



Baltimore County Unruly Social Gathering Ordinance

*New law brings \$500 fine,
community service
requirements*

Baltimore County Council passed a new law in January 2016 to provide neighborhoods with a more effective tool to address the problems emanating from loud and unruly house parties. Under the new law, police can write a civil citation on the spot, similar to a speeding ticket, to the property owners, property managers, management company, occupants and/or tenants when a loud and unruly party takes place. The law is a two-year pilot program impacting two areas in Baltimore County. Visit <http://www.gtcca.org/resources/shoreference/> to see maps of designated areas.

A loud and unruly party is a gathering of four or more people at a residence or other private property where:

- Alcohol is illegally furnished to anyone under 21 or someone under 21 is illegally consuming or possessing alcohol; or
- Conduct is disturbing the peace:
 - Excessive noise;
 - Excessive traffic (pedestrian or vehicle) that is above and beyond the norm;
 - Obstruction of public rights-of-way by unruly crowds;
 - Public drunkenness;
 - Assaults, batteries, fights or other disorderly conduct;
 - Vandalism;
 - Public urination;
 - Littering; or
 - Any other conduct that threatens the health, safety, quiet enjoyment or general welfare.



Persons Responsible

- Under this law, a “responsible person” for a loud and unruly gathering means a person with a right of possession in the residence, the person who organizes or supervises the gathering, or any other person who accepts responsibility for the gathering. “Persons responsible” for a loud and unruly party remain liable for violating the ordinance even if they were not present during the event.
- If the person responsible for an unruly event is under 18, they and their parents or legal guardians are jointly and severally liable for the civil penalties imposed by the ordinance.

Penalties for Responsible Persons *(not including Property Owners)*

1st offense: \$500 fine + 20 hours community service

2nd offense*: \$1,000 fine + 32 hours of community service

3rd or subsequent offenses*: \$1,000 fine + 48 hours community service

**24 month look back period to enhance penalty*

Penalties for Property Owners

1st offense: Written warning

2nd offense*: \$500 fine

3rd or subsequent offenses*: \$1,000 + potential suspension or revocation of rental license

**24 month look back period to enhance penalty*



Defense for Owners

Property owners or operators can defend themselves from any fine if:

1. They did not authorize, know about, or participate in the event, and they prove:
 - a. They have evicted the tenant(s), or
 - b. They filed court proceedings to evict the tenant(s).