



KING COUNTY AUDITOR'S OFFICE

Noise Code: Changes Untested on Difficult Cases; Training and Guidance Could Help



King County

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JUNE 12, 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In 2015, the King County Council amended the county noise code to expand tools for enforcement, clarify which agencies are responsible for implementation, and increase penalties for violations. Noise enforcement is generally working well. However, the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) has not emphasized implementation of the noise code, and has not trained its deputies on how to handle difficult noise issues. As a result, KCSO rarely issues citations for violating the noise code, and a small number of chronic noise cases are unresolved.

Noise Code: Changes Untested on Difficult Cases; Training and Guidance Could Help

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

What We Found

The King County agencies that enforce the noise code deal effectively with noise in most cases. However, while the 2015 changes to the noise code clarified language and reduced barriers to implementation, it did not result in more effective noise enforcement in difficult situations. Some of these difficult noise situations persist because of a lack of emphasis from the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) and uncertainty about how to apply the revised code.

KCSO deputies rarely write citations for noise code violations. We found that in response to over 7,000 complaints, KCSO issued one noise citation in the two years before the code change, and three noise citations in the two years following the code change. In the vast majority of cases, noise complaints to KCSO are not repeated, indicating that a verbal warning was at least temporarily effective at controlling the noise, and a citation was not necessary. At locations with multiple noise complaints, however, the lack of citations means KCSO is not making use of the enforcement tools provided in the revised code, such as increasing fines for successive citations within a year.

Additionally, some noise complaints involve complex enforcement issues. In these situations, the lack of citations issued by KCSO results in the absence of a pattern of court decisions on appeals that KCSO could use to inform the way it implements the noise code. Without court decisions on appeals, the effectiveness of the noise code cannot be determined.

We found enforcement to be effective for animal and construction noise complaints, which the Regional Animal Services of King County and the Department of Permitting and Environmental Review handle respectively.

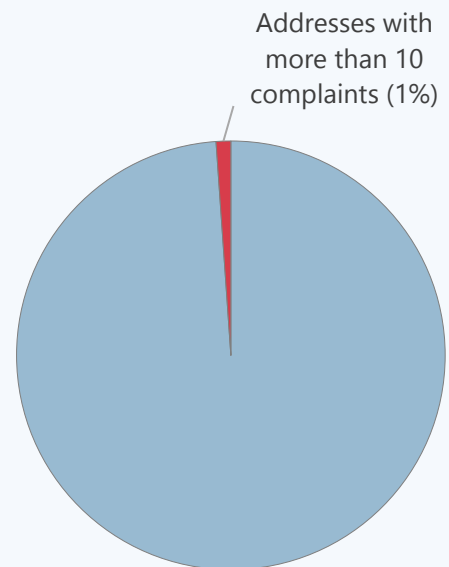
What We Recommend

We recommend that KCSO work with the Prosecuting Attorney's Office to develop guidance for complex noise situations, develop procedures for handling noise complaints, and provide training to deputies.

Why This Audit Is Important

When the County Council changed the noise code in 2015, it requested that we conduct this audit to see how the changes are working. The Council changed the code to make noise violations easier to enforce, particularly for difficult cases. The purpose of the audit is to assess the extent to which the noise code is working as intended.

While most locations with noise issues generated few complaints to the Sheriff's Office over four years, a few addresses generated many complaints



Source: King County Auditor's Office analysis of Sheriff's Office data

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Noise Code Is Generally Effective

