

Follow Up on Noise Exemption Permits and Noise Monitoring

Municipal Licensing and Standards (ML&S) Division
Presentation to the Toronto Music Advisory Committee (TMAC)
May 15, 2025

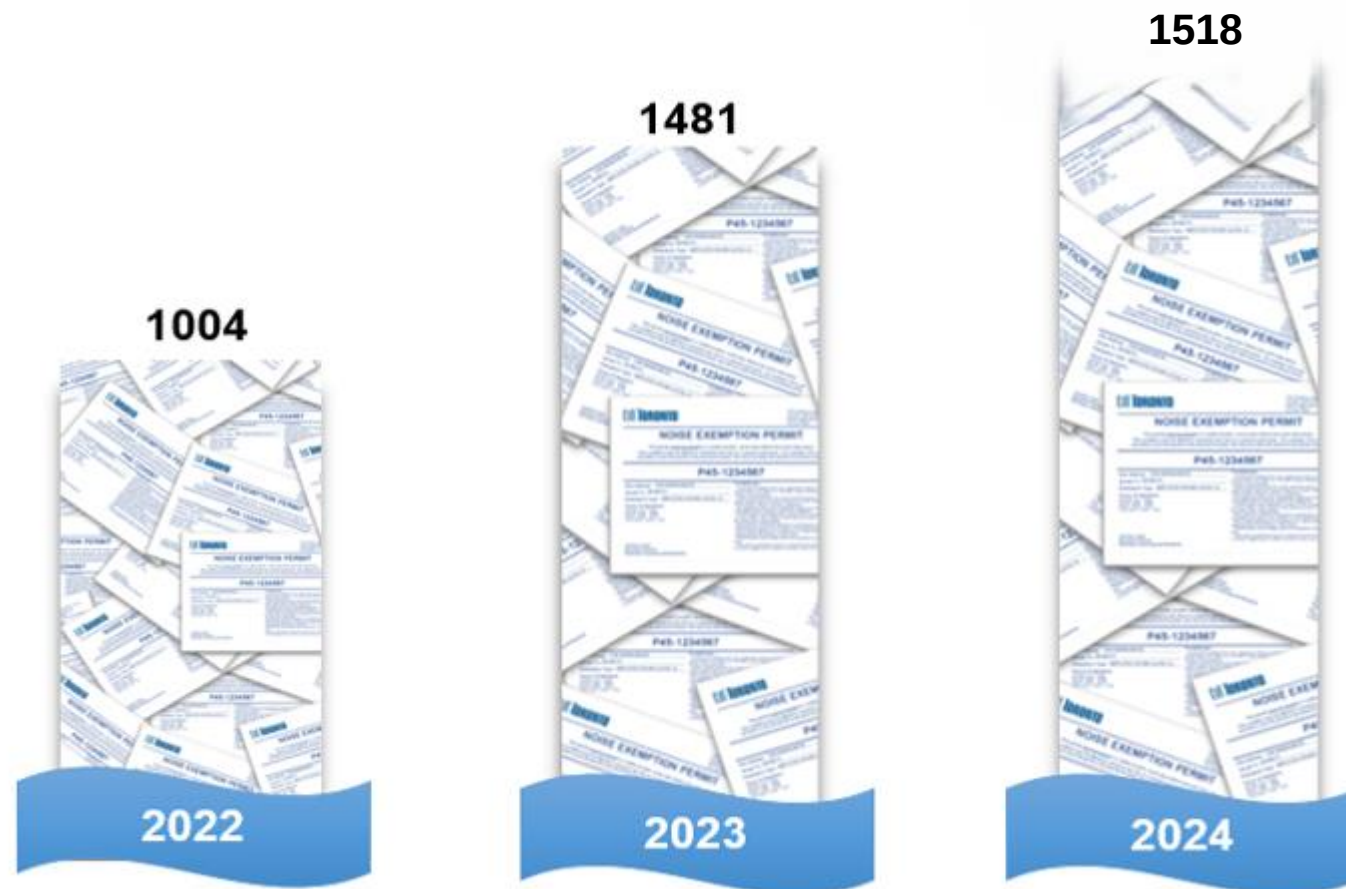


Background

- Noise exemption permits (NEPs) can be requested for events or activities that may temporarily contravene the provisions of the Noise Bylaw which may include special events that feature amplified sound or instruments (concerts)
- In November 2024, the Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) Division presented to the Toronto Music Advisory Committee (TMAC) on noise monitoring and NEPs ([2024.MA5.2](#))
 - **As part of the Item, TMAC requested that MLS:**
 - Work with the Music Office to enhance communication with event organizers requiring noise monitoring and return to TMAC on any refinements to the noise monitoring process.
 - As part of the 2025 budget process, explore reductions in noise monitoring fees.

How many NEPs are processed?

MLS processed **1518 NEPs** in 2024 (representing an approximate **51%** increase from the 1004 applications processed in 2022)



Recent changes made to the NEP process

Changes to the noise exemption permits process were approved by City Council in February 2024 as part of 2024.EC9.5 and came into effect on **September 1, 2024**

Changes made:

- Introduced activity-based permits to differentiate lower and higher impact activities;
- Required additional conditions for higher impact events; and
- Amended existing conditions (for example, setting more reasonable decibel levels for NEPs and allowing online notice of a permit); and application fees to reflect impact

Fees:

- If noise monitoring is required for the event, additional fees will be charged
- Application fees for NEPs will be waived if the applicant is a charity, non-profit organization, or grassroots cultural organization
- All fees related to NEPs will be waived if the applicant is an agency, board, commission, or division of the City of Toronto

NEP Process

- Currently, all applications for Noise Exemption Permits are sent through email to NoiseTO@toronto.ca
- To modernize the application process, a **new online Noise Exemption Permit Application portal** will be launched **within the next week**, to make it easier to submit an application.

Select Noise Exemption Permit

Noise Exemption Permit Application

