

Instructions and Information

Complete this application for a variance from the Portland Noise Ordinance if your activity will make more noise than the City Code allows. We won't be able to consider your application unless you've completely filled it out and included the payment.

Public notification is required for a variance. Please check with the Noise Control Office to find out about the best way to notify nearby neighbors. The Noise Control Officer will look at your application and either approve it with conditions, or deny it. Most applications are reviewed within 10 business days; but some may require more time. If you need help, please call the Noise Control Office at 503-823-7350.

A high impact event: An event attended by at least 250 people and will likely to increase the background noise level in residential or commercial zones by at least 15 dBA. (An increase of 10 dBA sounds twice as loud to people)

Review process: Applications for large activities, or activities lasting for a year or more are reviewed by the Noise Review Board (a volunteer group with monthly meetings). Variances going before the Noise Review Board are decided within 45 business days of receiving the completed application. The Noise Control Office reviews all other applications. When possible, a decision will be made within 10 business days of receiving of the completed application.

Accelerated review: It may be possible to shorten the process if a faster review is needed. There is an additional fee for this, and the Noise Control Officer/Noise Review Board Chair would have to have enough time to look at the request to decide that the request is in the City's interest. The Noise Control Office needs at least 3 business days to review the application. If a Noise Review Board variance is needed, the Chair of the Noise Review Board needs at least 7 business days for review.

Standards for review: All applications will be reviewed considering the following measures:

- The reason a variance is needed
- Length of time the noise will be occurring
- How many people the noise will impact
- whether the public health, safety, or welfare is harmed
- Whether the noise impact outweighs the benefit to the public

Appeals: To appeal a variance decision to the City Council, the applicant or legal representative, or any person who has submitted oral or written testimony must take these steps:

- Notice of the intent to appeal must be submitted in writing to the City Auditor's Office within 10 days of the effective date of the decision.
- The notice must identify the decision that is being appealed
- It must include the appellant's name, address and signature, phone number, relationship to the variance decision action, and a clear reason(s) for the appeal.
- When the Auditor receives the appeal, they will schedule a date on the Calendar of the City Council.

Variance review/revocation: All variances are subject to review if they receive complaints.

Violation of the terms of the variance may be grounds for revoking it or altering the conditions. The Noise Control Officer or any Police Officer of the City of Portland has this authority.