

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF AURORA, TEXAS, ESTABLISHING NOISE AND SOUND REGULATIONS FOR THE CITY; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS; PROHIBITING CERTAIN NOISY VEHICLES; PROHIBITING CERTAIN NOISY ANIMALS AND BIRDS; ESTABLISHING MAXIMUM PERMISSIBLE SOUND LEVELS; PROVIDING METHODS OF SOUND MEASUREMENT; REQUIRING A PERMIT FOR THE USE OF OUTDOOR SOUND AMPLIFICATION EQUIPMENT; PROVIDING FOR CERTAIN DEFENSES; PROVIDING FOR VARIANCES; PROVIDING FOR A PENALTY; PROVIDING THAT THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE CUMULATIVE OF ALL ORDINANCES; PROVIDING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; PROVIDING A SAVINGS CLAUSE; PROVIDING FOR PUBLICATION IN THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City of Aurora is a Type A general-law municipality located in Wise County, created in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 6 of the Local Government Code and operating pursuant to the enabling legislation of the State of Texas; and

WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes that some noises are of such volume or intensity as to constitute a danger to the physical health of persons or a breach of the peace, quiet, and solitude to which citizens are entitled; and therefore, the City Council desires to adopt noise and sound regulations for the City of Aurora, as hereinafter provided.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AURORA, TEXAS:

**CITY OF AURORA
NOISE AND SOUND LEVEL REGULATIONS**

**SECTION 1.
DEFINITIONS**

The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in this ordinance, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, unless the context of their usage clearly indicates another meaning:

Agricultural machinery shall mean a farm tractor or an implement of husbandry.

Daytime hours shall mean the hours from 7:00 a.m. on one day and 10:00 p.m. the same day for residential properties or areas and 6:00 a.m. on one day and midnight on the same day for nonresidential properties or areas.

dB(A) shall mean the intensity of a sound expressed in decibels.

Emergency shall mean any occurrence or set of circumstances involving actual or imminent physical trauma or property damage or loss that demands immediate action.

Emergency work shall mean any work performed for the purpose of (i) preventing or alleviating the physical trauma or property damage threatened or caused by an emergency, (ii) restoring property to a safe condition following a fire, accident, or natural disaster, (iii) protecting persons or property from exposure to danger, or (iv) restoring public utilities.

Farm tractor shall mean a motor vehicle designed and used primarily as a farm implement for drawing other implements of husbandry.

Implements of husbandry shall mean farm implements, machinery, and tools used in tilling the soil and harvesting crops, including self-propelled machinery specifically designed or adapted for applying plant food materials or agricultural chemicals but not specifically designed or adapted for the sole purpose of transporting the materials or chemicals. The term does not include a passenger car or truck.

Nighttime hours shall mean the hours between 10:01 p.m. on one day and 6:59 a.m. the following day for residential properties or areas and 12:01 a.m. and 5:59 a.m. the same day for nonresidential properties or areas.

Nonresidential property/areas shall mean any real property that is not included in the definition of residential property as defined in this section. Without limitation, the term includes any properties that are devoted to public purposes, such as public parks.

Plainly audible shall mean any sound that can be detected by a person using his or her unaided hearing faculties. For example, if the sound source under investigation is a portable or personal vehicular sound amplification or reproduction device, the enforcement officer need not determine the name of the song, specific words or the artist performing it. The detection of the rhythmic bass component of the music is sufficient to constitute a plainly audible sound.

Property line shall mean, with respect to single occupancy properties, the line along the ground surface and its vertical extension that separates the real property owned, leased, or occupied by one person from that owned, leased, or occupied by another person. With respect to shared occupancy properties the term shall mean the imaginary line that represents the legal limits of occupancy of any person who owns, leases, or otherwise occupies an apartment, condominium, hotel or motel room, office, or any other type of occupancy from that of other occupants.

Residence shall mean the place where a person resides or has a home.

Residential property/areas shall mean any real property where a residence is located.

Streets shall be defined as being in the same category as the surrounding property. In the case of residential properties/areas which are across the street from nonresidential properties/areas, the street shall be considered to be in a residential area.

