

Bridging Noise Conflicts Defining Acceptable Sound Levels

Presented by
Chuck McKinney
The Evergreen State College

Presentation Outline

- Current noise policies
- Defining noise standards
- Evergreen's noise policy
- Decibel based policies
- The sound meter
- Applying sound metering
- A two sided tool
- Q&A

Current Noise Policies

- Why do we develop a noise policy?
 - Support Academic Success
 - Positive Living Learning Environment
 - Establish Community Standards
- Western Washington University
 - The realities of community living require that individuals respect community needs for the moderation of noise (regardless of quiet hours). Excessive noise (loud stereos, amplified instruments, parties, etc.) is an infringement on the rights of other students and is unacceptable.

Current Noise Policies

- Oregon State University

The realities of community living dictate that individuals respect community needs for the moderation of noise regardless of established quiet hours. Noise is any sound, human or otherwise, which is disturbing to any resident.
- Simon Fraser University

The Department of Residence and Housing's mandate is to ensure that residents can study and sleep in residence. Residence is a densely-populated community, and some reasonable living noise is to be expected. While absolute silence may not be possible, excessive noise is not permitted.

Defining Noise Standards

- How do you define acceptable noise levels for students?
- How do you train new RDs and RAs to a common standard?
- How do you deal with the chronic noise issues?
- What is the central issue with chronic problems?

Evergreen's Noise Policy

- Past noise policy
 - You are responsible to hold yourself and others to acceptable noise levels as defined in this policy. Contact your Resident Assistant to quantify an acceptable noise level. You are expected to respectfully approach others directly for any noise concerns. The On-Duty Resident Assistant can assist you if the unacceptable noise persists. Quiet hours are Sunday to Thursday, 11 pm to 9 am, and Friday and Saturday, 12 midnight to 9 am. During these times noise must be contained to your room.

Evergreen's Noise Policy

- New noise and quiet hours
 - You are responsible to hold yourself and others to acceptable **sound** levels as defined in this policy. Contact your Resident Assistant to quantify an acceptable noise level. You are expected to respectfully approach others directly for any noise concerns. The On-Duty Resident Assistant can assist you if the unacceptable noise persists. Quiet hours are Sunday to Thursday, 11 pm to 9 am, and Friday and Saturday, 12 midnight to 9 am. During these times noise must be contained to your room.

Evergreen's Noise Policy

- New noise and quiet hours
 - Acceptable Sound Levels are measured by ANSI standard Type II digital sound level meter in decibels (dB). Readings are taken from the receiving (nearest) building or 50 feet away from the sound source, whichever is the greater distance. Two readings are taken there five minutes apart and the two readings are averaged and recorded as the sound level.

Decibel Based Policies

- Thurston County noise ordinance
 - 10.36.030 Public disturbance noise. It is unlawful for any person willfully to cause, or any person in possession of property willfully to allow to originate from the property, any sound which...
 - B. Is caused by the operation of any device designed for sound production or reproduction, such as but not limited to radios, televisions, musical instruments, phonographs, stereos and loudspeakers that exceeds **fifty-five dBA between the hours of seven am and ten pm and forty-five dBA between the hours of ten pm and seven am**, measured at any adjacent parcel or public right-of-way; or

Decibel Based Policies

- Chapel Hill, NC Noise Ordinance
 - (d) The following are established as maximum sound levels:
 - Nighttime sound levels (after 11 pm until 8 am) may not exceed fifty dBA.
 - Daytime sound levels (between 8 am and 11 pm) may not exceed sixty dBA.
 - Daytime sound levels may exceed sixty dBA with the issuance of a special permit.

The Sound Meter



Applying Sound Metering

- When, who, and where to use a sound meter
 - Chronic problems
 - RDs vs. RAs
 - Source
- Training staff
 - Fall setting standards
- Why Millennial's accept sound metering
 - Defining expectations

A Two Sided Tool

- Defining acceptable noise levels for both sides of the noise issue
- The sound meter is one additional tool

Questions

- Presentation on NWACUHO website
- References:
 - Noise Pollution Clearinghouse at <http://nonoise.org/>
 - US EPA at <http://www.epa.gov/history/topics/noise/01.htm>
 - Extech Instruments Digital Sound Level Meter at http://www.extech.com/instrument/products/400_450/407736.html
 - Thurston County WA noise policy at http://www.ordlink.com/codes/thurston/_DATA/TITLE10/Chapter_10_36_PUBLIC_DISTURBAN.html

Thank You