OFFICE OF Community & Civic Life
NOISE OFFICE

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CONSTRUCTION Noise Regulations

This sheet explains City of Portland regulations on construction noise. (Code section 18.10.060)

1. **Permissible Hours and Noise Level** -- From 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, the City permits a very liberal standard for construction noise (85 dBA at a 50' distance). This means that, provided your equipment is in good repair and muffled (if possible), it will be compliant. The few kinds of equipment that cannot meet this level – (for example: jack hammers, concrete saws, and pile drivers) are exempt from the standard during this period.
2. **Outside Permissible Hours** -- But outside of these hours, different rules apply. Work at other hours must meet the "baseline permitted decibel levels" of the area in which the work is taking place. You will likely be in violation of the code for exterior work (e.g., clearing, grading, excavating, framing, roofing, etc.) before 7 a.m., after 6 p.m., or on Sundays and the days on which New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day are fixed by State law.
3. **Complaints** – When complaints are received, it is usually because of the hours of operation rather than the amount of noise. The 7 a.m. start time includes noise generated by warm-up and maintenance. If we receive a complaint, we will contact you, and request that you take care of it. Most complaints stop here.
4. **Possible Citations** – If additional legitimate complaints are received, be aware that each individual or organization responsible can receive a citation and fine of up to $5000 for each violation. If needed, a court-ordered "stop work" order can also be obtained.
5. **Variances** -- There are times when work must occur outside of the permissible hours. Noise regulations do not apply for emergency work "…necessary to restore property to a safe condition following a public calamity, work to restore public utilities, or work required to protect persons or property from imminent exposure to danger," For non-emergency work outside of the permitted hours, you may apply for a variance. Construction noise variances may be issued if the need is valid and there is ample notification to nearby neighbors. Accelerated review fees will be required for applications submitted fewer than ten business days prior to the event
6. **The Noise Review Board** – This advisory board meets the second Wednesday of each month. Completed applications to be reviewed by the Noise Review Board must be filed 45 business days prior to the Noise Review Board meeting. Current fees charged for review for construction activities are located on the noise variance application. Accelerated application reviews triggers an increase in fees.

More Information Needed? These notes cover most of the questions asked about construction noise and the noise code. If you have more questions, you may call the Noise Office at (503) 823-7350.

The City of Portland is committed to providing meaningful access. To request translation, interpretation, modifications, accommodations, or other auxiliary aids or services, contact 503-823-4000, Relay: 711.

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