

Proposed Revisions to Denver's Noise Ordinance

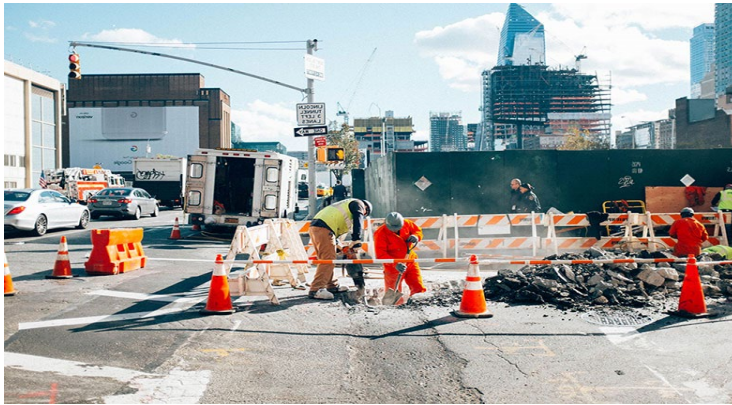
DRMC Chapter 36 Noise Control

City Council Safety Committee
2/5/25

Empowering Denver's communities to live better, longer

Denver's Noise Ordinance

Noise is defined in DRMC Ch. 36 as unwanted sound. DDPHE is charged with regulating noise that meets certain criteria.



Why revise the ordinance?

- Most recent noise ordinance revisions were completed in 2008.
- City has grown drastically and so has noise-producing activity.
- Revisions needed to balance the city's growth, desire for activation, arts & entertainment, and development while still preserving the public's health through the reduction and control of noise.

Stakeholder Engagement

Held 17 stakeholder meetings

Public survey with almost 1,000 responses

Reviewed hundreds of comments sent to public inbox

Researched noise ordinances in similar sized peer cities

List of Stakeholders

Public Stakeholders

- General Public
- Small Businesses
- Independent Musicians
- Event Organizers
- Waste Haulers
- Construction Industry
- Bars/Restaurant Associations
- Pickleball Clubs

Cities Researched

- Portland
- Seattle
- Nashville
- Austin
- Phoenix
- Minneapolis
- Miami
- Indianapolis
- Oklahoma City
- Las Vegas

City Agencies

- Excise & License
- Safety
- CPD
- OSE
- Arts and Venues
- Parks and Rec
- DEDO
- Mayor's Office
- DOTI

Major Updates

- Definition of noise
- Waste Stream activities
- Festivals
- Construction activities
- Pre-existing noise sources (industrial/public/commercial meets residential)
- Engine compression brakes
- Variances for nighttime construction

Definition of Noise

CURRENT: Sound that is unwanted and that causes or tends to cause adverse psychological or physiological effects on human beings.

PROPOSED: Sound that is unwanted and that exceeds the sound pressure levels permitted in this chapter or is otherwise prohibited.

Waste Stream Activities

CURRENT: Waste stream activities start time is 7 a.m. Prohibited after 10 p.m.

PROPOSED: Earlier collection start time for waste, recycling, and composting activities.

6 a.m. start. Prohibited after 10 p.m.

Festivals/Special Events – Public Property

CURRENT: Festivals on public property receive an elevated level of 80 dBA with hard stop at 10 p.m. Must meet the definition of a special event in the noise ordinance.

PROPOSED: Festivals or public noise producing events that are properly permitted by applicable city agencies to receive elevated level of 85 dBA with hard stop at 10 p.m.

Festivals/Special Events – Private Property

CURRENT: No special allowance for elevated noise levels for festivals/special events held on private property.

PROPOSED: Festivals or public noise producing events held on private property to receive elevated level of 85dBA for a total of eight calendar days per year, not to exceed four consecutive days and mandatory rest periods built in.

Construction Activities

CURRENT: Construction activities that exceed Table A decibel limits are prohibited between the hours of 9 p.m.-7 a.m. on weekdays and 5 p.m.-8 a.m. on weekends.

PROPOSED: Construction activities that are *plainly audible* are prohibited between the hours of 9 p.m.-7 a.m. on weekdays and 5 p.m.-8 a.m. on weekends.

Pre-existing Noise Sources (Mixed Use Areas)

CURRENT: Allowable decibel limits and times for industrial, commercial, residential, and public areas are subject to Table A limits.

PROPOSED: Increased allowable decibel limits and times for pre-existing sources to produce the same amount of sound during their operations that they've always produced regardless of surrounding development.

Engine Compression Brakes

CURRENT: Engine compression brakes (Jake Brakes) are not currently regulated.

PROPOSED: Engine compression brakes will be prohibited. These types of brakes are already prohibited in other Colorado counties.

Noise Variances

CURRENT: All noise variances must be approved through the Board of Public Health & Environment.

PROPOSED: No change to official variance process. New allowance for non-conforming, night-time, noise-producing *construction activities* to be approved by DDPHE, provided certain conditions are met.

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