

Town of Bethel, CT
Wednesday, December 30, 2020

Chapter 108. Noise

[HISTORY:^[1] Adopted by the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Bethel 12-6-2016. Amendments noted where applicable.]

[1] *Editor's Note: Former Ch. 108, Waste Disposal, adopted 12-8-1980, was repealed 11-29-1983. For current provisions pertaining to waste disposal, see Ch. 93, Solid Waste Transfer Station.*

§ 108-1. Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to carry out and effectuate the public policy of the State of Connecticut, the federal government and the Town concerning the regulation of those activities causing measurably excessive noise and noise disturbance within the Town limits of the Town of Bethel. A second purpose is to protect the safety, health and general welfare of all its citizens as the people have a right to and should be ensured an environment free from excessive noise which may jeopardize their general welfare and quality of life.

§ 108-2. Enforcement.

In recognition of the rights of free peoples to perform their daily activities without undue governmental interference, enforcement of this chapter shall be in accordance with specified guidelines indicated and delineated in § 108-5 herein.

§ 108-3. Definitions.

The following definitions shall apply in the interpretation and enforcement of this chapter:

COMMERCIAL ZONE

General commercial zones, light commercial zones, neighborhood commercial zones, all as defined in the zoning regulations of the Town, and all uses associated therewith, either permitted as of right or as specially excepted uses.

CONSTRUCTION

Any site preparation, assembly, erection, substantial repair, alteration, or similar action, but excluding demolition, for or of private rights-of-way, structures, utilities or similar property.

DAYTIME HOURS

The hours between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and the hours 10:00 a.m. through 8:00 p.m. on Sundays and holidays.

DECIBEL

A logarithmic unit of measurement used in measuring magnitudes of sound. The symbol is dB.

DOMESTIC POWER EQUIPMENT

Equipment including, but not limited to, power saws, snow removal equipment, drills, grinders, lawn and garden tools and other domestic power equipment intended for use in residential areas by a homeowner.

EMERGENCY WORK

Any work made necessary to restore property to a safe condition following an emergency, or work required to protect persons or property from exposure to imminent danger.

IMPULSE NOISE

Sound of short duration, usually less than one second, with an abrupt onset and rapid decay.

INDUSTRIAL ZONE

Industrial district, as defined by the zoning regulations of the Town.

MOTOR VEHICLE

Defined as per § 14-1(47) of the Connecticut General Statutes.

MUFFLER

A device for abating sounds such as escaping gases.

NIGHTTIME HOURS

The hours between 8:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., Sunday evening through Saturday morning, except that "night" shall mean the hours between 8:00 p.m. Saturday and 10:00 a.m. on Sunday and 8:00 p.m. of the day preceding a recognized, national holiday and 10:00 a.m. on said holiday.

NOISE

Any excessive sound or disturbance, the intensity of which exceeds the standards set forth in § 108-5 of this chapter.

NOISE LEVEL

The sound pressure level in decibels as measured with a sound level meter using the A-weighting network. The level so read is designated dB(A) or dBA.

PERSON

Any individual, firm, partnership, association, syndicate, company, trust, corporation, agency or administrative subdivision of the state or other legal entity of any kind.

PREMISES

Any building, structure, land or portion thereof, including all appurtenances, and shall include yards, lots, courts, inner yards and real properties without buildings or improvements owned or controlled by a person.

PROPERTY LINE

That real or imaginary line along the ground surface and its vertical extension which separates real property owned or controlled by any person from contiguous real property owned or controlled by another person, and separates real property from the public right-of-way.

RESIDENTIAL ZONE

Single-family residence zones and multifamily residence zones, as defined by the zoning regulations of the Town, and all uses associated therewith, either permitted as of right or as specially excepted uses.

SOUND

A transmission of energy through solid, liquid or gaseous media in the form of vibrations which constitute alterations in pressure or position of the particles in the medium and which in air evoke physiological sensations, including, but not limited to, an auditory response when impinging on the ear.

SOUND LEVEL METER

An instrument to take sound level measurements and which should conform, as a minimum, to the operational specifications of the American National Standards Institute for sound level meters.

§ 108-4. General prohibition.

It shall be unlawful for any person within the Town to make, continue or cause to be made or continued any loud, unnecessary, unusual or excessive noise, or any noise which either annoys, disturbs, injures or endangers the comfort, repose, health, peace or safety of others within the limits of the Town as provided in § **108-5** herein. The following are acts specifically prohibited under § **108-4**.

- A. Commercial construction, demolition and building operations before 7:00 a.m. Monday through Friday, before 8:00 a.m. Saturday, before 10:00 a.m. Sunday, and shall cease after 8:00 p.m. on any day. For excavation and fill operations, before 8:00 a.m. Monday through Friday and shall cease after 5:00 p.m. with no excavation and fill operations on holidays or weekends.
- B. Vehicle horns. No person shall at any time sound any horn or other audible signal device of a motor vehicle exceeding the standards set forth in § **108-5** hereof, unless it is necessary as a warning to prevent or avoid a traffic accident.
- C. The creation within the Town of any excessive noise, exceeding the standards set forth in § **108-5** hereof, in the vicinity of any school, institution of learning, church, senior housing, senior assisted living or nursing home while the same is in use which impacts the workings of such institution or which disturbs or unduly annoys patients in the assisted living or nursing home, provided conspicuous signs are displayed at or near such building indicating that the same is a school, institution of learning, church, senior housing, senior assisted living or nursing home.

