



Santa Cruz Municipal Code 9.37 – Pertaining to Special Security Service Charges at Loud or Unruly Gatherings

9.37.010 Definitions.

The following terms used in this chapter shall have the meanings set forth in this section.

(a) "Responsible person(s)" shall mean a person(s) with a right of possession in the property on which a loud or unruly gathering is conducted, including, but not limited to, an owner or tenant of the property if the gathering is on private property, or a permittee if the gathering is a permitted gathering on public property, or any person(s) accepting responsibility for such a gathering. "Responsible person" shall additionally include the landlord of another responsible person and the parents and/or legal guardians of responsible persons under the age of 21 years. To incur liability for special security service charges imposed by this chapter the responsible person need not be present at the loud or unruly gathering resulting in the emergency response giving rise to the imposition of special security service charges. This chapter therefore imposes vicarious as well as direct liability upon responsible persons.

(b) "Special security services" shall mean the provision of any police, fire or other emergency response service to a loud or unruly gathering within twelve months of a first response as provided in this chapter.

(c) "Loud or unruly gathering" shall mean a gathering of two or more persons on private property or a permitted gathering of two or more persons on public property whose loud or unruly conduct constitutes a threat to public health, safety, quiet enjoyment of residential property or general welfare, including violations of Chapter 9.36. This term excludes incidents of domestic violence. A loud or unruly gathering shall constitute a public nuisance.

9.37.020 Response to loud or unruly gatherings.

When a police officer responds to a first loud or unruly gathering at premises in the city with a given address, the officer shall inform any responsible person at the scene that:

- (a) The officer has determined that a loud or unruly gathering exists; and
- (b) Responsible persons will be charged for the cost of any special security services required for subsequent responses to the scene within the next twelve months.

Only one warning will be given pursuant to this section before the city assesses special security service costs pursuant to Section 9.37.030. If a responsible person cannot be identified at the scene, the police department may issue a warning to one of the other responsible persons identified in Section 9.37.010(a) or subsequently return to the scene and issue the warning to a then-present responsible person. Warnings given to responsible persons who do not reside at the premises in question shall be delivered by certified mail. To the extent feasible, each warning shall be documented in the form of a letter and mailed by the city to each responsible person.

9.37.030 Cost recovery for special security services.

(a) When the police department or fire department or other city emergency responder responds to a loud or unruly gathering at premises with a given address in the city within twelve months of a warning given to a responsible person for those premises pursuant to Section 9.37.020, or while any such warning remains in effect pursuant to Section 9.37.050, all responsible persons shall be jointly and severally liable for the city's costs of providing special security service for that response and all subsequent responses during that warning period.

- (b) (i) A tenant/responsible person who is a member of a multi-tenant/responsible person household may request a determination from the city that, in relation to his or her fellow tenants/responsible persons, he or she is not primarily liable for city costs assessed to responsible persons pursuant to subsection (a).
- (ii) At a minimum the determination request shall document by clear and convincing evidence that the requesting tenant/responsible person was not on or about the premises at any time during the loud or unruly gathering or during the twenty-four (24) hour period preceding the city response to the loud or unruly gathering and that the requesting tenant/responsible person had no prior knowledge of the gathering that ultimately resulted in the city response and cost assessment.
- (iii) The determination request shall be submitted in writing to the city official designated by the City Manager to hear and rule upon such requests.
- (iv) The written determination request shall be submitted within fifteen (15) calendar days of the date of the city cost invoice to the requesting tenant/responsible person; late determination requests shall not be considered.
- (v) The decision of the designated city official on the request determination shall be final.
- (vi) A city determination that the requesting tenant/responsible person is not primarily liable shall operate to preclude the city from undertaking further cost collection action against the requesting tenant/responsible person but shall not operate to bar any other responsible person, including landlords, parents or legal guardians, from seeking contribution or indemnity for such costs from the requesting tenant/responsible person.
- (c) Landlords shall be prohibited from charging tenants a deposit against potential cost assessments levied pursuant to subsection (a) where the tenants, during the current or any previous lease agreement with the landlord for the premises which are the subject of the lease agreement, have not been cited and convicted for violating this chapter. Upon any such citation and conviction, the landlord shall be authorized to charge such a deposit. For purposes of this subsection, a no contest plea and payment of a fine for violating this chapter shall constitute a conviction.

