	55

The ordinance includes exemptions as a recognition that some day-to-day sound levels may exceed the limits in the chart above. The exemptions are:

- If background noise levels on a property at the time of a noise complaint are within 5 decibels of the limits in the chart above, the levels in this chart do not apply, and the noise level may increase by up to 5 decibels over the background sound, up to a maximum of 75 decibels.
- Noises from the lawful operation of motor or utility vehicles, snow removal activity, noises created by Federal governmental units, and noises created or necessitated by emergency and civil defense activities.
- Noise created by refuse collection services, street sweepers, deliveries, and other activities associated with a permitted land use are exempt during the times as provided below:
 - (a) Residential Districts. Only during the hours of 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday and during the hours of 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday;
 - (b) Non-Residential Districts. Only during the hours of 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday to Friday and during the hours of 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.
 - (c) Upon application, the Director of Building & Planning may grant an exception if reasonably necessary to conduct the activity in question for a specifically limited duration, subject to reasonable conditions to protect the public welfare. Any application’s decision is appealable to the Board of Commissioners.

- Noise associated with permitted outdoor dining activities located in Non-Residential Districts, from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday to Thursday and 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday.
- Noises created by construction work and the repair and maintenance of any building, structure, or property, including landscaping operations, are exempt during the times provided below:
 - (a) 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday and Sunday;
 - (i) Monday through Friday between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., a maximum of one (1) piece of landscaping equipment exceeding the decibel limits may operate.
 - (b) The Director of Building & Planning may extend these exemptions if reasonably necessary to conduct the construction work in question for specifically limited durations, subject to conditions to protect the public welfare. The decision is appealable to the Board of Commissioners.
- Concerts, block parties, graduations, wedding receptions, ceremonies, sporting or recreational activities, carnivals, festivals, or other performances or similar activities (public or private) shall be exempt provided that:
 - (a) Such activities, except for sport shooting on ranges existing on July 1, 2017, do not produce sound at the property line of 10 decibels or more in excess of the sound levels in the chart above; and
 - (b) The exemption shall not apply from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m. the following day Sunday through Thursday, or from 11 p.m. to 9 a.m. the following day on Friday and Saturday and Federal holidays.
- Warning devices: sounds made by warning devices operating continuously for three (3) minutes or less. In the event of an actual emergency, the time limitation does not apply.
- Noise created by emergency generators during a power outage. Noise created by emergency generator testing is exempt between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Noise created by the unamplified human voice, provided however, that such noise shall be subject to the applicable provisions of Chapter 111 (Peace & Good Order).

If there are any provisions of the Lower Merion Code that sets noise standards or authorizes activities that conflict with the noise level regulations in this Chapter, the more restrictive language applies.

Violations of the sound level limits could result in fines or penalties up to \$1,000 for each offense.