§ 108-5. Noise zone standard.

This section is intended to conform to the regulations of the State of Connecticut applicable to the control of noise, as set forth in Connecticut State Regulations § 22a-69-3.5 as amended. It shall be unlawful for any person to emit any noise that is in excess of the standards as follows:

- A. No person in a Class C noise zone shall emit noise exceeding the levels stated herein and applicable to adjacent noise zones.

Receptor

	Receptor	B	A/day	A/night
Class C (industrial) emitter to	C	B	A/day	A/night
	70 dBA	66dBA	61dBA	51dBA

Levels emitted in excess of the values listed above shall be considered excessive noise.

- B. No person in a Class B noise zone shall emit noise exceeding the levels stated herein and applicable to adjacent noise zones:

	Receptor		A/day	A/night
	C	B	A/day	A/night
Class B (commercial) emitter to	62dBA	62dBA	55dBA	45dBA

Levels emitted in excess of the values listed above shall be considered excessive noise.

- C. No person in a Class A noise zone shall emit noise exceeding the levels stated herein and applicable to adjacent noise zones:

	Receptor		A/day	A/night
	C	B	A/day	A/night
Class A (residential) emitter to	62 dBA	55dBA	55dBA	45dBA

Levels emitted in excess of the values listed above shall be considered excessive noise.

- D. No person shall cause or allow the emission of impulse noise in excess of 80 decibels peak sound pressure level during the nighttime to any residential noise zone. No person shall cause or allow the emission of impulse noise in excess of 100 decibels peak sound pressure level at any time in any zone.
- E. Measurements shall be taken at a point that is located about one foot beyond the boundary of the emitter's premises within the receptor's premises. The emitter's premises include his/her individual unit of land or ground of contiguous parcels under the same ownership as indicated by public land records.

§ 108-6. Motor vehicle noise.

- A. All motor vehicles operated within the Town limits of the Town shall be subject to the noise standards and decibels levels set forth in the regulations authorized in §§ 14-80a-1a through 14-80a-10a inclusive of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.
- B. No sound amplifying devices on or within motor vehicles shall emit noise in excess of the noise levels as specified in § **108-5** hereof.

§ 108-7. Exclusions.

Maximum noise levels established pursuant to § 108-5 hereof shall not apply to any noise emitted by or related to:

- A. Natural phenomenon.
- B. Any bell or chime from any building clock, school or church.
- C. Any siren, whistle or bell lawfully used by emergency vehicles or any other alarm system used in an emergency situation; provided, however, that burglar alarms not terminating within 30 minutes after being activated shall be unlawful and shall not be excluded hereunder.
- D. Warning devices required by OSHA or other state or federal safety regulations.
- E. Noise created as a result of an emergency.
- F. Noise generated by engine-powered or motor-driven lawn care or maintenance equipment between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. provided that noise discharged from exhausts is adequately muffled to prevent loud and/or explosive noises there from.
- G. Recreational or celebratory activities specifically licensed or under permit from the Town of Bethel, including, but not limited to, parades, sporting events, concerts, patriotic or public celebrations and fireworks displays.
- H. Noises created by snow removal equipment, provided that such equipment is maintained in good repair so as to minimize noise and noise discharged from exhausts shall be adequately muffled to prevent loud and/or explosive noise there from.
- I. Noise that originates at airports that is directly caused by aircraft flight operations specifically preempted by the Federal Aviation Administration.
- J. Governmental activities which may be exempted by law or regulation of the Town of Bethel and State of Connecticut.
- K. Noises generated by the use of equipment, motorized or otherwise, including domestic power equipment, for farming operations during daytime hours only.
- L. Garbage/refuse haulers commencing operations for commercial and industrial zones prior to 7:00 a.m. but no earlier than 5:30 a.m. Mondays through Saturdays. For operations in residential zones, prior to 7:00 a.m. but no earlier than 6:00 a.m. Mondays through Saturdays.

§ 108-8. Penalties for offenses.

Any persons in violation of any of the provisions of this chapter shall be fined in the amount of \$50 for their first violation; \$75 for a subsequent violation occurring within 30 days of their first violation; and \$100 for any subsequent violation occurring within 30 days of any previous violation not including their first violation

occurring pursuant to this chapter. Each day such violation continues after the time for correction of the violation has been given in an order shall constitute a separate violation. Notification of violation shall be given at the time of the occurrence of the noise or shortly thereafter in the form of a written notice of violation.

§ 108-9. Enforcement.

The Bethel Police Department, as directed by the Chief of Police, shall enforce the provisions of this chapter pertaining to the measurement of noise levels and the issuance of notices of violation.

§ 108-10. Variances.

Any person living or doing business in the Town may apply to the Board of Selectmen for a variance from one or more of the provisions of this chapter.

§ 108-11. Effect on other provisions.

All provisions of the zoning regulations of the Town which are more stringent than those set forth herein shall remain in full force and effect and shall prevail over inconsistent provisions hereof.