



# CITY OF COLLEGE PARK

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## UNRULY SOCIAL GATHERINGS ORDINANCE

For many years, the Mayor and Council, City staff, Police, the County, student groups, and landlords have tried to prevent—with limited success—disruptive noise and other negative impacts caused by large social gatherings in our neighborhoods. The Mayor and Council recently amended the City Code to better address specific problem behaviors that may occur at unruly social gatherings.

The purpose of the Unruly Social Gatherings Ordinance (in Chapter 141, Nuisances) is to improve the quality of life and safety for residents; it does not prohibit gatherings. The Ordinance makes it a Municipal Infraction (civil citation) when one or more of the following conditions exist at a gathering of eight or more people:

- underage or excessive drinking, public drunkenness, illegal substance use or health and safety violations
- attendees spill over onto the street or a neighbor's property
- the noise level is above Noise Code limits
- attendees are vandalizing, urinating, defecating, or littering
- fights or other disturbances of the peace
- the gathering creates an excessive amount of traffic that is significantly above and beyond the normal amount of pedestrian or vehicle traffic
- other conduct which constitutes a threat to the public safety, quiet enjoyment of residential or other private property, or the general welfare.

A violation of the Unruly Social Gatherings Ordinance is subject to an immediate municipal infraction and \$500 fine of the responsible party, with a warning given on first offense to property owners (if a rental property). Subsequent violations of the ordinance within 24 months of the prior violation will result in a \$1,000 fine of the responsible party and a \$500 fine of the property owner. The occupancy permit for the property may also be revoked for three or more violations within a 24-month period.

The Council also amended the City's Noise Code to extend the lower nighttime noise limit of 55 decibels from 7:00 a.m. (previously) to 8:00 a.m. on weekends and holidays. Additionally, a list of specifically exempted sources of noise has been added to the Code.

Changes to the Noise and Nuisance Codes went into effect on October 15, 2019. However, **a grace period for issuing municipal infractions and fines for Nuisance Code violations is in effect until January 1, 2020.** Violations and complaints of potential Nuisance Code violations will be documented by a notice sent to residents and property owners. Violations of the Noise Code will continue to be addressed per the current practice, which includes the issuance of municipal infractions and fines for documented violations. When appropriate, referrals to the University of Maryland Office of Student Conduct will be made.

To read the complete City Noise and Nuisance Codes (Chapters 110, 138, and 141 of the City Code), you may access the City Code online at <https://ecode360.com/CO0032>.

Please contact the Department of Public Services at 240-487-3570 or [publicservices@collegeparkmd.gov](mailto:publicservices@collegeparkmd.gov) if you have any questions about these or other City codes.