9.37.040 Billing and collection.

Charges for special security service shall include a reasonable charge for the emergency responder's time and actual costs of any equipment used or damaged in connection with the response, together with an additional thirty-three percent of the special security charge for administrative overhead. These charges shall be computed and a bill submitted to the responsible person(s). The chief of police shall promulgate notice and billing procedures for this purpose. The bill shall be a debt owed to the city and failure to pay that bill within thirty days is a violation of this code. If the city is obliged to initiate litigation or other proceedings authorized by Title 4 of this code to recover this debt, the responsible person shall be liable for:

- (a) Costs of suit;
- (b) Attorney's fees; and
- (c) Costs of collection.

9.37.050 Violations/fines.

(a) It shall be an infraction for a responsible person to conduct or allow a loud or unruly gathering on premises owned by the responsible person or on premises rented by or to the responsible person. A third or subsequent violation within a twelve-month period shall constitute a misdemeanor.

(b) Fines.

(1) A first violation of this Section shall be punishable by a fine of \$250.00.

(2) A second violation of this section at a given address in the city within a given twelve-month period shall be punishable by a fine of \$500.00.

(3) A third or subsequent violation of this section at a given address in the city within a given twelve-month period shall be punishable by a fine of \$1,000.00.

(c) The fines prescribed at subsection (b) are in addition to any special security service charges that may be assessed pursuant to this chapter.

(d) The second, third or subsequent violation fines prescribed at subsections (b)(2) and (b)(3) are payable whether or not the responsible person at the time of the current loud or unruly gathering is the same person who was the responsible person for any prior loud or unruly gathering at those premises.

(e) The fine schedule prescribed at subsection (b) is a "rolling schedule" meaning that in calculating the fine payable the police department or city attorney shall count backward starting from the date of the most recent loud or unruly gathering to determine how many prior loud or unruly gatherings have taken place at the premises in question during the statutory twelve month period. A warning given pursuant to Section 9.37.020 shall remain in effect for the premises at a given address until a full twelve-month period has elapsed during which there have been no loud or unruly gatherings at those premises.

9.37.055 Ineligibility to receive zoning permit or building permits.

(a) A responsible person, or a responsible person's agent, shall be ineligible to receive, and shall not be issued, any Title 24 zoning permit or Title 18 building permit authorizing work on the responsible person's premises that would result in the potential intensification of use of those premises, if within three years of the date of the permit application any responsible person has been found guilty of violating Section 9.37.050 for conducting or allowing a loud or unruly gathering at those premises, or has failed to contest such a citation for a violation of Section 9.37.050. The provisions of this subsection shall apply whether the subject Section 9.37.050 citation is a criminal citation subject to adjudication in the Santa Cruz County superior court or administrative citation subject to adjudication pursuant to the procedures delineated in Chapter 4.14.

(b) For purposes of this subsection a permit authorizing work that would result in the intensification of use of premises is any zoning permit or building permit which, upon exercise of the permit, will result in an alteration of the premises that either increases the number of rooms in the premises, converts non-sleeping rooms to sleeping rooms in the premises; increases the interior square footage; whether or not habitable, of the premises, increases the square footage of structures on the site with the addition of new detached buildings; or increases the number of off-street parking spaces on the premises.

9.37.060 Service of alcoholic beverages to minors.

The city council hereby finds that the service of alcohol to minors at loud and unruly gatherings and the consumption of alcohol by minors at loud or unruly gatherings has in the past and continues to pose a threat to the health and safety of all persons who reside in the city and also causes significant disruption of city residents' quiet enjoyment of their households, especially in the city's residential neighborhoods. In addition, such conduct on behalf of persons who serve alcohol to minors and minors who consume alcohol at loud or unruly gatherings results in the expenditure of a disproportionate percentage of the city's police, fire and public safety resources which are underwritten primarily by general municipal taxes paid to the city by its taxpayers and residents. It is therefore the policy of the city council that in responding to loud or unruly gatherings, the city police department shall strictly enforce any and all applicable state laws pertaining to the service of alcohol to minors, and the consumption of alcohol by minors, and with respect to minors in possession of alcohol, the police department shall establish a "no tolerance" protocol by which the police department contacts, or causes the minor's school to contact, the minor's parents or legal guardians whenever the minor is found to be in possession of alcohol or narcotics or found to be intoxicated at a loud or unruly gathering. Where the minor's school has an internal student disciplinary office any such incident shall likewise be reported to that office.

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