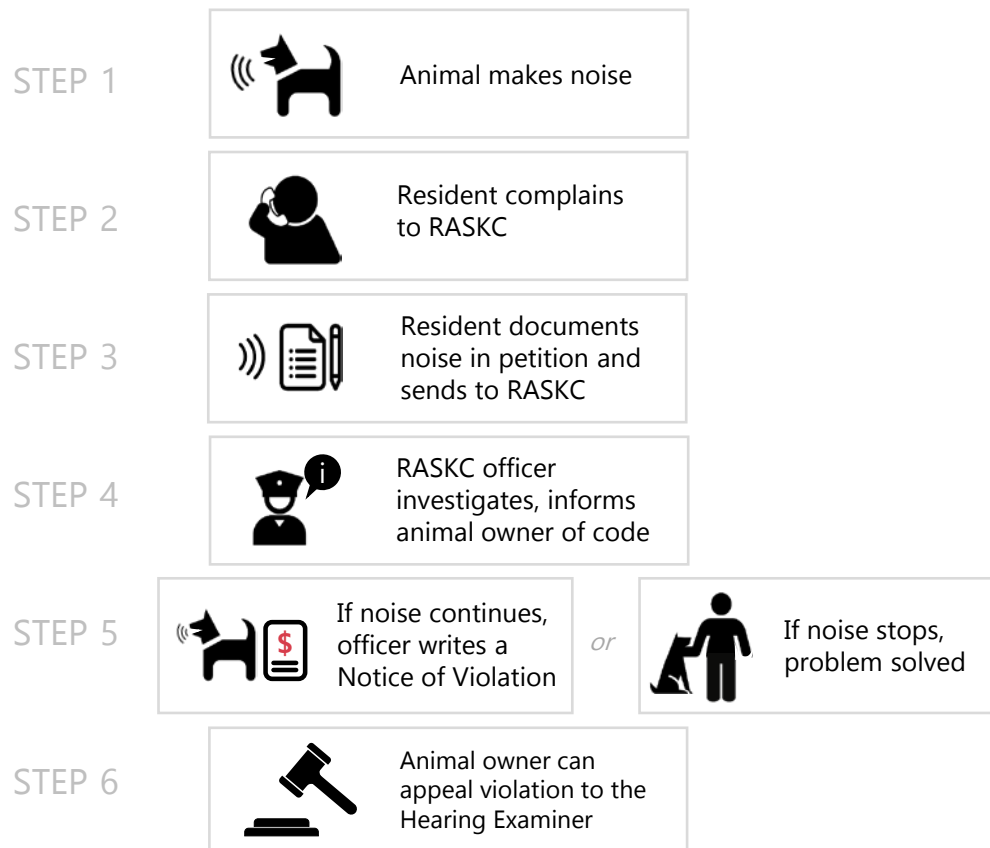
SECTION SUMMARY

The noise code is effective in addressing a large majority of noise complaints; however a small number of chronic noise issues remain unresolved. Enforcement of the noise code by Regional Animal Services of King County (RASKC), the Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER), and the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) is largely effective. The 2015 code change did not significantly affect RASKC. In most cases, agency officials resolve noise complaints and they do not become chronic issues. However, there are a few locations where noise issues remain unresolved, despite many complaints that span years. The primary reason for this is that KCSO has not provided guidance or training to deputies on applying the revised code.

Animal noise control is effective

Regional Animal Services of King County's animal noise enforcement is effective. RASKC regularly investigates complaints about animal noise and issues citations for noise code violations. Exhibit A, below, illustrates RASKC's enforcement process.

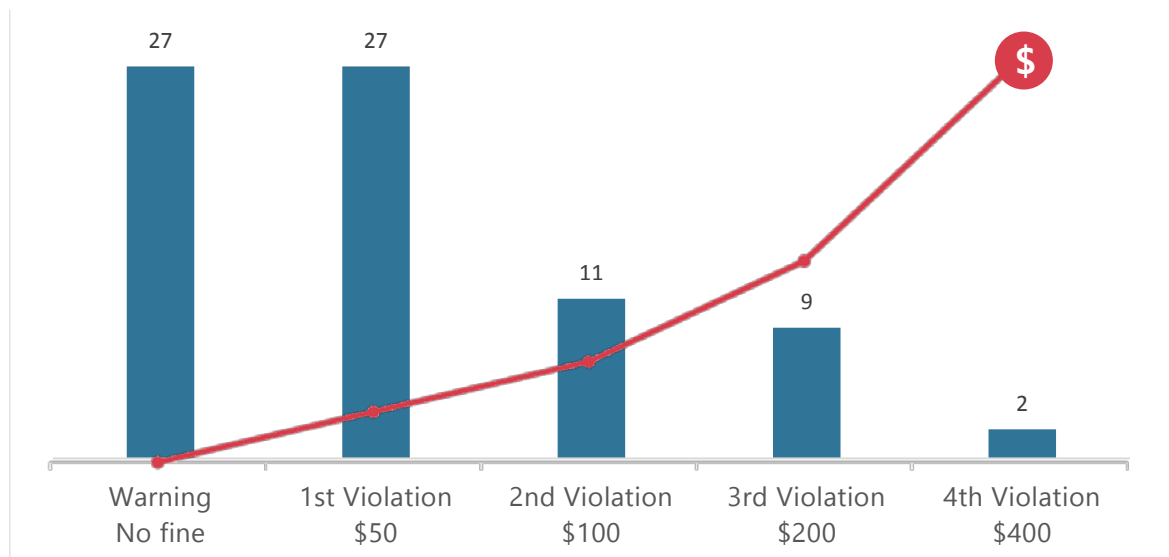
EXHIBIT A: RASKC animal noise complaint process



