



June 24, 2024

**EXCESSIVE NOISE COMPLAINT AT A CITY FACILITY  
AUDITOR GENERAL COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION**

**REPORT**

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## Executive Summary

### Background

An allegation was received indicating that the noise (music) at a City Facility was too loud, and complaints/concerns were not being addressed. Specifically:

1. Verbal and written complaints were provided to various personnel in the City.
2. A noise decibel report was prepared using the complainant's phone, and a concern was submitted, which was endorsed by other participants.
3. The complainant eventually indicated they had to move to another facility to handle the noise level.

### Investigation Approach

1. Enquire whether management has received and considered noise complaints at the facility.
2. Consider the applicability of noise-related policies.
3. Consider the noise management practices management has in effect.

### Scope Limitation

The scope and practices considered were focused on the specific site alleged by the complainant.

### Summary of Procedures and Findings

Management was able to provide support to indicate that the complainant's concerns had been (1) heard, (2) considered and (3) acted upon. However, given the timing of the complaint and the nature of management's evidence of control at that time, conclusive evidence could not reasonably be detected either way.

Management may wish to:

1. Formalize the basis and specific acceptable noise level for City locations (or times) where babies and infants are reasonably expected to attend.
  2. A formal process/requirement for monitoring dBA when a noise complaint is implemented, communicated and executed. Such a process should ensure that the monitoring is conducted independently from the individual controlling the sound and should also include an element of future randomness/unexpectedness.
  3. Site considerations/approaches to managing sound should also consider "spikes/variances" in sound levels so the limits are set with peaks and audiences/participants in mind. Some sound systems may adjust for this or factor this into audio projection.
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<b>Management Comments</b>	Administration was aware of the situation and took appropriate action prior to the Auditor General raising and discussing the concern. Suggestions made by the Auditor General will be considered where appropriate as it relates to future public events.
<b>Name:</b>	Jen Knights
<b>Title:</b>	Executive Director Recreation and Culture
<b>Date:</b>	July 10, 2024

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*Summary of Investigation Approach Results*

#	Approach	Summary of Findings
1	Meet with the complainant to understand the concern and subsequently review the complainant's evidence/information.	<p>The concern was that the music was being played at over 80 decibels, impacting attendees. Further, the complainant expressed concern over the impact of the noise level on the infants and babies present for programs coinciding and overlapping.</p> <p>The complainant felt that their concerns were not addressed.</p>
2	Enquire as to whether management has received and considered noise complaints at the facility in question.	<p>In enquiry, management provided the Auditor General with overview information regarding noise complaints at the facility. It was noted that conversations and written communication occurred.</p>
3	Consider the applicability of noise-related policies.	<p>The Province of Ontario has a Noise Regulation under the Health and Safety Act. It indicates that “no worker is (to be) exposed to a sound level greater than a time-weighted average exposure limit of 85 dBA (decibels measured on the A-weighting network of a sound-level meter) measured over an 8-hour work day.”</p> <p>The City of Windsor has a “Noise Procedure” that adjusts the limit for worker exposure to 80 decibels (80 dBA).</p> <p>In conducting external research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- World Health Organization and CDC recommend that the sound be lower than 80-85dBA, but they also sometimes suggest that 70dBA may be too loud.</li> <li>- The CDC and Pediatrics recommend keeping sound under 60bBA and 50dBA for infants and babies.</li> </ul> <p>Management's workplace policy aligns with or is more risk-averse than regulatory requirements and general recommendations for adults.</p> <p>The policy and procedure elements provided by management reference workplace and one</p>

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		<p>communication references program/participants of City Services.</p> <p>Given that some City locations provide services to or where babies and infants are reasonably expected to attend, specific/explicit consideration of the City's position on the acceptable noise level and basis for such places/times should be formalized.</p>
4	Consider the noise management practices management has in effect	<p>Evidence of communication regarding the city's noise level limits was noted in a letter from 2016 and a newsletter from 2019. The procedure is posted for personnel. These documents are included in staff training materials.</p> <p>The site periodically monitors noise levels using a dBA meter. A supervisor may request the monitoring at any time, and a noise complaint will trigger monitoring of the noise level.</p> <p>Formal requirements for logging the dBA monitoring results (previously verbally communicated) have recently been implemented.</p> <p>The dBA monitor will be calibrated annually, or a new one will be acquired to ensure accurate calibration.</p>