

**Noise Control Regulations Transylvania County,  
North Carolina**

**ARTICLE I**

**SHORT TITLE**

This Ordinance shall be known and cited as the Noise Control Ordinance of Transylvania County, North Carolina

**ARTICLE II**

**AUTHORITY**

This Ordinance is adopted under the authority and provisions of the General Statutes of the State of North Carolina Article 6, Chapters 153A-121 and 153A-133.

**ARTICLE III**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Ordinance is to establish an effective means of regulating and controlling loud and disturbing sound and noise within Transylvania County to promote the health, safety and general welfare for its citizens..

**ARTICLE IV**

**JURISDICTION AND ADMINISTRATION**

This Ordinance shall apply to all areas of Transylvania County located outside the boundaries of any incorporated city or town. Transylvania County Noise Ordinance is on file at the office of the Transylvania County Clerk to the County Commissioners. NCGS 153A-48 requires the ordinance to be kept on file with the clerk to the board. The Transylvania County Sheriff, or their appointee, shall be known as the Enforcement Officer.

## ARTICLE V

### DEFINITIONS

**SECTION 1: For the purpose of this Ordinance, certain words or terms used herein are defined as follows:**

- 1.1 Ambient noise level – an A-weighted sound level based on at least three readings made and recorded over a period of no less than ten minutes, made at the location where a complainant claims to be disturbed by an alleged violation but at a time when no noise is then being alleged to violate this Ordinance, and made at a point no closer than outside the property line of the property from where the noise is generated.
- 1.2 Decibel – a unit used to measure the intensity of a sound by comparing it with a given level on a logarithmic scale.
- 1.3 Decibel Meter – an instrument used to measure the noise or sound pressure level to determine whether the noise level exceeds the established level.
- 1.4 Disturbing - a noise that annoys, disturbs, injures or endangers the comfort, health, peace or safety of reasonable person of ordinary sensibilities.
- 1.5 Noise – any sound or combination of sounds, which, because of its volume or quality, tends to disturb reasonable persons of ordinary sensitivity or to interfere with normal human activity.
- 1.6 Unreasonably loud noise which is substantially incompatible with the time and location where created to the extent that it creates an actual or imminent interference with peace and good order.

## ARTICLE VI

### NOISE REGULATIONS

**SECTION 2: Noise Regulations** - It shall be unlawful for any person or persons to make, permit, continue, or cause to be made or to create any unreasonably loud and/or disturbing noise in the County. Noise of such character, intensity and duration as to be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of any reasonable person of ordinary sensibilities, in the vicinity is prohibited.

- 2.1 In determining whether a noise is unreasonably loud and/or disturbing, the following factors incident to such noise are to be considered based on the totality of circumstances surrounding a particular determination:
  - A. Time of day;
  - B. Proximity to residential structures;
  - C. Whether the noise is recurrent, intermittent, or constant;
  - D. Volume and intensity;

- 2.2 To determine if there the noise is in violation of this Ordinance, the Enforcement Officer will use a decibel meter to measure the offending noise level in the following manner:
- 2.2.1 Sound measurements shall be made using a calibrated decibel meter in accordance with the manufacturers recommended procedure.
  - 2.2.2 Sound measurements shall be taken at the complainant's curtilage closest to the source of the offending noise which shall be at the same location where the ambient noise level is recorded, if it's recorded.
  - 2.2.3 Sound measurements shall be taken using an A-weighted sound level based on at least three readings made and recorded over a period of no less than ten minutes.
  - 2.2.4 The offending noise level will be considered a violation if it exceeds the decibel limit for a duration of more than fifty percent (50%) during the time of sound measurement.
  - 2.2.5 A violation shall have occurred if the offending noise level exceeds the ambient noise level by more than:
    - 15 decibels, so that the total noise level is over 65 decibels between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.; or
    - 20 decibels so that the noise level is over 75 decibels between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m.
  - 2.2.6 If, due to the nature of the offending noise level, no determination of an ambient noise level is practicable, then a violation shall have occurred if the offending noise level exceeds:
    - 65 decibels between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.; or
    - 75 decibels between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m.