Source: King County Auditor's Office analysis

Over four years, RASKC issued 49 citations for violations of the noise code in unincorporated King County.¹ Twenty-two of these citations were for repeat violations. The fines for repeat animal noise violations within 12 months increase with each violation. As illustrated by Exhibit B, there are fewer citations as the penalty escalates. This suggests that increasing penalties are effective in curbing chronic noise violations.

EXHIBIT B: As fines for animal noise violations increase, repeat violations decrease.



Source: King County Auditor's Office analysis of RASKC data: notices of violations issued July 2013-June 2017

Construction noise control is effective

The Department of Permitting and Environmental Review construction noise enforcement is effective. The 2015 noise code changes clarified that DPER is responsible for enforcement of construction noise complaints. DPER reports that it receives few complaints about noise from activities for which it has jurisdiction: those that need a county permit, such as building and road construction activities. For example, between 2013 and 2017, only 56 of 7,193 complaints to DPER code enforcement were about noise. Over the same period, only three of more than 10,000 calls to DPER's general phone number were complaints about noise. DPER reports that these complaints are usually resolved by educating the permit holders about the requirements of the noise code, and that it gets very few repeat complaints.²

DPER staff reports that the 2015 code change was helpful because it clarified the types of cases for which it has enforcement responsibility. It also simplified enforcement. Under the prior code language, construction noise was subject to both decibel limits and

¹ We reviewed the number of notices of violation RASKC issued in the two years before and after the July 2, 2015, code change, and found them to be almost exactly the same.

² DPER has received reoccurring complaints from community members about noise from mining and mineral extraction operations such as the Raging River Gravel Mine. These operations are not regulated under the noise code, but rather King County Code 21A.22, which governs zoning. DPER managers indicated that they work with operations permit holders and communities to allay noise concerns, which often means educating community members about the noise levels allowed in the operating permits. In the case of Raging River mine, DPER issued three stop work orders in 2016 requiring the mine to take action to reduce its noise to levels consistent with its permit.

time of day restrictions. Under the revised code language, construction noise is subject to only time of day restrictions.

The 2015 code revisions made DPER responsible for processing requests for variances from the noise code. According to DPER, the typical variance request comes from the Washington State Department of Transportation to authorize nighttime road construction. DPER reports that this has had little impact on its workload, as it receives few variance requests, and they do not take much time to process.

Noise enforcement under KCSO is usually effective

The King County Sheriff's Office enforcement of the noise code is effective for most complaints. A large majority of addresses receiving a noise complaint only received one complaint over a four-year period, indicating that contact with a deputy successfully resolved the issue. The 2015 noise code revisions streamlined enforcement by reducing emphasis on environmental noise limits, which required county staff to use decibel meters to measure noise. Now the emphasis is on public disturbance noise, where a noise code violation is based on judgment that noise is unreasonably disturbing neighbors. The 2015 code revisions also clarified the definition of public disturbance noise and increased fines for repeat noise violations. More details on the code revisions are available in Appendix 1.

