

Baltimore County Council's Social Host-Unruly Social Gatherings Pilot Program

New law brings \$500+ fines and community service

Baltimore County enacted the Social Host-Unruly Social Gatherings-Pilot Program, effective February 1, 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 now write a civil citation on the spot, similar to a speeding ticket, to the property owners, property managers, occupants, and/or tenants when a loud and unruly party takes place.

A loud and unruly party is a gathering of two or more people on private property at which:

- Alcohol is illegally furnished to anyone under 21 or someone under 21 is illegally consuming or possessing alcohol; or
- Conduct is disturbing the peace, including:
 - Excessive noise;
 - Obstruction of public rights-of-way by unruly crowds;
 - Public drunkenness;
 - Assaults, batteries, or other disorderly conduct that disturbs the peace;
 - Vandalism;
 - Littering; or
 - Any other conduct that threatens the health, safety, quiet enjoyment, or general welfare.

Persons Responsible

- The owner, operator, tenant, or occupant of any premises, whether alone or jointly with any other person is a “person responsible” under this ordinance. “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 the first offense, all those cited are subject to a \$500 fine and community service hours. For the second or subsequent offense within 24 months of the previous offense, all those cited are subject to a \$1,000 fine and 32 community service hours.

Additional penalties including fines and suspension or revocation of rental license are applicable to property owners.

Additional Resources

- Exact language of the ordinance can be found here: <http://bit.ly/1IZBXuU>
- The enforcement area includes the area of Arbutus consisting of the area north of Selford Road and south Rolling Road, east and south of Wilkens Avenue, south of Maiden Choice Lane, west of Leeds Avenue, Linden Avenue, and East Drive, and north of Sulphur Spring road at its intersection with Selford Road.