



## REAL ESTATE LAW

# Reducing noise pollution in your neighbourhood



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For many people, the summer months are synonymous with barbecues, pool parties and outdoor concerts. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware of the City of Ottawa by-laws that regulate noise levels for these types of events in order to ensure safe and peaceful cohabitation

between neighbours.

Summertime get-togethers can be a great way to enjoy the warm weather with friends and family. Be that as it may, these parties can sometimes get out of hand and become an incredible nuisance for neighbours. As a host, should you be concerned? The City

of Ottawa permits the use of stereos at a reasonable volume throughout the day until 11 p.m. However, the noise level must not exceed 55 dBA (the equivalent of a busy office, a running air conditioning unit, or a piano practice).

Furthermore, operating a "sound reproduction device" (such as a stereo, a musical instrument, or a radio) between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. in a way that disturbs the peace and comfort of neighbours is a violation of city by-laws punishable by a



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minimum fine of \$500.00. All sound reproduction devices must be kept under 45 dBA (the equivalent of a babbling brook or a normal conversation at home). Keep in mind that the social host of a noisy party can also be charged for the behaviour of their rowdy guests. When you become aware of your guests engaging in drunken or riotous behaviour that could cause a noise disturbance or lead to property damage, you must take action to prevent this type of behaviour from occurring. If your guests persist, you may ask them to leave or call the police if they refuse to leave the premises.

During the summer months, Ottawa becomes the host to a multitude of music festivals and other outdoor music events, such as the RBC Bluesfest, the TD Ottawa International Jazz Festival, and the Ottawa CityFolk Festival. So, how do these event organizers avoid costly fines? Concerts and other outdoor events are exempt from

these rules on sound amplification. However, the organizers for these types of events must submit an application to the Director of By-law Services sixty days prior to the event. Furthermore, the event cannot carry on passed 1 a.m. on weekends or 11 p.m. on week nights. Sporting events, such as the Ottawa Redblacks games at the Lansdowne Stadium, are also exempt from the general noise by-laws. Organizers must follow similar rules to the ones that apply to concert events.

If your neighbor is violating any of these municipal rules, consider the following suggestions to reduce the noise pollution in your neighbourhood. Firstly, getting to know your neighbours and maintaining a good relationship

with them helps to facilitate a peaceful cohabitation. If your neighbour is exceeding noise levels, you should try to ask them to reduce the noise. Remember to remain vigilant and to avoid potentially dangerous situations. If the noise persists after speaking with your neighbour or if you do not feel comfortable communicating with your neighbour, you can always report these violations to the City of Ottawa's By-Law and Regulatory Services Branch by calling 3-1-1.

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