Select which noise exemption permit you are seeking. For more information on permit types, see the [City of Toronto's Noise Exemption Permits information page](#).

Permit Type

Select One ▾

I am applying as/on behalf of:

☐ An individual

☐ On behalf of a corporation/partnership or organization

[Cancel](#) [Next](#)

- Once you submit your application online, staff will review the application details and may reach out to provide additional supporting documentation. You will be provided with a link and token to upload any required documentation.
- Fees (if applicable) will be processed online through a new payment portal.

NEP Process (continued)

- **Screening criteria** are referenced by staff to determine the appropriate level of NEP (criteria like expected attendance, event equipment, and type of event)
- For an NEP for amplified/instrument sound, the bylaw allows for maximum sound levels (85 dBA or 105 dBC) measured at the property or lot line
- Per the Bylaw, permits are subject to review by the local Councillor and Councillors may:
 - Approve the application as submitted
 - Approve any negotiated modifications with the applicant and/or any additional conditions listed in the bylaw
 - Deny the application

Amplified Sound NEPs

Level 1 (Low Impact)	Level 2 (Medium Impact)	Level 3 (High Impact)
Application Fee: \$110	Application Fee: \$340	Application Fee: \$570
Required documents: (1) Application form; (2) Parks letter of condition if applicable	Required documents: (1) Application form; (2) Parks letter of condition if applicable;	Required documents: (1) Application form; (2) Parks letter of condition if applicable; (3) Site Plan (4) Noise Mitigation Plan
Councillors office has 14 days to approve or deny or the City will automatically approve	Councillors office has 14 days to approve or deny or the City will automatically approve	Councillors office must approve or deny (no deadline)

Current Screening Criteria for Amplified Sound NEPs

Amplified and Instrument Sound Noise Exemption Screening Criteria

Level 3 (High Impact) – total is 8 or more

Level 2 (Medium Impact) – total equals 7

Level 1 (Low Impact) – total is 6 or less

Criteria	Score
Expected attendance for the event (per day)	
Less than 100	1
101 – 500	2
500 – 1999	2
Greater than 2000	4
What type of equipment/amplification will be used?	
Single Amplifier/speakers	1
Multiple Amplifier/speakers	2
Will the event be using subwoofers as part of their equipment?	
Yes	2
No	1
Is this a music focused event/festival or concert?	
Yes	2
No	1

