



Noise Standards in San Luis Obispo

What are the City of San Luis Obispo noise laws?

The noise ordinance for the City of San Luis Obispo is a 24/7 regulation. The law in its entirety can be found on the City's website within the Municipal Code:

<https://sanluisobispo.municipal.codes/Code/9.12.050> and the sections SLOPD uses to enforce are provided below.

SLMC 9.12.050 A. Noise Disturbances Prohibited. No person shall make, continue or cause to be made or continued, or permit or allow to be made or continued, any noise disturbance in such a manner as to be plainly audible at a distance of fifty feet from the noisemaker; provided, nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit any noise which does not penetrate beyond the boundaries of the noisemaker's own premises or does not constitute an unreasonable disturbance to people lawfully on said premises.

SLMC 9.12.050 B(a). Between the hours of ten p.m. and seven a.m. in such a manner as to create a noise disturbance across a residential or commercial real property line or at any time to violate the provisions of Section 9.12.060 of this chapter, except for activities for which a exception has been issued by the noise control office.

Summary: from 7am to 10pm, if a disturbance can be heard 50 feet from the source of the noise, a warning or citation can be issued. From 10pm to 7am, if a disturbance can be heard from the property line, a warning or citation can be issued.

Who enforces the Noise Ordinance?

Violations are enforced by the San Luis Obispo Police Department. People found to be in violation receive either a warning or an administrative citation and a monetary fine. If the property is rented, violations are reported to the property owner. If multiple violations occur at a property, the property owner is also cited and fined.

Either patrol officers or Student Neighborhood Assistance Program (SNAP) employees respond to noise complaints. SNAP employees are Cuesta and Cal Poly students employed by SLOPD that act as first responders to noise complaints. If SNAP verifies a noise violation, they can issue a Disturbance

Advisement Card (DAC) which is a formal warning. **SNAP do not issue noise citations.** If SNAP employees are met with verbal abuse or uncooperative behavior by the residents or guests, patrol officers will then respond and issue a citation.

Are you entitled to a warning first?

No. Patrol officers may respond to noise complaints without SNAP being sent first, and warnings are not guaranteed. Noise citations can be issued on the first contact if officers observe a noise violation.

What happens if you get a Disturbance Advisement Card warning?

Residences that receive a DAC are put on the noise “No Warning List” for 9 months. During the 9-month period, if a noise complaint is received and verified, warnings are not granted, and a citation will be issued. A notification letter is sent to the property owner, along with a copy of the DAC, informing them of the warning. NOTE: some property management companies are charging civil penalties to their tenants for DACs. Please be aware of your lease terms when securing housing.

What does a noise citation cost?

The fines for noise violations are:

- \$350 for the first citation
- \$700 for the second citation
- \$1,000 for the third and subsequent citations

In addition, if the noise is not stopped after a warning and officers are required to return anytime within 24 hours, the resident will also be responsible for paying the cost of the officers’ response time in addition to the citation.

If a noise citation is issued during a [safety enhancement zone](#), the fine is doubled but not to exceed \$1000. Safety enhancement zones include the start of the fall academic quarter for Cal Poly, Halloween, and St. Patrick’s Day.

What happens if you get a citation?

If the property is already on the “No Warning List”, an additional 9 months is added. If the property wasn’t on the “No Warning List”, it will be added. If the property was on the list, your landlord will also be cited and fined. The fine schedule is the same: \$350 for the first, \$700 for the second and \$1000 for the third and subsequent. Many landlords have included language in the lease that passes fines back to the tenants. An invoice will be sent to you from the City Finance Department with a due date of 30 days from the date of the invoice.

Can more than one citation be given at one party?

YES. Officers can write noise citations to multiple people at a single gathering.

Can you appeal a citation?

Yes. If you feel the citation was issued in error, you can request an appeal hearing. Requests must be made in writing within **10 calendar days** of the date it was issued, the request form can be found on the City's [website](#). Appeals can be in-person or "by mail". The Hearing Officer cannot reduce fines, they can only dismiss or uphold a citation.

Tenant and property owner citations are separate. **Property owners must appeal their citations in the same manner as the tenant, within 10 calendar days of the date the property owner citation was issued.**

If a tenant's noise citation is dismissed, the 9-month addition to the "No Warning List" will be removed, the fine is voided, and the property owner citation is automatically dismissed.

If a citation is upheld, the person will be granted 30 days to pay the fine. If the fine is not paid in full by that time, late fees will be added. If the fine is not paid within 90 days, it will be sent to collections (which in turn can negatively affect the person's credit rating.)

If a property owner appeals their citation, and it is upheld, they will be granted 30 days to pay the fine. If the citation is dismissed, the fine will be voided.

Can community service hours be done instead of paying the fine?

No, community service may not be done in lieu of fines.

Can fines be paid using a payment plan?

Yes, however late fees may be attached to each payment increasing the total due. Contact City Finance at 805-781-7148.

Can a property be removed from the "Noise No Warning" list before the 9 months is up?

Yes. If the property is a rental, the property owner can submit the Early Removal request and if there is full tenant turnover, it will be removed from the list. Tenants may not submit the form, it must come from the property owner or property manager. https://forms.slocity.org/Forms/Early_Removal

What if you're having on-going conflicts with neighbors, housemates or landlords?

There is a FREE conflict resolution and mediation service called **SLO Solutions** available to all City residents. For more information on the services they provide, log on to www.creativemediation.org/slo-solutions or contact them by phone at 805-549-0442.

Still have questions or need clarification? Contact Public Affairs Manager Christine Wallace at 805-781-7186 or at cwallace@slocity.org.