SECTION 2. GENERAL PROHIBITIONS

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person to make, continue, or cause to be made or continued any loud noise that disturbs, injures, or endangers the comfort, repose, health, peace, or safety of others. In determining whether a noise is loud, the following factors shall be considered: time of day; proximity to residential properties/areas as defined above; whether the noise is recurrent, intermittent, or constant; the volume and intensity; whether the noise has been enhanced in volume or range by any type of electronic or mechanical means; and whether the noise is subject to being controlled without unreasonable effort or expense to the creator thereof.

(b) It shall be unlawful for any person to make, assist in making, permit, continue, cause to be made or continued, or permit the continuance of any sound that either exceeds the maximum permitted sound levels specified in section 6 of this ordinance or, for purposes of sections 3, 4, and 5 of this ordinance, otherwise unreasonably disturbs, injures, or endangers the comfort, repose, health, peace, or safety of others.

(c) The acts enumerated in the following sections of this ordinance, among others, are declared to be loud, disturbing noises in violation of this ordinance, but such enumeration shall not be deemed to be exclusive.

(d) This ordinance shall not apply to any agricultural machinery, public utility or public works.

SECTION 3. NOISY VEHICLES GENERALLY

(a) The use of any motor vehicle so out of repair or so extra loaded, that it creates any loud and unreasonable, (that is, not standard equipment for the type vehicle, or which violates state regulations for equipment or emissions), grating, grinding, rattling, or any other loud and unreasonable sound is hereby prohibited and declared to be unlawful.

(b) No person shall operate an engine of any motor vehicle as defined by the Texas Transportation Code so as to "brake" or slow the same through the use of gears (commonly known as "jake braking") or by any other method which produces any noise in addition to the normal operating engine noise.

(c) No person shall operate or allow an engine of any sort of motor vehicle, except emergency equipment or vehicles then located at a permitted public event or parade, to idle for more than one hour.

SECTION 4. AMPLIFIED SOUND

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person to make, assist in making, permit, continue, cause to be made or continued, or permit the continuance of any sound using any sound amplifier that is part of or connected to any speaker system, radio, stereo receiver, compact disc player, cassette tape player, microphone, or any other sound source, when operated: (1) in such a manner as to disturb the peace, quiet, and comfort of the neighboring inhabitants, or (2) at any time with louder volume than is necessary for convenient hearing for persons who are in the vehicle or within the property or premises in which such sound amplifier is operated and who are voluntary listeners thereto. The operation of any such sound amplifier in such a manner as to be plainly audible at a distance of 50 feet or more from a vehicle shall be presumed to be violative of this section. The operation of any such sound amplifier in such a manner that bass sounds are plainly audible at a distance of 50 feet or more from the property line of a property or premises in which the amplification is located shall be presumed to be violative of this section.

(b) It is an affirmative defense to prosecution under this section that the sound source is a motor vehicle and that (1) the motor vehicle is a mobile sound stage or studio that is being used on a stationary basis at a location not situated upon any street for the purpose of providing sound, during daytime hours, for an event or function and (2) the use is in compliance with all other provisions of this ordinance.

SECTION 5. NOISY ANIMALS AND BIRDS

(a) The keeping of any animal or bird, other than farm livestock, that causes or makes frequent or long and continued sound that unreasonably disturbs, injures, or endangers the comfort, repose, health, peace, or safety of ordinary, reasonable persons of normal sensibilities and ordinary tastes, habits, and modes of living who reside in the vicinity thereof is hereby prohibited and declared to be unlawful as a sound nuisance in violation of this ordinance, regardless of whether the sound so created by said animal or bird is within the permissible levels specified in section 6 of this ordinance.

(b) In any prosecution for a violation of this section, the fact that any loud animal noise which disturbed any person and which occurs in residential areas either (1) during nighttime hours or (2) when none of the residents who reside at the place where the animal or bird is being kept are at home, shall create a rebuttable presumption that such noise was in violation of this section.

