



CITY OF COLLEGE PARK

THE UNRULY SOCIAL GATHERINGS ORDINANCE, EXPLAINED

On Tuesday, September 24, 2019 the City’s Mayor and Council adopted amendments to City Code Chapter 141, Nuisances, to address noise and other negative impacts of unruly social gatherings.

The purpose and intent of the Unruly Social Gathering Ordinance is to improve the quality of life and sense of safety for our residents. If a party spills out into the street or into another neighbor’s property, that creates a safety concern and a negative impact on the neighborhood. Or, if there is a gathering of inebriated individuals trespassing on neighbors’ yards or vandalizing their homes, that creates a health, safety and security concern for the neighborhood. No one wants to live in a neighborhood where they feel unsafe, are consistently awakened at night, or have their property transgressed. These situations do not characterize most of our neighborhoods and residents, but unfortunately some issues persist. The Unruly Social Gathering Ordinance is intended to help prevent these kinds of situations.

Here is a quick FAQ about the Ordinance to help answer questions about the changes.

Can I still host a party at my house?

Yes. The Ordinance does not prevent parties in City neighborhoods. If you wish to host a gathering, make sure that your guests stay on your property, that underage and excessive drinking or the use of illegal substances is not occurring, that public or private property isn’t being trespassed or vandalized, and that the party doesn’t also violate the Noise Code. By doing so, your party can continue without issue.

If I’m hanging out with eight or more friends, is that considered an unruly social gathering?

No. You can hang out with friends and as long as you are abiding the law and not negatively impacting your neighbors, then you are in the clear.

Why was this Ordinance passed?

For many years, the City’s Mayor and Council, student groups, and landlords have discussed various strategies to address noise and other negative impacts of unruly social gatherings. The recently amended Nuisance Ordinance and the long-standing Noise Ordinance work together to improve the quality of life and sense of safety for our community.

In what circumstances would I get a violation?

Violations would be issued if...

- the party has become unsafe with underage or excessive drinking, illegal substance use or health and safety violations,
- the party spills over onto the street or a neighbor’s property, or negatively impacts the neighborhood,
- party attendees are vandalizing, urinating, defecating or negatively impacting another’s home or property,
- or the noise level is above Noise Code limits (7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.: 65 dBA; 8:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.: 55 dBA).

What do the violations entail?

A violation of the Ordinance is subject to a municipal infraction and fine, with a warning given on first offense to property owners.

	Responsible Party*	Owner
First Offense	\$500	Warning
Second Offense	\$1000	\$500
Third Offense	\$1000	\$500

**Responsible Party is defined as the same tenant(s). If a new tenant(s) receives a citation, the offenses start over with \$500 for the first offense.*