**SECTION 3: Exempted Noises** - The following noises are exempt from this Ordinance:

- 3.1 Sound emanating from regularly scheduled outdoor athletic events.
- 3.2 Construction operations.
- 3.3 Noises of safety signals, warning devices, emergency pressure valves, factory steam whistles and all mechanical and electronic church bells or chimes.
- 3.4 Noises resulting from any authorized emergency vehicle when responding to any emergency call or acting in time of emergency.
- 3.5 All noises coming from the normal operations of aircraft (not including small model aircraft).
- 3.6 Noise from lawful fireworks and noisemakers on holidays.

- 3.7 Noise from lawnmowers, weed trimmers, edging machines, or other similar small-engine yard maintenance equipment, properly equipped according to manufacturer's specifications.
- 3.8 Farming operations as defined by NC G.S. 106-581.1.
- 3.9 Use of firearms for recreational purposes and noise associated with lawful taking of any wildlife resources.

**SECTION 4: Noises Prohibited** - The following list of prohibited noises shall not be deemed to be exclusive and other sources of unreasonably loud and disturbing noise are subject to the provisions of this Ordinance.

- 4.1 Noise or sounds that are substantially incompatible with the time and location where created to the extent that it creates an actual or imminent interference with peace or good order.
- 4.2 Noise that is perceived by a person of ordinary and reasonable sensibilities as interrupting the normal peace and calm of the area, neighborhood or vicinity.
- 4.3 Repetitive, recurrent, intermittent or constant noise exceeding 65 decibels between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.; or 75 decibels between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m.
- 4.4 Dogs or any other constrained animals that, by frequent, recurrent or constant howling, yelping, barking, baying or otherwise cause unreasonably loud or disturbing noises, provided the animals are not associated with farming operations as defined by NC G.S. 106-581.1.
- 4.5 Knowingly permitting the occurrence or emanation of any of the foregoing specifically enumerated violations of this Ordinance on property owned, possessed, or used in whole or in part by any person or entity shall be a violation of this Ordinance.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **NOISE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

In the event any person has reasonable grounds for believing that any provision of this Ordinance is being violated, he may make a report thereof to the Transylvania County Sheriff's Office, which shall investigate the alleged violation. If any such investigation reveals a violation, the investigating deputy has the authority to cause a written complaint to be made and may obtain criminal process for violation thereof, may issue a citation for a civil penalty, and/or may obtain other enforcement measures as allowed in this Ordinance. Criminal process for violation of this Ordinance may only be obtained by personnel from the Transylvania County Sheriff's Office.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **VIOLATIONS, PENALTIES, & ENFORCEMENT**

This Ordinance may be enforced in accordance with any and all of the provisions of N.C.G. S. § 153A-123 and of any other applicable enforcement provision as may be set forth within the Transylvania County Ordinances or as may be provided for by applicable law.

#### **SECTION 5: Penalties –**

5.1 Criminal penalties: Any Deputy Sheriff of Transylvania County, having first investigated this matter, pursuant to Article VI above, may obtain criminal process for violation of this Ordinance. A violation of any Ordinance provision shall constitute a Class 3 misdemeanor and may be punished by fine in the discretion of the Court, up to a maximum of \$500 per offense.

5.1.1 Warning: Upon the violation of a particular provision of this Ordinance, an individual may be issued a warning. Such warning shall identify the particular practice which is in violation of the Ordinance and shall state the time, date and place of the violation. Such warning shall further state that if the individual commits further violations following the date of the warning, Transylvania County, by and through an enforcement agent, may cause a warrant to be issued for the individual's arrest.

5.1.2 Arrest or Citation: Upon the violation of a particular provision of this Ordinance, a law enforcement officer having jurisdiction may charge the offender with a misdemeanor committed in the officer's presence, by arrest or citation, as set forth in Chapter 15A of the North Carolina General Statutes.

