



PARTY HOUSE HANDBOOK

Many of us in the Oaks neighborhood have suffered from the plague of out-of-control nighttime parties at short-term rental houses, and the Oaks Neighborhood Association wants to make sure that all residents have the latest information about how best to secure near-term and long-term relief from these parties. Shutting down a problem location takes some work up-front but these actions generally pay off in the long term.

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THE PLAYERS

Dealing with a party house requires contact with several different city agencies. **LAPD** responds to party calls and issues citations for violations of the Party House Ordinance (such as unruly or loud or disruptive gatherings). **Neighborhood Prosecutors** are part of the City Attorney's office and they are tasked with dealing with local problems; they can take legal action on behalf of the City against party house owners. **Los Angeles City Planning** is in charge of the home-sharing registration system, and they refer violations to **LA Department of Building and Safety** who then can issue fines for violations of the Home Sharing Ordinance. As a final step, **The Mayor's Office** is responsible for reviewing requests to shut off power at nuisance locations. The City Council office can assist in all of these efforts on behalf of residents.

The **GAME PLAN** is to get citations issued for nuisance properties so that the Neighborhood Prosecutor can pursue cases against the property owners and so that fines levied in association with these citations can have an impact on the problem. In parallel, if the party house is also an illegal home share, neighbors can seek enforcement for that violation through the Planning Department. Under the current Ordinance, penalties for short-term rental violations are too infrequent and too insubstantial. We need to convince City Council to beef up the size and the frequency of the fines.

LAPD's **Hollywood Station** serves the North of Sunset area that includes the Oaks neighborhood. The Acting Senior Lead Officer (SLO) there is Heather Mata and you can reach her at 40988@lapd.online. The Neighborhood Prosecutor for our area is Ethan Weaver and you can reach him at ethan.weaver@lacity.org.

THE LAW

We all know the sinking feeling that comes when we see a truck off-loading sound equipment at a problem house but to effectively deal with party houses, it's important to understand what laws are being broken. Several different laws can be applied to party house problems. The relevant ones are: the **Party House Ordinance**, the **Home Sharing Ordinance**, and the **Noise Ordinance**. According to the **Party House Ordinance**, an unlawful party is a "loud or unruly gathering". The conduct that defines such a party can be any of the following: loud noise (audible 150 feet from the property line); obstruction of a street or public right-of-way, including a sidewalk; public intoxication or drinking in public; the service of alcoholic beverages to minors; possession and/or consumption of alcohol by minors; assault, battery, fights, domestic violence or other disturbances of the peace; the sale or service of alcoholic beverages without a required license; vandalism or destruction of property; litter, urinating or defecating in public; or trespassing. To issue a citation for a violation, a responding officer would need to observe one of these things and then choose to issue a citation. Citations carry an escalating series of fines. The fine for a first offense is only \$100, but the fine for the sixth offense is \$8,000. After the sixth offense, the case becomes criminal, and the City can prosecute the offender.

WHAT TO DO

The first thing you need to know is that unless you take action it is likely that **nothing** will happen. Here are steps you can and should take if there is a party house in your area.

Before the Party:

If you see set-up for a party happening at a problem location (one that has hosted disruptive parties in the past), please contact your **Senior Lead Officer** and your **Neighborhood Prosecutor**.

During the Party:

- **Make sure you know exactly where the party is.** You may know from experience where it is or where it probably is. You may be able to walk out and determine where it is. You might have to communicate with neighbors to learn more. You can make all of this easier by establishing a group text with neighbors who want to work together or even by posting on Nextdoor asking whether anybody else hears the noise and whether they know where it is. However: be cautious about use of Nextdoor because the party house owner or renter may be on that site as well. If it's a persistent issue, and you are having trouble locating the home, a walk in the neighborhood and conversations with those you meet may help. Police will likely not be able to respond properly if you merely say, "there is a party somewhere in the canyon" or "I can hear it from my house."
- **Call LAPD.** This step is **critical**. Unless you make the call to the police, there is no record of the problem and no way to escalate enforcement action. If you don't know precisely where the party is, you will have to estimate as specifically as possible and tell the dispatcher that it's an estimate. Normally you want to call

877-ASK-LAPD but if there is fire, violence, teenage drinking, a fireworks display or another crime happening, you can call 911. Hold times can be long. You don't have to wait until it gets late to call - call as soon as you are aware of the problem and hang in there!

