



## PARTY HOUSE HANDBOOK

*Too many of us know the sinking feeling that comes when we see a truck off-loading sound equipment at a party house. Bel Air-Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council wants to make sure that all residents have the latest information about how to best secure short- and long-term relief from out-of-control parties.*

# YOU CAN DO IT

Shutting down a problem location requires a great deal of persistence as well as assistance from City employees but actions taken generally pay off in the long term. If you are committed to solving your quality of life issues, you have to face this problem as you would any other task. You need organization and persistence, and good communication with people who can help you. One thing you can be sure of – if you take no action nothing will happen.

You also need flexibility and resourcefulness. Rules, practices and personnel may change quickly. Through your efforts, you will learn who your most effective allies are, both in your neighborhood and in the City. You'll need to maintain open lines of communication, and that communication should occur with cordiality and respect, no matter how frustrated you may get. Please let go of any ideas you have about how a City should operate with respect to problems like these. Los Angeles does not work that way.

Note that this guide is primarily for dealing with a problem AFTER you have already attempted to address it with the property owner or resident. Additionally, while one all-night rager every six months may be a terrible problem, it may not be severe enough to justify use of scarce City resources.

# THE PLAYERS

In your quest for peace and quiet, you may enlist the help of many different City employees. **LAPD** responds to party calls and can issue citations for party house ordinance violations. **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** staff is in charge of the home sharing registration system, and they refer violations to the **Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (LADBS)** who then can issue fines for violations of the home sharing ordinance. Short term rental permits can also be suspended or revoked. Your **City Council Representative's Field Deputy** for your area can assist with tracking problems and following up with City employees on behalf of residents.

Ideally, the **GAME PLAN** would be to get citations issued for nuisance properties so that the Neighborhood Prosecutor can pursue cases against the property owners and so that the escalating fines levied in association with these citations may have an impact on the problem. If the party house is a short-term rental, efforts may be made that could lead to a suspension of the permit or, if there isn't a valid permit at the location, to get enforcement action taken against the property owner.

Unfortunately, LAPD staffing levels are making party house citations a rarity so this "game plan" has become harder to put into play. Still, a combination of careful record-keeping and open lines of communication can make a difference

Bel Air Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council territory is served by two separate police stations. Each station has its own personnel and slightly different operating procedures. Each office has "Senior Lead Officers" who are responsible for ongoing issues in their areas. You may also find that there are other officers at your station who have some expertise on party house issues.

LAPD's **Hollywood Station** serves the "North of Sunset" area and Laurel Canyon. Our Senior Lead Officer (SLO) there is Ralph Sanchez. You can reach him at 30735@lapd.online. The Neighborhood Prosecutor is Ethan Weaver. You can reach him at ethan.weaver@lacity.org.

LAPD's **West Los Angeles Station** serves the remainder of the territory – Coldwater Canyon, Benedict Canyon and Bel-Air. Our SLO is James Allen, who you can reach at 39318@lapd.online. Veronica de la Cruz-Robles serves as West LA Neighborhood Prosecutor. Her email address is veronica.delacruz-robles@lacity.org.

**City Planning** runs the short term rental program. Their 24-hour complaint line (213) 267-7788. You can communicate with them by email at planning.home-sharing@lacity.org.

If you live within the Bel Air Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council boundaries and you live in Council District 4, your Field Deputy is Mehmet Berker (mehmet.berker@lacity.org). If you live in Council District 5, your Field Deputy is Jarrett Thompson (jarrett.thompson@lacity.org).

If there is a neighborhood association or HOA in your area, it may have specific suggestions about how to involve it in enforcement, so it's worthwhile to reach out to it in addition to reading this document.

Others who you may call on as you try to solve the problem:

The Fire Department (LAFD) may be summoned if the party is causing a fire hazard. They will be reached through 911 or the police non-emergency number (877-ASK-LAPD).

Parking enforcement can clear illegally-parked cars. You can reach dispatch at (818) 374-4823 or (213) 485-4184.

# THE LAWS

In order to effectively deal with party houses, it's important to understand the laws that are on the books. Several different laws can be applied to party house problems – 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. In order to issue a party house citation a responding officer would need to observe one of these happening and then choose to issue a citation.