(c) In any prosecution for a violation of this section, the fact that any animal or bird has been allowed or permitted to persistently and chronically violate this section, as demonstrated by the issuance of two or more citations and/or the receipt of two or more complaints from more than one household within a two month period shall create a rebuttable presumption that such noise was in violation of this article.

SECTION 6. MAXIMUM PERMISSIBLE SOUND LEVELS

(a) In addition to the violations established by the preceding sections of this ordinance, no person shall conduct, permit, or allow any activity or sound source to produce a sound discernible beyond the property on which the sound is being generated that when measured as provided in section 7 of this ordinance exceeds 85 dB(A) during daytime hours and 70 dB(A) during nighttime hours for the respective areas described above.

(b) Any sound that exceeds the dB(A) levels set forth in this section under the conditions and measurement criteria set forth in this section is a violation of this ordinance. Evidence that an activity or sound source produces a sound that exceeds the dB(A) levels specified in this section shall be prima facie evidence of a sound nuisance that unreasonably disturbs, injures, or endangers the comfort, repose, health, peace, or safety of others in violation of this ordinance.

(c) Regardless of the measurable dB(A) level established above and measured as provided in section 7 below, the generator of any sound of such a nature as to cause persons occupying or using any property other than the property upon which the sound is being generated to experience physically detectable sound, vibrations or resonance at a distance of 50 feet from the source of the sound (measured as set out below) caused by the sound shall also be prima facie evidence of a sound that unreasonably disturbs, injures, or endangers the comfort, repose, health, peace, or safety of others in violation of this ordinance.

SECTION 7. METHOD OF SOUND MEASUREMENT

Whenever portions of this ordinance prohibit sound over a certain decibel limit, measurement shall be made with a type 1 or type 2 calibrated sound level meter utilizing the A-weighting scale and the slow meter response as specified by the American Standards Association. Measurements recorded shall be taken so as to provide a proper representation of the sound being measured. The microphone of the meter shall be positioned so as not to create any unnatural enhancement or diminution of the measured sound. A windscreen for the microphone shall be used. Traffic, aircraft, and other transportation noise shall not be considered in taking measurements except where such background noise interferes with the noise being measured and cannot reasonably be distinguished from the primary noise. Measurements of sound generated shall be taken from the curb line of the nearest public street to the property where the sound is generated

and taken toward the source of the sound. In the event that there is not at least 50 feet of distance from the building in which sound is being generated and from which sound is being measured, then measurements shall be taken from the street curb line opposite the said building of the nearest public street to the property where the sound is generated.

**SECTION 8.
PERMIT REQUIRED FOR USE OF OUTDOOR SOUND
AMPLIFICATION EQUIPMENT**

(a) No person shall use or cause to be used any loudspeaker, loudspeaker system, sound amplifier, or any other machine or device that produces, reproduces, or amplifies sound outside of buildings or other enclosed structures in a manner that exceeds the levels specified in section 6, without first obtaining a permit to do so. No permit is required for any use not exceeding the said permissible levels. The permit shall be granted only for the amplification of music or human speech, or both. The permit:

(1) May be obtained by making application to the City Secretary.

(2) Requires payment of a \$10.00 fee for the administrative costs of issuing the permit or a sworn statement of inability to pay the fee.

(3) Is valid for any requested period between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. in residential areas or between 7 a.m. and midnight in nonresidential areas.

(4) Shall not be issued to the same or any other person for the same location more than twice during any 30-day period. In the case of a sound truck, location shall relate to the area traversed by the truck in one day.

(5) Shall specify the maximum sound level permitted.

(b) The permit application required to be filed pursuant to this section shall contain the following information:

(1) The date of the application and the date and hours for which the permit is requested.

(2) The name and address of the applicant.

(3) The name and address of the person who will have charge of the sound amplifying equipment.

(4) The address and a description of the location where the sound equipment will be used.

(5) A description of the type of sound amplifying equipment to be used.

(c) The permit hereby required is not required for the purpose of regulating speech which is protected speech or to conflict with any law of any superior governmental authority. Any regulation hereof that is in conflict with any such right or authority is hereby declared to be inoperative and severable from the other regulations herein.

