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## City of San Marcos

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## NEWS

May 15, 2009

For Immediate Release

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### New Noise, Unruly Gathering Rules Take Effect

New noise and unruly gathering rules took effect in San Marcos May 12 with the goal of reducing the incidents of loud party complaints and easing the collision of lifestyles in a university town.

The ordinance amendments, adopted April 7 by the City Council, are the result of more than two years of problem-solving aimed at identifying the root causes and engaging the stakeholders in the solutions.

“The broad goals of this program are to achieve community partnership and collaboration, education, fair enforcement and an effective response plan,” said Mayor Susan Narvaiz. “We want to balance the collective interests of our citizens in a way that respects the rights of all.”

*‘Our goal is to encourage party hosts to plan responsibly for their parties and supervise their gatherings to prevent them from getting too loud or out of control.’*

*--Assistant Police Chief Lisa Dvorak*

Noise is the number one type of call handled by the San Marcos Police Department, said Assistant Chief of Police Lisa Dvorak. “San Marcos Police handled more than 2,700 noise complaints in 2008. While we have used traditional policing methods in the past, this effort has sought to use community problem-solving to achieve long-term change.”

Highlights of the new rules include:

- Define excessive noise and sets the property line as the reference point for measuring noise.
- Describes factors for officers to consider when determining whether noise is excessive
- Holds hosts, guests or property owners /managers responsible for gatherings.
- Defines an unruly gathering.
- Allows police officers to disperse an unruly gathering.

- Provides for notification of property owners or managers to establish strategies to prevent future violations from occurring on a property. Strategies include education, mediation, and enforcement of lease violations against tenants, refusal to renew leases and tenant eviction.

The two year review of the ordinances has involved evaluation of existing ordinances, meetings with stakeholders, including university students and community groups, and several public presentations and discussions at City Council meetings.

“We are paying attention to noise issues because noise is a trauma that can affect the livability of a neighborhood—whether it’s a single family residential area or apartment complex,” Dvorak said. “Loud noise, music and parties can harm quality of life and result in a property being a less sought after place to live.”

The original series of ordinances addressing noise in neighborhoods was adopted in 2002.

A copy of the new ordinance, tips for party goers, and additional information are available online at [sanmarcostx.gov](http://sanmarcostx.gov).

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