KCSO is responsible for all noise complaints not related to animals or construction. For example, if a loud party disturbs a resident, they can make a complaint by calling 911 or the Sheriff's non-emergency phone number. Dispatchers send an available deputy to investigate. The deputy verifies the complaint, and asks the noisemaker to reduce the noise. KCSO staff indicates that this approach is effective for the vast majority of complaints. KCSO also reports that, although the way it enforces the noise code has not changed, the revisions to the noise code were helpful because it can now credibly threaten to issue a citation if the subject does not reduce the noise.³

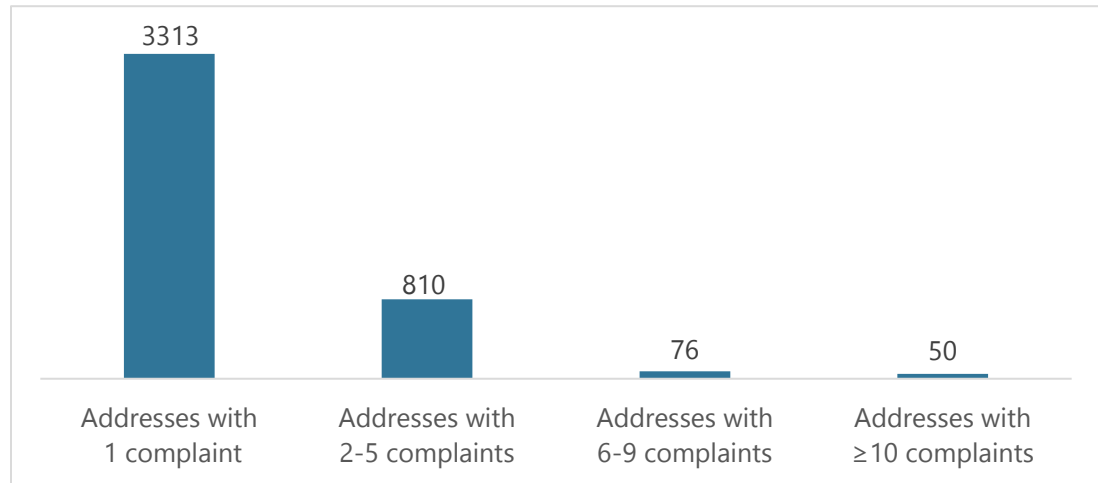
KCSO data supports its assertion that deputy contact with alleged noisemakers resolves most complaints.⁴ Additionally, only 2.7 percent of noise complaints were multiple complaints against a single address in the same day. This suggests that KCSO's standard practice of making contact with the noisemaker and asking them to address the noise is effective most of the time, at least temporarily.

However, 47 addresses received 10 or more complaints over that same four-year period. This indicates that a small number of noise issues are not resolved by simply warning the offending party. See Exhibit C, below.

³ This is due to the new emphasis on public disturbance provisions rather than measuring maximum sound levels under the environmental noise provisions.

⁴ We reviewed KCSO noise complaint data from July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2017, which represents two years of data prior to and subsequent to the July 2, 2015, effective date of the revised noise code. We found that out of 4,250 addresses that received noise complaints in unincorporated King County between 2013 and 2017, 78 percent, (or 3,313 addresses) received only one complaint. The data showed consistent patterns of complaints and KCSO enforcement, with similar numbers of noise complaints from year to year. Since KCSO only issued four citations for noise complaints over the four-year period, the data shows little change in KCSO enforcement of the noise code after the code revisions took effect.

EXHIBIT C: **Most addresses with noise complaints between 2013 and 2017 received only one complaint, but a few received many.**



Source: King County Auditor's Office analysis

A few locations have ongoing noise issues

Of the 50 addresses with 10 or more complaints, only about 10 involve ongoing noise issues that have not been resolved. Almost half (22) of the addresses with 10 or more complaints were multi-family apartment or condominium complexes; we excluded these from our count of unresolved noise issues.⁵ The remaining 28 noise complaint locations were a mix of single-family residences, bars/nightclubs, other businesses, and parks. Complaints at some locations were not primarily about noise, but were associated with other types of disturbances, such as unruly behavior at shopping centers and convenience stores, domestic violence, or trespassing. Of these 28 locations, 20 had significant noise issues, but only 10 had noise complaints in 2017. This indicates that there are only a few locations that have significant, ongoing noise issues that are unresolved.⁶

