

1 [Police Code - Prohibiting the Use of Amplified Sound on Open Top Sightseeing Buses]

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3 **Ordinance amending the San Francisco Police Code by amending Section 46 to clarify**
4 **that the definition of "Sound Truck" in that section does not include open top tour**
5 **buses, amending Section 2901 to clarify that the noise restrictions imposed by Article**
6 **29 do not apply to City agencies, adding a new Section 2913 to prohibit the use of**
7 **amplified sound on open top sightseeing buses in San Francisco except where the**
8 **sound is audible only to individual listeners, amending Section 2916 to authorize the**
9 **Department of Public Health and the Police Department to enforce the requirements of**
10 **Section 2913, and amending Section 2922 to clarify that the Article should not be**
11 **construed to conflict with Federal or State laws.**

12 NOTE: Additions are *single-underline italics Times New Roman*;
13 deletions are ~~*strike-through italics Times New Roman*~~.
14 Board amendment additions are double-underlined;
Board amendment deletions are ~~strike-through normal~~.

15 Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

16 Section 1. Findings.

17 a. The Board of Supervisors finds that in order to protect public health, it is and has
18 been the policy of San Francisco to prohibit unwanted, excessive and avoidable noise.

19 b. There are a number of sightseeing bus operators in San Francisco who use
20 amplified sound on open top sightseeing buses to communicate with their passengers as the
21 buses travel along regular routes throughout the day. This amplified sound disturbs people in
22 their homes and on the streets along the sightseeing bus route. The number of open top
23 sightseeing buses in San Francisco has increased substantially in recent years.

24 c. The routes for most open top sightseeing buses include popular tourist
25 destinations, which disproportionately impact a select group of local residences along the

1 route. These open top tour buses are typically operated eight hours per day, seven days per
2 week.

3 d. The San Francisco Department of Public Health has observed that open top
4 sightseeing announcements are audible in private residences along the tour route. The sound
5 from open top sightseeing buses is more disruptive to listeners than amplified sound from
6 other vehicles, including sound trucks, because these announcements are frequent, have
7 informational content, and vary between tour guides, which makes this sound more difficult to
8 ignore.

9 Section 2. The San Francisco Police Code is hereby amended by amending Sections
10 46, 2901, 2916, and 2922, and adding a new Section 2913 to read as follows:

11 **SEC. 46. - DEFINITIONS.**

12 (a) "Sound Truck." The words "sound truck" as used in this Code shall mean any
13 motor vehicle, horse drawn vehicle or other means of conveyance, having mounted thereon,
14 attached thereto or carrying any sound amplifying equipment, except that an "Open Top
15 Sightseeing Bus" as defined in Section 2913 of this Code shall not be considered a "sound truck" for
16 purposes of this Article.

17 (b) "Sound Amplifying Equipment." The words "sound amplifying equipment" as
18 used in this Code, shall mean any machine or device for the reproduction or amplification of
19 the human voice, music or other sound. "Sound amplifying equipment" shall not be construed
20 as including standard automobile radios, television receiving sets or mobile radio telephone
21 equipment or other mechanical sound or voice-reproducing devices when used and heard
22 only by occupants of the vehicle in which installed, or warning devices on authorized
23 emergency vehicles or horns or other warning devices on other vehicles used only for traffic
24 safety purposes.

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1 **SEC. 2901. - DEFINITIONS.**

2 (a) "Ambient" means the lowest sound level repeating itself during a minimum ten-
3 minute period as measured with a type 1, precision sound level meter, using slow response
4 and "A " weighting. The minimum sound level shall be determined with the noise source at
5 issue silent, and in the same location as the measurement of the noise level of the source or
6 sources at issue. However, for purposes of this chapter, in no case shall the ambient be
7 considered or determined to be less than: (1) Thirty-five dBA for interior residential noise, and
8 (2) Forty-five dBA in all other locations. If a significant portion of the ambient is produced by
9 one or more individual identifiable sources of noise that contribute cumulatively to the sound
10 level and may be operating continuously during the minimum ten-minute measurement period,
11 determination of the ambient shall be accomplished with these separate identifiable noise
12 sources silent or otherwise removed or subtracted from the measured ambient sound level.

13 (b) "Director" means the Director or department head of any City department having
14 administrative or enforcement responsibilities under this Article or any other provision of the
15 Municipal Code regarding noise control, as well as his or her designee.

16 (c) "Dwelling Unit" means (1) a dwelling space consisting of essentially complete
17 independent living facilities for one or more persons, including, for example, permanent
18 provisions for living and sleeping; (2) a room in group housing, even if such room lacks private
19 cooking facilities and private plumbing facilities, such as rooms in senior citizen housing,
20 single room occupancy or residential hotels, dorms, hostels, or shelters; or, (3) a
21 housekeeping room as defined in the Housing Code.

22 (d) "Emergency work" means work made necessary to restore property to a safe
23 condition following a public calamity or work required to protect persons or property from an
24 imminent exposure to danger or work by private or public utilities when restoring utility service.
25 This term shall not include testing of emergency equipment.

1 (e) "Fixed source" means a machine or device capable of creating a noise level at
2 the property upon which it is regularly located, including but not limited to: industrial and
3 commercial process machinery and equipment, pumps, fans, air-conditioning apparatus or
4 refrigeration machines.