Party House citations are part of the “Administrative Citation Enforcement Program” (ACE) and 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. These tickets are not burdensome for officers to write.

Responding officers may also issue a misdemeanor “release from custody” ticket which has more impact but which requires more effort on the part of the officer. They have discretion as to what action they take.

The **noise ordinance** regulates noise only. If there is loud noise but no evidence of an actual party, responding officers may be able to cite for a violation of the noise ordinance. This is a misdemeanor charge which may or may not help solve your problem.

The **home sharing ordinance** regulates short term rentals. Short term rentals (rentals of shorter duration than 30 days) require a permit. Permits for short-term rentals can be suspended after two citations or revoked after three. These citations would include citations for parties, citations for failure to put away garbage cans, or any code violations. If a party house is a short term rental with no permit, that’s another story altogether.

# WHAT TO DO

Here are steps you can and should take if there is a party house in your area. It's best to start this process as soon as the issue becomes apparent.

## Before a Party:

*If you see set-up for a party happening at a problem location, please contact your **Senior Lead Officer** and your **Neighborhood Prosecutor**, letting them know that you expect a large party will be happening there. Email them even if it's not during normal business hours. This may or may not end up being effective but be sure to take this step.*

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 prepare to call and perhaps communicate with one another regularly to coordinate calls for enforcement. One neighbor should be designated the "lead neighbor" and should be responsible for maintenance of records and communication with public officials.

Keep a running log with your information. This is also helpful to show to responding officers, so that they can see there is a problem with this house.



## During a Party:

- **Figure out where the party is.** You may know from experience where it is or where it probably is. You may be able to go out and figure it out. You might have to communicate with neighbors to learn more. You can do this by establishing a group text with neighbors that want to work together or even by posting on Nextdoor asking whether anybody else hears it and whether they know where it is. Be mindful that the party house owner or renter may be on Nextdoor as well.
- **Call the police and do so early.** With the current staffing situation, it's unlikely that LAPD will respond while the party is going on but without making the call, there is no record of the problem and no way to escalate enforcement action. Normally you want to call 877-ASK-LAPD but if there are blocked roads, fire, violence, teenage drinking or another crime happening, you can call or text 911. If you text please be certain to include the address of the problem. 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 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. Getting a call is not guaranteed.
- **Ask the dispatcher for an incident number.** This will insure that you have a record of the violation.

## During a Party (continued):

- **Meet up with responding officers.** If LAPD responds to the call while the party is still happening, and you are able to meet up with them, get business cards from the responding officers. Take the opportunity to share the history of the problem and ask for a citation to be written. Know that writing an ACE citation is not burdensome. They have discretion but you may be able to exert some influence.
- **Call Parking Enforcement.** Do this if there are illegally-parked cars. They may show up, they may not. Response time is unpredictable. Ask for an incident number here too. Please be certain to note if driveways are blocked. This will escalate the problem. Additionally, if driveways are blocked you should let LAPD know as well.
- **Call the Home Sharing Complaint Line.** Do this if the house is a short term rental. There will be no immediate result from the call but it serves as another record of the problem.
- **Collect video, audio and photographic evidence.** This will give the Neighborhood Prosecutor necessary tools to make a case against the owner, if that becomes necessary.

## In the Morning

- Check for a citation posted on the home.
  - If it's there, you'll see it. It's yellow. Take a picture for your records. Make sure it stays posted for 30 days. If it's torn down, notify your SLO. It needs to be re-posted. There are additional fines for taking down the citation.
  - If there is no citation and the party was especially bad or the problem is chronic, reach out to your Senior Lead Officer. It may be possible to have a citation written based on footage from the body cameras of the responding officers.
- If trash is an issue, document the situation 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 permit to be suspended or revoked. Also document the after-party garbage issues.
- Update your log with any additional information from the party – the dates and times of calls, incident numbers, results – and any documentation you might have 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.

## Now What?

If a 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 your particular 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 5, this would be Jarrett Thompson (jarrett.thompson@lacity.org) and for Council District 4, it would be Mehmet Berker (mehmet.berker@lacity.org). Also copy any HOA or neighborhood association that may cover your area.