Persistent noisemakers are not held accountable

Deputies rarely issue noise citations, and therefore are not making full use of the tools available in the code. Between July 2013 and July 2017, KCSO only issued four noise citations out of over 7,000 complaints. Citations, and repeat citations with escalating fines, are the tools provided in the code to deter repeated complaints. None of the addresses that showed frequent complaints received citations, indicating that deputies are not fully implementing the noise code even in situations with ongoing

⁵ KCSO data does not consistently identify the specific unit in the complex that is the subject of the noise complaint. It is likely that many of the reoccurring complaints generated at multi-family addresses do not involve a single tenant, but consecutive tenants in the same unit, or multiple units generating noise once or a few times. Because the data did not differentiate these situations from ones where a single unit was responsible for chronic excessive noise, we excluded the multi-family addresses from our count of 10 addresses with ongoing noise issues. One of the four citations issued between 2013 and 2017 was to a tenant in a multi-family apartment complex.

⁶ We assigned significance based on the presence of repeated noise complaints that were not associated with other types of disturbances. We defined a chronic noise location to be an address with 10 or more noise complaints over a four-year period ending June 30, 2017. Others may choose to define this differently (e.g., five or more complaints in the last year). In addition, since our data is no more recent than June 30, 2017, the noise issues may have resolved at some of these locations by the time we publish this report. Therefore, this analysis should not be considered a definitive count of addresses with unresolved noise issues, but more a general indication that there are only a small number of locations with currently unresolved recurring noise issues.

problems. We interviewed people at various levels of KCSO (chiefs, captains, sergeants, and deputies) to learn more about why they issued so few citations. These interviews included six deputies who handled complaints at the addresses with the most frequent complaints. Deputies provided a variety of reasons for the lack of citations, including:

- KCSO does not emphasize noise code enforcement, as noise has been a low priority in comparison to criminal activity.
- When responding to a complaint, deputies may not be aware that noise is a chronic issue at that location.
- Deputies are not clear on what evidence they need to collect to support a noise code citation.
- KCSO has not provided guidelines or training to deputies on how to handle noise code violations.

In addition, we found that the document deputies use to look up the code or regulation and associated fine when writing citations—called the bail schedule—was incorrect: it still had the old code listed, which no longer exists. One of the citations written after the code changed cited the old code, so after trying but failing to resolve the outdated code issue through the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office, the District Court dismissed the citation without prejudice. KCSO took action to revise the bail schedule to list the revised noise code prior to the publication of this report.⁷

KCSO has not updated practices to reflect the revised code

Outdated assumptions may hinder enforcement. KCSO deputies and command staff told us that they have not changed their practices for enforcing noise since Ordinance 18000 revised the code. Given the lack of emphasis, guidance, and training mentioned above, assumptions based on past experiences with the old code may still hinder enforcement. The old code required county Public Health officials to measure decibel levels using sound meters in order to issue a citation for exceeding environmental noise limits. Public Health did not have the staff, equipment, or availability to do this, so deputies could not implement that part of the code. The old code had a provision for public disturbance noise, but it was not well defined. Further, it was unclear whether decibel measurements had to accompany a citation for public disturbance noise.⁸

The 2015 revisions to the noise code attempted to address these challenges by emphasizing public disturbance noises as the enforcement priority and clarifying the definition. Public disturbance noises are those that unreasonably disturb at least one person. See Appendix 1 on page 9 for more information on the 2015 noise code revisions.

The lack of citations allows a few chronic noise issues to remain unresolved.

Because there are relatively few chronic noise locations, KCSO does not need to write citations for noise code violations frequently. However, the lack of citations for chronic violations of the noise code means that KCSO is not using the primary enforcement tool

⁷ Of the four KCSO citations written between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2017, one was written prior to the code change and three were written after the code change. Of those three, one was dismissed as noted above, one was paid in full, and the third was found committed (meaning that the court upheld the citation) and the fine was sent to collections.

⁸ The challenges of enforcing the old noise code became clear in 2012, when the KCSO wrote a series of citations relating to one particularly difficult noise issue, and the District Court judge dismissed the citations on appeal. The judge’s ruling in this case shed light on the problems that the code change attempted to address.

provided in the code, and allows these ongoing noise issues to remain unresolved. We spoke to complainants in situations with chronic noise issues, and they do not feel that the noise code is protecting them from unreasonable noise, as their complaints have not been resolved.

