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# When the cops are called to your noisy party, it's best to cooperate

By Rich Kinsey

In the **Ann Arbor** area, the most common type of disturbance call is for a noisy party or noise disturbance. They're usually called in by a neighbor who is trying to sleep or study. These noise complaints can range from a few friends listening to a stereo or talking too loudly to huge street-closing block parties encompassing whole neighborhoods.

During the football season, the **Ann Arbor Police Department** assigns extra officers on the street specifically to deal with underage drinking and unruly parties. These extra patrols are, not surprisingly, called "Party Patrols."

Normally what happens at these types of calls is officers respond, and if the party isn't already flowing into the street and out of hand, the officers contact the party host. The officers warn the party is too loud and must be quieted or shut down. The host is identified and is informed it is his or her responsibility to quiet the party. The officers will also let the party host/responsible person know that if the police are called back to the party because it is noisy again, the host will be issued a ticket.



Ann Arbor police break up the annual Greenwood Avenue block party last April.

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The police mission here is to quiet the party. The officers will also cite any obvious underage drinking, but again, the object is to bring the gathering into compliance.

It is a source of pride for officers to take care of a "job" (call for service), so the problem doesn't cause work for other officers or the next shift coming on. Therefore, responding officers may cite a party host on the first call if it appears that cooperation in quieting the party is less than enthusiastic or if the address has been a party problem in the past.

The police, city attorney's office and courts have been dealing with these parties for years, so there are standardized procedures, fines and punishments in place. Second or subsequent noise offense violations issued to the same address or person are dealt with more severely by the criminal justice system. The Ann Arbor area criminal justice system handles party complaints very efficiently.

For instance, one of the "games" played by party hosts is to ignore the police officer's insistent knocks on their door. These particular party hosts feel self-righteous and steadfast in their belief that our forefathers fought a revolution and drafted a constitution to protect their kegs, stereos and beer pong equipment from warrantless search and seizure.

Unfortunately for them, this is the digital age. Fill-in-the-blank search warrants - coupled with cell phones, fax machines and understanding judges and magistrates - have made obtaining search warrants to enter the premises of an offending party rather quick. Once inside, the officers will take a "zero tolerance" approach to ending the party. They will cite any and all violations they encounter and may be forced to seize as evidence noise-making equipment such as stereos and amplifiers.

It has been my observation over the years, and should be common sense for most, that the level of cooperation demonstrated by an offender is inversely proportional to the level of law enforcement administered. That is to say - the more cooperative a violator, the fewer citations that person will likely receive. Conversely, less cooperation on the part of the violator results in more vigorous enforcement of the law (i.e. more citations and or arrests).

If you're hosting a party, keep it quiet and small, keep the party favors legal, and don't serve alcohol to intoxicated people or anyone under the age of 21. If your party is getting out of control, take the high road and call the police yourself to help close it down. Most importantly, invite your neighbors, and they'll be less likely to call the police to complain about your party.

Have fun, enjoy, but keep it legal.

**Lock it up, don't leave it unattended (especially drinks at parties), be aware and watch out for your neighbors.**

*Rich Kinsey is a retired Ann Arbor police detective sergeant who now blogs about crime and safety for [AnnArbor.com](http://AnnArbor.com).*