



Crime Prevention Bulletin

12/22/2020

Officer Steven McGhee

(480)348-3567

Unruly Gatherings and Excessive Noise

Town of Paradise Valley, Arizona – December 22, 2020 – Every other week there seemed to be a large social gathering with no known resolution. He explained how days grew heavy with new visitors next door in his quiet neighborhood. A threat to the peace and the welfare of his street appeared to unravel.

With increased frequency, one resident felt he was losing the comforts of his home. He shared, “One of our neighbors has a property located between us that is regularly rented out as a short-term rental that results in some noise and other disturbance issues.” After weeks of attempting to civilly resolve the issues with the owner of the property, the resident felt no other choice but to contact his local police for help.

He was not aware of the Town Ordinance on Unruly Gatherings (Article 10-13). In 2018, Town Council had determined unruly gatherings may constitute a nuisance if left unregulated. The repeated calls to their activities could deplete the resources of the police department while compromising the levels of police protection across Town, thereby creating a significant threat to the safety of both citizens and police.



Photograph shows the notice on the door of the premise of an Unruly Gathering. Courtesy of a resident.

From January to December of 2020, Paradise Valley Police Department issued 24 citations and/or warnings for the Unruly Gathering ordinance. As a deterrent, Unruly Gathering violations have a minimum mandatory fine between \$1,000 to \$2,500 per violation for the responsible person. In addition, a Police Service Fee may be imposed in the amount equal to the actual costs of the law enforcement response. The responsible person may be cited civilly or criminally with a class one misdemeanor for the violation.

As defined by the Town Ordinance, “‘Unruly Gathering’ means a gathering of five (5) or more persons on any private property, including property used to conduct business, which constitutes a threat to the public peace, health, safety or general welfare including, but not limited to: excessive noise, impeding traffic, obstruction of public streets by crowds or vehicles, use or possession of illegal drugs, drinking in public areas, the service of alcohol to minors or consumption of alcohol by minors, fighting, disturbing the peace, and/or littering.”



TOWN OF PARADISE VALLEY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Photograph shows litter from the site of an unruly gathering. Courtesy of a resident.

While reporting the issue to the police, the resident learned of another quality of life initiative in Paradise Valley which included the noise ordinance. Noise cannot be above 56 decibels from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. All other times, Sundays and specified legal holidays, the noise cannot go above 45 decibels. Without a specialized device, it may be difficult to know the exact decibel range of noise.

A sound level meter app on the phone by residents can prove useful as an early indicator of a violation if prolonged disturbances are above the listed decibels during specific dates and timeframes. Police use a calibrated sound level meter device to measure the noise disturbances from the nearest property line.

The resident initially felt unsure of what actions to take but did the best he could. He attempted to resolve the issue with his neighbor first then contacted the police. In the end, he learned more about what laws are set in stone to assist with local disturbances and how the police are there to help.

If you have concerns that there may be a violation of Unruly Gathering or Excessive Noise, please contact our non-emergency line at (480)948-7410 or in the case of an emergency dial 9-1-1.

For more crime prevention tips, please reach out to Community Resource Officer Steven McGhee at smcghee@paradisevalleyaz.gov and discuss a Home Security Review provided within Paradise Valley.

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