Recommendation 1

The King County Sheriff's Office should provide training to deputies and front-line managers on how to use the tools provided in the code to address noise complaints.

The code protects people from unreasonable complaints about noise. The code provides a process for defendants to appeal noise code citations. There have been several appeals to the Hearing Examiner of animal noise violations. The Hearing Examiner overturned or reduced the fine for some of the violations after assessing the reasonableness of the complaint, and diverted other appeals to a successful mediation.

Multiple KCSO deputies stated that the first step they take when responding to a noise call is to talk with the caller and verify the reasonableness of the complaint. For complaints handled by KCSO, the extreme rarity of citations indicates that the code (and the way deputies apply it) protects people from unreasonable complaints about noise. The right to appeal KCSO noise citations in District Court provides additional protection.



Implementation Questions Remain

SECTION SUMMARY

In ambiguous and difficult circumstances, Sheriff's deputies are unsure how to apply the code, and thus do not use enforcement tools. The code's new emphasis on the public disturbance noise standard creates challenges for deputies. The code defines a noise as a public disturbance if it is unreasonably disturbing to at least one person. Some deputies we spoke to found the subjective task of determining if a noise is unreasonable to be challenging. KCSO personnel found shooting noise to be particularly ambiguous, as they said the presence of federal and state laws regulating gun use complicates the assessment of whether loud noise from guns is reasonable. Difficulty applying the noise code results in a lack of citations, which inhibits the development of case law that could serve as guidance on how to effectively enforce the code. Without court decisions on appeals, the effectiveness of the revised code cannot be determined.

Outstanding questions remain about the revised code

Lack of clear procedures in ambiguous or difficult situations hinders noise code implementation and allows chronic noise to persist. KCSO does not have a policy about how deputies should handle issues where there are outstanding questions about enforcement. While KCSO's standard procedure of responding to a noise call by verifying the complaint and asking noisemakers to be quieter works in most instances, deputies related other instances where it was difficult to apply the code. For example:

- Noisemakers stop loud activities when they see a deputy approach so the deputy cannot personally witness the noise.
- Noisemakers refuse contact so the deputy does not know their identity and cannot write a citation.
- Many individuals are generating noise (bar, house party) and the owner is not present or identifiable.
- An otherwise legal object (such as a boat or dirt bike) is generating noise and the deputy is not sure how to determine whether the noise is unreasonable.

In these types of situations, deputies are sometimes unclear on how to proceed. Higher-level KCSO staff we spoke with had differing opinions on what to do and what kind of evidence a deputy would need to collect to support a citation. Various staff expressed confusion about the interaction between the environmental sound limits (which still require decibel measurements to enforce) and the reasonableness standard for public disturbance noise (which the code describes as sound that interferes with normal conversation at a distance of 50 feet or more from the source of the sound). Some said they understood that the code did not require a decibel reading for a public disturbance noise citation, but they wondered whether the court would uphold a ticket without objective evidence like a decibel reading.

A particularly challenging example of this confusion was enforcement of noise caused by shooting guns. A complainant told us that when they called KCSO to complain about shooting noise, the responding deputy said that KCSO would not enforce the noise code for shooting noise. KCSO management staff indicated that there is no official policy relating to enforcement of noise caused by guns. We also heard a variety of opinions about whether the code applies to shooting noise, given other federal and state laws regulating gun use. Some KCSO staff members stated that the presence of laws allowing shooting influenced their assessment of the reasonableness of the noise generated.

Lack of citations circumvents court cases that could provide learning opportunities for KCSO

Appealed citations would create a record of case law that could help define answers to outstanding questions. The presiding judge of District Court indicated that the validity of noise citations would depend on the facts of the case, how the facts are presented during a contested hearing, and the individual judge's application of the law. Because KCSO has issued so few citations, there has not been an opportunity for the court to hear appeals under the revised noise code, so there is no established pattern that reflects how District Court judges would decide such cases.⁹ The problem becomes circular:

- Deputies do not issue citations in difficult or ambiguous circumstances because they are not clear on how to apply the code or what evidence would be necessary to collect.
- There are no citations, so no appeals to contest citations in District Court.
- Absent appeals, District Court judges do not make decisions that KCSO could use as guidance in applying the code.