5 (f) "Low frequency ambient" means the lowest sound level repeating itself during a
6 ten-minute period as measured with a sound level meter, using slow response and "C"
7 weighting. The minimum sound level shall be determined with the music or entertainment
8 noise source at issue silent, and in the same location as the measurement of the noise level
9 of the source or sources at issue. However, for purposes of this chapter, in no case shall the
10 local ambient be considered or determined to be less than: (1) Forty-five dBC for interior
11 residential noise, and (2) Fifty-five dBC in all other locations. If a significant portion of the
12 ambient is produced by one or more individual identifiable sources that would otherwise be
13 operating continuously during the minimum ten-minute measurement period, determination of
14 the low-frequency ambient shall be accomplished with these separate identifiable noise
15 sources silent or otherwise removed or subtracted from the measured ambient sound.

16 (g) "Noise level" means the maximum continuous sound level or repetitive peak
17 sound level, produced by a source or group of sources as measured with a sound level meter.
18 In order to measure a noise level, the controls of the sound level meter should be arranged to
19 the setting appropriate to the type of noise being measured. For example, the settings should
20 be slow response for continuous noise sources and fast response for noises with rapid onset
21 and decline.

22 (h) "Person" means a person, firm, association, copartnership, joint venture,
23 corporation, or any entity, public or private in nature, but shall not include the City and County of
24 San Francisco.

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1 (i) "Place of Entertainment" has the same meaning as the term is defined in San
2 Francisco Police Code Section 1060.

3 (j) "Powered construction equipment" means any tools, machinery, or equipment
4 used in connection with construction operations which can be driven by energy in any form
5 other than manpower, including all types of motor vehicles when used in the construction
6 process of any construction site, regardless of whether such construction site be located on-
7 highway or off-highway, and further including all helicopters or other aircraft when used in the
8 construction process except as may be preempted for regulation by State or Federal law.

9 (k) "Property plane" means a vertical plane including the property line that
10 determines the property boundaries in space.

11 (l) "Public Property " means property leased or owned by a governmental entity, to
12 which the public or a substantial group of persons has access, including but not limited to any
13 street, highway, parking lot, plaza, transportation facility, school, place of amusement, park, or
14 playground located within the City and County of San Francisco.

15 (m) "Residential Property" means any property that has at least one dwelling unit
16 and has been approved for human habitation by the City and County of San Francisco.

17 (n) "Sound level," expressed in decibels (dB), means a logarithmic indication of the
18 ratio between the acoustic energy present at a given location and the lowest amount of
19 acoustic energy audible to sensitive human ears and weighted by frequency to account for
20 characteristics of human hearing, as given in the American National Standards Institute
21 Standard S1.1, "Acoustic Terminology," paragraph 2.9, or successor reference. All references
22 to dB in this chapter refer to the A-level or C-level weighting scale, abbreviated dBA or dBC,
23 measured as set forth in this section.

24 **SEC. 2913. AMPLIFIED SOUND RESTRICTIONS FOR OPEN TOP SIGHTSEEING**

25 **BUSES.**

1 (a) For purposes of this Section, "Open Top Sightseeing Bus" shall mean a privately-owned
2 passenger vehicle for hire with a capacity of nine or more passengers, including the driver, that:

3 (1) is used primarily for the conveyance of passengers over the public streets, for the
4 purpose of visiting or viewing places of interest; and

5 (2) lacks a permanently attached solid roof enclosing substantially all of the seating areas
6 of the vehicle containing windows that are glass or other solid transparent material set in frames that
7 are permanently attached to the body of the vehicle.

8 (b) Effective July 1, 2011, it shall be a violation of this Section for any person to operate an
9 Open Top Sightseeing Bus using electronically amplified sound to communicate with passengers except
10 by use of a system whereby the communications are audible to passengers only through the use of
11 technology designed to make such communications audible only to the individual listener, such as
12 individual headsets or headphones.

13 **SEC. 2916. ENFORCEMENT**

14 The Director of Public Health may enforce the provisions of Section 2904, 2909, and
15 2912 of this Article.

16 The Department of Building Inspection may enforce the provisions of Sections 2907
17 and 2908 of this Article insofar as said provisions relate to construction operations conducted
18 on private property under appropriate permits issued pursuant to the San Francisco Building
19 Code, Housing Code, Electrical Code and Plumbing Code. Insofar as these provisions relate
20 to construction operations conducted on publicly-owned property subject to the police power
21 of the City and County of San Francisco, the Department of Public Works may enforce the
22 provisions of Sections 2907 and 2908 of this Article. The Executive Director of the
23 Entertainment Commission may enforce noise standards associated with licensed Places of
24 Entertainment.

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1 The Chief of Police and the Director of Public Health may enforce the provisions of Section
2 2913.

3 The Chief of Police may enforce the provisions of this Article that relate to noise
4 created by humans or any other noise source not specifically assigned or designated to
5 another Department or Agency.

6 **SEC. 2922. - PREEMPTION**

7 In adopting this Article, the Board of Supervisors does not intend to regulate or affect
8 the rights or authority of the State to do those things that are required, directed, or expressly
9 authorized by Federal or State law. Further, in adopting this Article, the Board of Supervisors
10 does not intend to prohibit that which is prohibited by Federal or State law, This Article shall be
11 construed so as not to conflict with applicable federal or State laws, rules, or regulations. Nothing in
12 this Article shall authorize any City agency or department to impose any duties or obligations in
13 conflict with limitations on municipal authority established by State or federal law at the time such
14 agency or department action is taken.

15 APPROVED AS TO FORM:
16 DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

17 By: _____
18 DAVID A. GREENBURG
19 Deputy City Attorney