

University Policy: Amplified Sound

Policy Category: Operational Policies

Subject: Requirements and Restrictions Pertaining to the Use of Amplified Sound at Outdoor Events Hosted at American University

Responsible Executive: Vice President, Campus Life & Inclusive Excellence

Offices Responsible for Annual Review of This Policy: University Center, Office of Campus Life; Department of Athletics & Recreation

Related University Policies: Event Scheduling Policy; Zoning Commission Order

I. SCOPE

This policy applies to all forms of sound increased by electronic means and produced in association with outdoor activities on property supervised by American University

II. PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of the Amplified Sound Policy is to ensure compliance with DC Law 2-53, District of Columbia Noise Act of 1977; to ensure that amplified sound associated with university approved outdoor events does not interfere with the regular functioning of the university or with the peace and well being of residential neighbors; and to establish the protocols for policy enforcement.

III. POLICY

Definition: Amplified sound is sound increased in volume through the use of public address systems, loudspeakers, bullhorns, or any form of musical amplifier.

Approval for Use of Amplified Sound - General: The use of amplified sound at outdoor activities must be approved in connection with a space reservation through University Event Scheduling. Approval is subject to the professional judgment of the University Center staff or designee as to the suitability of the proposed activity for the requested time and campus site. The use of amplified sound is prohibited on East Campus.

Approval for Use of Amplified Sound – Athletic Events: The use of amplified sound at intercollegiate, club sports, and intramural competitions and at special athletic events on the university's athletic fields must be approved by the Department of Athletics & Recreation. The use of athletic fields is limited to daylight hours. There are additional restrictions per the Zoning Commission Order in effect; please refer to that document for additional guidance.

Time Restrictions – General: Amplified sound is generally prohibited during normal business hours, however, exceptions may be granted in certain areas of the main university campus between the hours of 11 am and 2 pm on weekdays. Activities employing amplified sound must conclude by 10:00 pm. Exceptions may be granted by the University Center staff.

Amplified Sound Source: Sound amplification for university approved events must be provided by the American University Audio-Visual Department or other university source. Exceptions must be authorized by the University Center staff or designee.

Amplified Sound Standards: Amplified sound for both general and athletic activities, at a minimum, may not exceed 60 dbA during daylight hours and 55 dba after dark, in accordance with DC Law 2-53. During all non-athletic activities employing amplified sound, designated university staff will measure the sound level at 50 feet centerline from the source, where readings may not exceed 105 dbA or 100dbC. There are no exceptions to these sound levels.

Amplified sound that is reported as interfering with the regular functioning of the university or with the peace and well being of residential neighbors will be reduced or may be terminated, even if it is compliant with DC law.

Complaint Management - General. Any university official is authorized to respond to sound complaints by notifying the activity host and asking for a significant reduction in sound level. If there is a second complaint, the activity host will be asked by a university official to terminate the activity. Student organizations that do not comply with the directives of university officials may be referred to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution Services.

Complaint Management – Athletic Events. Any university official is authorized to respond to sound complaints by notifying a member of the Department of Athletics & Recreation staff and asking for a reduction in the sound level of activity directly associated with the athletic competition to comply the 60 dbA standard established by DC Law 2-53. Event staff may be asked to reduce other sound (ex. music) to a level below the standard or to terminate its use, if the non-essential sound is reported as interfering with the regular functioning of the university or with the peace and well being of residential neighbors.

IV. EFFECTIVE DATE AND REVISIONS:

This policy is effective as of October 2010; Revised January 2012; Reviewed February 2015