Recommendation 2

The King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) should consult with the Prosecuting Attorney's Office on how KCSO should handle noise enforcement, develop policies to clarify its approach, and communicate these policies to deputies.

Conclusion

Enforcement of the noise code by RASKC, DPER, and KCSO is working well for the vast majority of noise complaints. However, the lack of KCSO citations for noise code violations allows a small number of chronic noise issues to remain unresolved. Further, without citations, the effectiveness of the code cannot be tested in court. Making enforcement more of a priority by resolving questions about procedures, training deputies on the tools the code provides, and communicating emphasis through the chain of command could help address chronic noise issues.

⁹ There have not been any noise code hearings at King County District Court since the 2015 code revision.

Appendix 1

Differences Between Old and Revised Noise Code

<i>Old Noise Code</i>	<i>Revised Noise Code</i>
TYPES OF NOISE VIOLATIONS AND DEFINITIONS	
<p>Public disturbance – No definition of public disturbance. Instead, the code provided a list of noise types deemed to be public disturbances.</p> <p>Environmental noise limits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any noise exceeding defined decibel limits Decibel limits vary by location, type of noise, and time of day County Public Health staff required to measure noise County staff must measure the noise using county-owned equipment <p>Construction noise – Subject to environmental noise limits and time restrictions</p>	<p>Public disturbance – Defined as a noise unreasonably disturbing a person or persons. The code clarified that a noise does not need to exceed maximum decibel standards established by environmental noise limits to be considered a public disturbance.</p> <p>Environmental noise limits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any noise exceeding defined decibel limits. Decibel limits vary by location, type of noise, and time of day County staff not required to measure noise <p>Construction noise – Subject to time restrictions</p>
ENFORCEMENT RESPONSIBILITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) - general noise Department of Public Health (DPH) – general noise, responsible for measuring noise using decibel meter Regional Animal Services of King County (RASKC) – animal noise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KCSO – general noise Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER) – construction noise RASKC – animal noise
PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fine of \$125 (penalties do not escalate for subsequent infractions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fine of \$125 for first infraction¹⁰ Penalties double for subsequent infractions within 12 months If three infractions within 12 months, enforcing deputy may refer to Prosecuting Attorney's Office (PAO) to seek a court injunction
APPEAL ENTITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hearing Examiner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Court (KCSO violations) Hearing Examiner (RASKC violations)

Source: King County Auditor's Office analysis

¹⁰ Including 2018 state fees, the fine for a first infraction totals \$257.

Sheriff's Response



KING COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
516 Third Avenue, W-116
Seattle, WA 98104

Mitzi G. Johanknecht
Sheriff

June 5, 2018

Kymber Waltmunson
King County Auditor
Room 1033
King County Courthouse

Dear Ms. Waltmunson,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed final report on the King County Noise Ordinance Audit, titled "Noise Code: Changes Untested on Difficult Cases; Training and Guidance."

The response from the King County Sheriff's Office is enclosed in the format requested by your office. I am happy to answer any follow-up questions and look forward to the presentation of your report on June 12, 2018. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mitzi Johanknecht". The signature is stylized with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Mitzi Johanknecht
SHERIFF

cc: Undersheriff Scott Somers
Chief Lisa Mulligan, Patrol Operations Division
Erin Overbey, Legal Advisor

Recommendation 1

The King County Sheriff's Office should provide training to deputies and front-line managers on how to use the tools provided in the code to address noise complaints.

Agency Response

Concurrence	Concur
Implementation date	03/31/2019
Responsible agency	KC Sheriff's Office
Comment	The King County Noise Ordinance is only applicable in unincorporated areas however Deputies from all worksites in King County can be on-duty, working a regular or overtime shift an unincorporated area, and therefore required to respond to a noise complaint. Mandatory on-line training, created by the KCSO Advanced Training Unit is the most efficient way to address the knowledge based training needs of all KCSO Deputies, in a timely manner. Early indication is that this training can be completed by the end of the first Quarter in 2019, possibly earlier. Timeline due to current and projected workload of the Advanced Training Unit staff. If the training takes longer, due to workload, KCSO will inform the Auditor's Office of the delay.

