

13.40.050 Exterior noise standards.

A. Maximum permissible sound levels shall be determined by the zoning district of the property subject to the noise, not the property from which the noise originates.

1. The noise standards for the various categories of land use in Table 13.40-1 or 13.40-2 shall, unless otherwise specifically indicated in other codes, apply to all such property within a designated zone.
2. No person shall operate or cause to be operated any source of sound at any location within the incorporated City or allow the creation of any noise on property owned, leased, occupied or otherwise controlled by such person, which causes the sound level when measured on any other property to exceed:
 - (a) The noise standard for that land use as specified in Table 13.40-1 for a cumulative period of more than 30 minutes in any hour; or
 - (b) The noise standard for that land use as specified in Table 13.40-1 plus 5 dBA for a cumulative period of more than 15 minutes in any hour; or
 - (c) The noise standard for that land use as specified in Table 13.40-1 plus 10 dBA for a cumulative period of more than 5 minutes in any hour; or
 - (d) The noise standard for that land use as specified in Table 13.40-1 plus 15 dBA for a cumulative period of more than 1 minute in any hour; or
 - (e) The noise standard for that land use as specified in Table 13.40-1 plus 20 dBA for any period of time.

Table 13.40-1. EXTERIOR NOISE LIMITS

(Levels not to be exceeded more than 30 minutes any hour)

Zoning District	Time Period	Noise Level (dBA)
R-1, R-2, R-1A, R-2A, and ESR	7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	55
	10:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.	45
R-3 and above	7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	60
	10:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.	55
Commercial	7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	65
	10:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.	60
Industry	Anytime	70

3. If the measured ambient noise level is greater than the level permissible within any of the noise limit categories above, the sound level when measured on any other property shall not exceed:

- (a) The ambient noise level for a cumulative period of more than 30 minutes in any hour; or
- (b) The ambient noise level plus 5 dBA for a cumulative period of more than 15 minutes in any hour; or
- (c) The ambient noise level plus 10 dBA for a cumulative period of more than 5 minutes in any hour; or
- (d) The ambient noise level plus 15 dBA for a cumulative period of more than 1 minute in any hour; or
- (e) The ambient noise level plus 20 dBA for any period of time.

4. If the measurement location is on a boundary between two different zones, the sound level limit applicable to the quieter noise zone shall apply.

5. If possible, the ambient noise level may be measured at the same location along the property line utilized in subsection A.2 of this section with the alleged offending noise source inoperative. If the intruding noise source is continuous and cannot reasonably be discontinued or stopped for a time period whereby the ambient noise level can be measured, the ambient noise level may be determined by traveling away from the noise source to a point where a steady state decibel reading is achieved. If this test is not possible, the noise level measured while the source is in operation shall be compared directly to the noise level standards.

B. The classification of additional areas of the community not listed in Table 13.40-1 in terms of environmental noise zones shall be determined by the EHD. Industrial noise limits are intended primarily for use at the boundary of industrial zones rather than for noise reduction within the zone. (Ord. 7122-NS § 5, 2009; Ord. 5500-NS § 1 (part), 1982)

The Berkeley Municipal Code is current through Ordinance 7995-NS, passed December 2, 2025.

Disclaimer: The City Clerk's Office has the official version of the Berkeley Municipal Code. Users should contact the City Clerk's Office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

[City Website: www.berkeleyca.gov](http://www.berkeleyca.gov)

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