5.1.3 Warrant: Upon the violation of a particular provision of this Ordinance, Transylvania County, by and through an enforcement agent, may request from a magistrate that a warrant be issued for the arrest of the individual.

5.2 Civil Penalties: Any individual who is found in violation of this Ordinance may be subject to a civil penalty. The amount of such civil penalty shall be assessed as described below. Each day the violation continues shall be considered a separate offense and therefore such continuing violation may be subject to multiple civil penalties as described below:

#### 5.2.1 Compliance Order:

5.2.1.1 Upon making a determination that a person is in violation of this Ordinance, Transylvania County may issue a compliance order to the person in violation of this Ordinance. The compliance order shall notify the violator of the violation in writing. Such order shall identify the circumstances giving rise to the violation, including the

times, dates and places of the violation. Such notification shall further identify the action which is necessary to comply with this Ordinance. Such order shall state that if the violator does not comply within a reasonable time, not to exceed 15 days, the individual will be subjected to a civil penalty. If circumstances exist such that the violator cannot come into compliance within 15 days, Transylvania County may grant an extension of time commensurate with the magnitude of the violation. The compliance order shall further state that failure to comply with the terms of the compliance order will subject the violator to a civil penalty and shall further state the amount of said civil penalty.

Failure to comply with the terms of a compliance order issued by Transylvania County within the time stated in the order shall subject the violator to a civil penalty of \$500.00. Each day that the violation continues shall be considered a separate offense, and the violator may be subject to additional \$500.00 civil penalties for each separate offense.

5.2.2 Civil Action: When necessary to collect any civil penalty or accrued civil penalties, a civil action may be instituted by the County against an individual for the collection of all accrued penalties if not paid within thirty (30) days of assessment.

**SECTION 6:** Equitable Remedies: This Ordinance may be enforced by the County through equitable remedies, and any unlawful condition existing in violation of this Ordinance may be enforced by injunction or order of abatement in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 153A-123.

6.1 Injunction: Where necessary to effectuate compliance with this Ordinance, Transylvania County may institute an action in a court of competent jurisdiction seeking an injunction against the further violation of this Ordinance. Such action may be joined with a civil action instituted to collect accrued civil penalties in accordance with the provisions above, and may be brought against any person or entity causing a violation of this Ordinance or against an owner of a premises upon which a violation of this Ordinance occurred.

6.2 Order of Abatement: Where necessary to abate a condition existing upon land in violation of this Ordinance or a use made of land in violation of this Ordinance, Transylvania County may institute an action in a court of competent jurisdiction seeking an order of abatement of the use or condition of land in violation of this Ordinance. Such action may be enjoined to an action for an injunction and/or an action to recover civil penalties accrued against an individual for the use or condition of land in violation of this Ordinance.

6.3 Other Equitable Remedies: This Ordinance may be enforced by any other equitable remedy which a court of competent jurisdiction deems just and proper.

6.4 To the extent allowable by law, reasonable attorney's fees may be sought by the County or its authorized agent in any action to enforce the provisions of this Ordinance.

**ARTICLE IX**

**LEGAL STATUS PROVISIONS**

- A. **Effective Date of Ordinance:**  
This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners, and shall amend and supersede the previously existing Noise Control Regulations Ordinance existing prior to this Ordinance’s adoption.
  
- B. **Severability:**  
If any provision or provisions of this Ordinance shall be deemed by a Court of law having Jurisdiction over such matters to be unenforceable, invalid, or unconstitutional for any reason, such declaration shall not affect the validity of the Ordinance as a whole or any part thereof that is not specifically declared to be unenforceable, invalid, or unconstitutional.
  
- C. **Conflict of Laws or Ordinance Provisions:**  
Whenever the regulations of this Ordinance conflict with each other, or with the requirements of another statute, the more restrictive standard shall govern.

This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its adoption. Adopted

this 14<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2008.

Amended 11/12/2013 and \_\_\_\_\_ 2019

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman  
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

Clerk to the Board