If you have had three or more incidents at the location, and there is no discussion of long-term solutions, the lead neighbor should arrange a call with the Field Deputy (and perhaps the SLO and Neighborhood Prosecutor) to discuss solutions. They will have the very latest information on what's possible. It's probably good to get a number of affected neighbors on the call.

## Bonus Points

Your case can be helped by learning about parties ahead of time from social media and by keeping a file of social media postings from the party. It's probably best to find a young person to help with this.

# SHORT TERM RENTAL STRATEGIES

If you have a short-term rental party house in your neighborhood, additional information may serve you well. There can be two consequences for action related to home sharing – fines for non-compliant listings and permit suspension or revocation based on citations.

## Listings

Try to find listings for the home. AirBnB and other sites can often be searched by location. An unpermitted short-term rental will likely be listed on a site that is not monitored. Los Angeles uses Granicus for monitoring of short-term rental listings. Most local sites are not monitored automatically.

If you want to find good sites to look at, you can do internet searches like “los angeles luxury vacation rentals.”

You can also find the most recent listing for the house and use a phrase from the description of the property in an internet search. This may turn up short term listings for the property as well.

Now you need to make sure it is a true short-term listing. Some listings will have a minimum rental period of 30 days or more. These are not short-term rentals covered under the law, and are mostly useless to you in this effort.

For any true short-term listings, check for a permit number. Any listing without a permit number is non-compliant because the law requires listings to display permit numbers.

### **Communicating with City Planning**

If you find a non-compliant listing, email home sharing with the link and the address, noting the absence of a permit number on the listing. This should trigger a warning letter or fine. The City can issue fines for up to twice the nightly rent per listing day but normally a warning letter will be issued first, followed by a fine.

If the listing has a permit number, you may wish to inquire with home sharing whether the permit is currently valid. Sometimes listings use invalid numbers. These listings are also non-compliant.

You may also wish to start by determining whether the home has a valid permit. To do so, you may submit a California Public Records Act Request to [beatrice.pacheco@lacity.org](mailto:beatrice.pacheco@lacity.org). A google search for a permit number will turn up listings.

If you determine that you are dealing with a registered short term rental, you should report all issues to 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 homesharing registration.

## Home Sharing Suspensions, Revocations and Citations

According to the home sharing ordinance, suspensions of the permit begin after two citations and revocations begin after three. This is a rare event, not yet seen in BABCNC territory, but that doesn't mean that you shouldn't try to make it happen if you have a nuisance location with a valid home sharing permit. These citations can be party house citations, code violations or other citations.

If you are dealing with a registered short-term rental, and a party house citation is issued after a party, you may want to ask your SLO whether Planning knows about the citation. Communication is meant to be ongoing but follow-up will help you understand whether that communication is happening.

One other short-term rental nuisance that can be helpful in generating citations is failure to deal properly with trash. If cans are left out when they are not supposed to be, you can report through 311. If you report through the app or on the website, you will get an email notifying you of the resolution of your complaint. Sometimes a second complaint after a citation will result not in a citation but in confiscation of garbage cans.

Building code violations also count towards suspension or revocation.

## Working With the Platform:

AirBnB has the most robust policy, not allowing gatherings of more than 16 people at homes listed on their site. This would apply both to short-term rentals and to longer-term rentals. They also have a reporting process. You can find details on all of that [here](#).

Other platforms don't have any particular policies that we know of but it can be worthwhile to attempt to reach out to the platform to let them know about the nuisance situation.



# FOR HOSTS

Please be considerate to your neighbors!

Give contact information to nearby neighbors so that they can communicate with you if problems arise.

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

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

- Every Host must provide and maintain fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors and information related to emergency exit routes on the property and must be in compliance with LA fire, life and safety codes.
- Every Host that lists in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone as designated by the LAFD shall include and post notices that smoking is not permitted in any exterior 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

## Phone Numbers:

LAPD Non-Emergency#: (877)ASK-LAPD

Parking Enforcement: (818) 374-4823 or (213) 485-4184.

Home Sharing 24/7 Complaint Line: (213) 267-7788