



Development CITY OF AUSTIN
SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Building a Better and Safer Austin Together

Amplified Sound Process

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Brian Block
Entertainment Services Manager

David Chapman
Environmental Division Manger

Welcome



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Chapter 9-2 Noise & Amplified Sound

General Restrictions

- Noise may not be audible to an adjacent business or residence between 10:30pm-7:00am
- At a business, sound equipment is limited to 85dB between 10:00am-2:00am, and may not be audible at the property line of the business between 2:00am-10:00am
- In a residential area, sound equipment is limited to 75 dB from 10:00am-10:00pm and may not be audible beyond the property line from 10:00pm-10:00am
- Businesses and Events can get a permit for the use of sound equipment that exempts them from the general restrictions



Outdoor Amplified Sound Permit Types

- Outdoor Music Venue Permit (OMV)
 - Outdoor Amplified Sound at commercial establishments on a regular or recurring basis
 - Annual operating permit issued for outdoor amplified sound
- Temporary Use of Sound Equipment
 - Outdoor Amplified Sound at commercial establishments on an event-by-event basis
 - Temporary permit for events and activities with outdoor amplified sound at permanent establishments that don't require a Special Event Permit
- Outdoor Amplified Sound at Special Events
 - Outdoor amplified sound at events is typically approved through the special event permit required for all special events
 - City Code Chapter 4-20 (Special Events)



Review Process

(Entertainment Services Group)

The purpose of the Outdoor Music Venue (OMV) permit is to assess and limit impacts to the surrounding community and to support both outdoor amplified sound at establishments and residential quality of life

Every OMV permit includes a sound impact plan that specifies the allowances and restrictions for decibel limits and operating hours, as well as other details that the establishment must comply with

City code sets maximum sound level and hours for different locations and contexts, and the criteria for the review. Staff conducts the review and customizes allowances and restrictions in a customized and context sensitive way based on the review criteria

Review Process

(Entertainment Services Group)

1. Review for potential impacts to surrounding community may include
 - a) On-site inspections, sound measurements, discussions with nearby residents and business owners; and
 - b) Any additional research necessary to assess potential impacts

2. Criteria for review include
 - a) Suitability for outdoor music based on topography and proximity to other uses including residential
 - b) Size and capacity of the site covered by the permit
 - c) Sound mitigating design features proposed by the applicant including stage construction and orientation, size, location and orientation of speakers, and sound buffering

3. Review findings include:
 - a) Approval or denial of the application and any appropriate conditions and restrictions
 - b) If necessary, to protect public health and safety, more restrictive decibel levels and hours of operation may be established

Enforcement Process

(Environmental Inspections Division)

1. Purpose is to conduct routine inspections, provide response to loud noise complaints.
2. Common violations that may be identified during a site visit:
 - a) No OMV permit or an expired permit,
 - b) Sound exceeding permitted decibel limits (measured with sound meters),
 - c) Amplified sound played past authorized operational hours or dates,
 - d) Unapproved modifications to the Sound Impact Plan (SIP).
3. Depending on the nature of the violation, enforcement staff may issue:
 - a) Warning to gain compliance,
 - b) Misdemeanor citation,
 - c) File an affidavit with the City of Austin Court to the Business Owner or General Manager when:
 - i. 4 violations in 45 days occurs, suspend the Outdoor Music Venue Permit.
 - ii. 2 court convictions, revoke Outdoor Music Venue Permit.



Resources & Reference

- [MuniCode, Chapter 9-2 Noise & Amplified Sound](#)
- [Outdoor Music Venue Application](#)
- [Environmental Inspections Division](#)





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