

Town of Princess Anne's Neighborhood Nuisances and Unruly Social Events Ordinance

In April 2016, the Town of Princess Anne enacted a law to give neighborhoods a more effective way to address issues caused by loud and disruptive house parties. Under this new law, police can issue a civil citation on the spot—similar to a speeding ticket—to property owners, managers, occupants, and/or tenants when such parties occur.

UNRULY SOCIAL EVENT is a loud and unruly party or gathering of two or more people on private property at which:

- A. Alcohol beverages are consumed by, furnished to, or possessed by any underage person in violation of law; or
- B. The conduct creates a disturbance of the peaceful enjoyment by others of private or public property, including:
 1. Excessive noise, including as described in Chapter 101 or other applicable law;
 2. Obstruction of public rights-of-way by unruly crowds;
 3. Public drunkenness;
 4. Assaults, batteries, or other disorderly conduct that disturbs the public peace;
 5. Vandalism of public or private property;
 6. Littering;
 7. Public urination;
 8. Excessive traffic that is significantly in excess of the normal amount of pedestrian and vehicle traffic for the day, date, and time of day for the zoning district;
 9. Use of a controlled substance by any person at the gathering; or
 10. Any other conduct that constitutes a threat to the public health, safety, or general welfare.

NEIGHBORHOOD NUISANCE

Any premises on or in which an owner, operator, tenant, or occupant for the holder of any possessory interest in those premises:

- A. Acts in a disorderly manner that disturbs the public peace; or
- B. Creates or maintains conditions that let others act in a disorderly manner that disturbs the public peace.

PERSONS RESPONSIBLE

The owner, operator, tenant, or occupant of any premises, whether alone or jointly with any other person, including a person who organizes, supervises, or conducts an unruly social event, is a “person responsible” under this ordinance.

Persons responsible for a loud and unruly party remain liable for violating the ordinance even if they were not present during the event.

If the person responsible for an unruly event is under 18, they and their parents or legal guardians are jointly and severally liable for the civil penalties imposed by the ordinance.

Duties of persons responsible, owners or operators, and parents of juveniles.

A. Person Responsible

1. Every person responsible for any premises is required to maintain, manage, and supervise the premises and all persons on or in the premises in a manner so as not to violate the provisions of this chapter.
2. A person responsible for any premises remains liable for a neighborhood nuisance or an unruly social event even if that person was not present during the nuisance activity or the unruly social event.

B. Owners or Operators

1. An owner or operator of the premises remains liable for violating this subtitle regardless of any contract or agreement with any third party regarding the premises.

C. Parents of Juveniles

1. If the person responsible for the premises on or in which a neighborhood nuisance or an unruly social event occurs is a juvenile, then the juvenile and the parents of the juvenile are jointly and severally liable for paying the penalties and response costs imposed by this chapter.

Penalties for Responsible Persons

1st offense: \$500 fine

2nd or subsequent offenses*: \$1,000 fine *12 month look back period to enhance penalties

Defense for Owners

Property owners or operators can defend themselves from any fine if they didn't authorize, know about, or participate in the event, and they prove:

1. They evicted the tenant(s), or
2. They filed court proceedings to evict the tenant(s), or
3. They have not received more than three violations for the same dwelling unit within a 12-month period.

Revised 2024