SECTION 9. DEFENSES

The following defenses shall apply to any offense established in this ordinance, and the same must be specifically pleaded by anyone charged with a violation:

(a) The emission of any sound was for the purpose of alerting persons to the existence of an emergency, danger, or attempted crime, or was produced pursuant to any safety rule or regulation of any governmental entity or agency.

(b) The sound was produced by an authorized emergency vehicle.

(c) The sound was produced by emergency work.

(d) The sound was generated:

(1) At a lawfully scheduled stadium event;

(2) By a parade and spectators and participants on the parade route during a lawful parade;

(3) By spectators and participants at lawfully scheduled amphitheater event;

(4) By patrons and participants using cannons and gunfire during historical battle re-enactments for which a pyrotechnic permit was obtained and the explosives were inspected by the person who performs the duties of fire marshal;

(5) By a pyrotechnic display that was inspected and approved by the person who performs the duties of fire marshal; or

(6) By spectators and participants of any outdoor event, fun run, race, festival, fiesta, or concert that was sponsored or cosponsored by the City and in full compliance with a permit issued by the City.

(e) The sound was produced by the erection, excavation, construction, or demolition of any building or structure, including the use of any necessary tools or equipment, which activity did not produce a sound exceeding 85 dB(A) when measured from the property line of the residential property where the sound is being received.

(f) The sound was produced by aircraft, in flight or in operation at an airport, or railroad equipment in operation on railroad rights-of-way.

(g) The sound was produced by operating or permitting the operation of any mechanically powered saw, drill, sander, router, grinder, lawn or garden tool, lawnmower, or any other similar device used between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. when the sound is being produced for the maintenance or upkeep of the property on which it was operated.

(h) The sound was generated as authorized under the terms of a permit issued under section 8 of this ordinance.

(i) The sound was produced by church bells or church chimes when used as part of a religious observance or service during daytime hours for the zone in which the church is located.

(j) The sound was produced during daytime hours by activities conducted on public parks, public playgrounds, and public or private school grounds, including, but not limited to, school athletic, band and school entertainment practice or events.

SECTION 10. VARIANCES

The City Council may authorize a variance to any restriction set forth in this ordinance. Before granting a variance, the City Council must determine that a literal enforcement of this ordinance would create an unnecessary hardship or a practical difficulty on the applicant, that the situation causing the unnecessary hardship or practical difficulty is unique to the affected property and is not self-imposed, that the variance will not injure and will be wholly compatible with the use and permitted development of adjacent properties, and that the granting of the variance will be in harmony with the spirit and purpose of this ordinance. A person may request a variance from this ordinance by filing the request with the City Secretary.

SECTION 11. PENALTY AND CULPABLE MENTAL STATE

(a) Any person who violates any provision of this ordinance is guilty of an offense and upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than \$1.00 nor more than \$500.00, and each and every violation of the various provisions of this ordinance shall constitute a separate offense, as shall each day that violation continues.

(b) Enforcement hereunder shall not require the pleading or proving of any culpable mental state.

**SECTION 12.
CUMULATIVE CLAUSE**

This ordinance shall be cumulative of all provisions of existing ordinances of the City, except where the provisions of this ordinance are in direct conflict with the provisions of existing ordinances, the conflicting provisions of the other ordinances are repealed.

**SECTION 13.
SEVERABILITY CLAUSE**

It is hereby declared to be the intention of the City Council that the phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs and sections of this ordinance are severable, and if any phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph or section of this ordinance shall be declared unconstitutional by the valid judgment or decree of any court of competent jurisdiction, such unconstitutionality shall not affect any of the remaining phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs and sections of this ordinance, since the same would have been enacted by the city council without the incorporation in this ordinance of any such unconstitutional phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph or section.

**SECTION 14.
PUBLICATION**

The City Secretary is directed to publish this ordinance, or its caption and penalty clause, in one issue of the official city newspaper as required by Section 52.011 of the Local Government Code.

**SECTION 15.
EFFECTIVE DATE**

This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication as required by law, and it is so ordained.

PASSED AND APPROVED on this the _____ day of _____, 2005.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Secretary