- **Ask for the responding officer to call you when they are on their way.** This step is **strongly urged**, especially on weekdays. This is critical if the sound you are hearing in your home cannot be heard from the street. It's also important if there is a history at the house that the responding officer may not know about. This is most likely to happen on a weekday. You can also take this opportunity to ask for a citation to be written. Getting a call is not guaranteed. What day of the week you call may impact what the result of the call is. LAPD's party cars operate on weekends. Officers participating in party car activities are more inclined to write citations than other responding officers might be. If you are calling on a weekend and party activity is ongoing when the LAPD party car arrives, a citation will likely be written. If you are calling mid-week, the result may be different.
- **Ask the dispatcher for an incident number.** **Critical**, as this will insure a record of the violation. Keep a record of these numbers.
- **Enlist neighbors' help.** If only one person is calling about the problem then the police can assume that only one person is bothered. Enlist neighbors to call and perhaps communicate with one another regularly to coordinate calls for enforcement.
- **Keep a running log with this information.** **Strongly urged.** If you have such a log, it may be helpful to show to responding officers, so that they can see there is a problem with this house.
- **Collect video, audio and photographic evidence.** **Strongly urged.** Such evidence will give the Neighborhood Prosecutor the necessary tools to make a case against the owner if that becomes necessary. Do so discreetly to ensure your safety.
- **Call parking enforcement dispatch.** If the party house complaint involves blocked roads, driveways, or fire hydrants, take this step. Call (818) 374-4823 or (213) 485-4184. Your call will be answered around the clock.

After the Party:

- If trash is an issue, document the situation with photographs and then file a 311LA service request. You can do this using the 311LA app, by calling 311, or by using the [web interface](#). This can lead to a citation which, if there is home sharing involved, can cause the owner's home-share permit to be suspended or revoked.
- Update your log with any additional information from the party - the dates and times of calls, incident numbers, results - and any documentation you've collected.
- If you know the owner of the property, it's always a good idea to make sure the owner is aware of the nuisance situation. You should also enlist other neighbors to call the owner.
- If your HOA or neighborhood association collects party house information, alert it about the event.

Then What?

If the problem has occurred several times at a single location, then it's time to reach out to your Senior Lead Officer and your Neighborhood Prosecutor. It's best to do so by email. The subject line should be "Party House: address of the problem house." In your email you should reference the incidents and any citations that were issued. You should copy your Council District Office Field Deputy. For Council District 4, this would be Xanthe Scheps (xanthe.scheps@lacity.org). Also copy the neighborhood association on your email.

SHORT TERM RENTALS

If the problem location is a short-term rental, there are additional steps you can take.

Working With the City:

Short-term rentals (defined as 30 days or fewer) are governed by the Home-Sharing Ordinance. Permits, issued by the Planning Department, are required for the operation of short-term rentals, and permit numbers must be displayed on all listings for the rental. Getting citations can cause the permit to be suspended or revoked.

If the house is a short-term rental and doesn't have a home-sharing permit, the City can fine the owner up to twice the nightly rent per listing day. If you want to determine whether the home has a valid permit, you may submit a California Public Records Act Request to ***beatrice.pacheco@lacity.org***.

If there is no permit, you will want to find at least one online listing for the property. You can find some sites to check here: ***tiny.cc/HomeshareSites***. You should then send a link to the listing along with the address of the home to ***planning.home-sharing@lacity.org***.

[Listings with minimum stays greater than 30 days are not covered under the Home-Sharing Ordinance.]

If a citation for a party has been issued, you should ask your LAPD Senior Lead Officer whether the Planning Department knows about the citation.

During a party you can also call the Department of City Planning home sharing 24/7 complaint line at (213) 267-7788. Providing the Department of City Planning with photos/video of the party can help document the violations and potentially affect the

property's home-sharing registration. You should send this information to [*planning.home-sharing@lacity.org*](mailto:planning.home-sharing@lacity.org).

Working With the Listing Agent:

If you find a listing on Airbnb, you may use their channels to try to get the listing removed. Parties are currently banned by Airbnb and Airbnb has a neighborhood support phone number that you and your neighbors can call to report parties hosted through Airbnb at (855) 635-7754. You can also file a complaint at airbnb.com/neighbors. This is particularly good to do if that property is a recurring problem - making Airbnb aware of the party could shut down the listing in the future. Airbnb has promised to take steps to shut party houses down when notified through their neighborhood support phone number or reporting form.

If You Are A Host:

Please be considerate of your neighbors!

As a home-share host, make sure to check that your homeowners insurance policy *actually* covers home-sharing and isn't voided by it. Many homeowners policies will not cover home-share activities because home-sharing is considered a commercial activity and as a result home-sharing can actually void your homeowners policy in full, even if an incident happens on a day you're not home-sharing the property. Be adequately insured!

Read and get to know all applicable ordinances to fully understand your responsibilities and liabilities as a home-share/short-term rental (STR) Host. Some of them are:

- Every Host must provide and maintain fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors as well as information related to emergency exit routes

on the property. These devices and notices must be in compliance with LA fire, life, and safety codes.

- Every Host who lists in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone as designated by the LAFD (such as the Oaks) shall include and post notices that smoking is not permitted in any exterior part of the property.
- There can be no use of sound amplifying equipment after 10:00pm and no evening outdoor congregations of more than 8 people (excluding children).

Hosts may be responsible for any nuisance violations. There are many other requirements defined in the ordinances below, and as such, you should take the time to read through the various ordinances to ensure compliance with the law.

Be aware that if alcohol is served to minors, even unintentionally, and then that minor gets into a car accident, the host and/or property owner may be liable.

And lastly, again, **be considerate of your neighbors!**

Applicable Laws:

- [Party House Ordinance](#)
- [Home Sharing Ordinance](#)
- [Noise Ordinance](#)