Recommendation 2

The King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) should consult with the Prosecuting Attorney's Office on how KCSO should handle noise enforcement, develop policies to clarify their approach, and communicate these policies to deputies.

Agency Response

Concurrence	Concur
Implementation date	03/31/2019
Responsible agency	KC Sheriff's Office
Comment	Consultation efforts will be initiated and coordinated by the Sheriff's Office Patrol Operations Division, prior to on-line training being developed.



Statement of Compliance, Scope, Objective & Methodology

Statement of Compliance with Government Auditing Standards

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Scope of Work on Internal Controls

We assessed internal controls relevant to the audit objectives. This included a review of relevant county department and division procedures, guidance, plans, and processes. We conducted interviews with knowledgeable staff in the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO), Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER), Regional Animal Services of King County (RASKC), King County District Court, the King County Hearing Examiner, the King County Ombudsman's Office, and the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. In performing our audit work, we learned that KCSO does not provide guidance or training to deputies on how to handle noise complaints, and we recommend it does so.

Scope and Objectives

The audit evaluated King County noise code and its enforcement by the agencies responsible, including the impact of the 2015 changes to the code. The objectives were to answer the various questions the Council asked the audit to cover in Ordinance 18000. These questions included the ability of the code to provide relief from unreasonable noise, protect those faced with unreasonable complaints about their level of noise, and provide readily enforceable language for code enforcement officers to implement. Ordinance 18000 also asked that the audit include an analysis of the effects of shifting the emphasis of the code from decibel limits to public disturbance provisions, and an analysis of the impact of variance requests on the workload of DPER.

Methodology

We used data from KCSO and RASKC to identify trends in noise complaints and enforcement actions, and to analyze complaint patterns. For example, we used the data to compare the number of complaints in the two years before and after the July 1, 2015, effective date of the noise code change, and the number of citations for noise code violations in the same timeframe. We used KCSO data to identify the addresses of noise complaint recipients, and to identify addresses with repeat complaints. For addresses with multiple complaints, we identified the nature of the land use at each address by looking them up on the King County Assessor's Parcel Viewer. We reviewed KCSO incident reports and deputy notes entered into the Computer Assisted Dispatch (CAD) system. We interviewed staff at all levels of KCSO and conducted structured interviews of a sample of deputies. We also interviewed staff at DPER, RASKC, District Court, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the Hearing Examiner's Office, and the Ombudsman's Office. Finally, we conducted structured interviews with a sample of frequent complainants about noise issues.



List of Recommendations & Implementation Schedule

Recommendation 1

The King County Sheriff's Office should provide training to deputies and front-line managers on how to use the tools provided in the code to address noise complaints.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: 3-31-19

ESTIMATE OF IMPACT: Training deputies, sergeants, and captains will give them the information they need to fully implement the noise code. This could result in deputies issuing more citations for violating the noise code and fewer chronic noise issues in King County.

Recommendation 2

The King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) should consult with the Prosecuting Attorney's Office on how KCSO should handle noise enforcement, develop policies to clarify its approach, and communicate these policies to deputies.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: 3-31-19

ESTIMATE OF IMPACT: Working with the Prosecuting Attorney's Office to resolve questions about noise code implementation will inform the staff training recommended above. A clear approach will enable deputies to enforce the noise code, especially in difficult situations.



KING COUNTY AUDITOR'S OFFICE

Advancing Performance & Accountability

KYMBER WALTMUNSON, KING COUNTY AUDITOR

MISSION Promote improved performance, accountability, and transparency in King County government through objective and independent audits and studies.

VALUES INDEPENDENCE - CREDIBILITY - IMPACT

ABOUT US The King County Auditor's Office was created by charter in 1969 as an independent agency within the legislative branch of county government. The office conducts oversight of county government through independent audits, capital projects oversight, and other studies. The results of this work are presented to the Metropolitan King County Council and are communicated to the King County Executive and the public. The King County Auditor's Office performs its work in accordance with Government Auditing Standards.



This audit product conforms to the GAGAS standards for independence, objectivity, and quality.