Note: the City may also determine level based on the dates/times of the event, the distance of the event to the nearest residence or lot line, compliance with previous permits and/or related widespread complaints, investigations, charges or convictions

Edits being made to further breakdown attendance numbers and equipment/amplification

Noise Monitoring

As a condition of an NEP, the City or the Councillor's office may request Noise Monitoring:

Self-monitoring

- Permit holder documents decibel levels during the event and sends back to Noise Team within 48 hours of the end of the event

Staffed noise monitoring

- City staff are scheduled to attend the event to monitor sound levels, respond to complaints/inquiries at the event and through 311, and communicate with the permit holder to ensure levels remain in compliance
- Permit holders are invoiced based on the number of staff that are required, hourly (may be standard or overtime hours, depending on the event)
- Charities and not-for-profits are not exempt from these fees

Issues Raised at TMAC Meeting (Nov 2024)

1. Noise monitoring fees and staff scheduling
2. Timeline for determining monitoring plan
3. Noise complaints during an NEP and post-event reports
4. Determining property line/lot line locations prior to event
5. Edits to NEP screening criteria

1. Noise monitoring fee amounts and staff scheduling

Feedback:

- Use of overtime hours for monitoring more costly than standard hours
- City monitoring should be scheduled in a manner that reduces costs to event organizers

Operational changes being made:

Edits to operating procedures to:

- Ensure monitoring fees are only issued for the time staff are on-site, not for prep or debrief
- Coordinate with organizers to set out monitoring for a portion of the event, not the entire duration

Implementing strategies to reduce the amount of overtime paid where possible

Operational plans for monitoring may be combined for events in close proximity (depending on structure, location, and timing of event)

Note: Reduction to noise monitoring fees were not included in the City's 2025 Operating Budget ([2025.MPB27.1](#))

2. Timeline for determining monitoring plan

Operational change being made:

Feedback:

- Establish a timeline for determining monitoring fees - organizers should be informed well ahead of event dates of any financial impacts associated with monitoring.

Staff will confirm monitoring costs and structure **within 7 calendar days** of receiving a complete NEP application

- Timelines may be delayed if there is back-and-forth with Councillor's Office(s) during their review of the NEP
- Operators are encouraged to **submit NEPs as soon as possible** when planning events

3. Noise complaints during an NEP and post-event reports

Feedback:

- Organizers should be informed about any noise complaints received by the City; communication should be done soon after the event

- If monitoring is being conducted by City staff, they are made aware of any complaints submitted to 311 and will raise with event organizer

Operational change being made:

Staff will make best efforts to send a post-event report for Level 3 permits, to include a summary of any noise complaints received during the event

4. Determining property line/lot line locations prior to event

Feedback:

- Property lines / lot lines for sound measurement should be established and agreed upon prior to the commencement of the event

Operational change being made:

Staff will work with applicants (with a focus on Level 3 permits) to determine appropriate locations for measurement prior to the event (site plan may be required, which would also identify location and positioning of sound equipment)

- Per the Bylaw, City staff have the discretion to determine the location for sound measurement
- Flexibility may be required to change the measurement locations on the day of the event if changes are made to the event structure and/or positioning of equipment

5. Edits to NEP screening criteria

Operational changes being made:

Feedback:

- Clarification needed on some of the amplified sound NEP screening criteria

Staff are making changes to the criteria to further break down “expected attendance” and clarify it is specifically the highest expected attendance at any particular time of the event

Staff are consulting with EDC to make changes to the “equipment/amplification” criteria to more appropriately reflect industry standards and equipment best practices

Next Steps

- Staff intend to implement noted operational changes by **June 1, 2025**
- Economic Development and Culture (EDC) Division's Music Office to provide MLS staff with an orientation on Toronto's music and events scene, to promote harmonious, collaborative relations between monitoring staff and event organizers and attendees

Communication to event organizers

- MLS staff will be working with EDC to provide information on NEPs and noise monitoring, including the new online application portal once its launched, to event organizers and live music venues
- Staff are available to answer any questions about the NEP process and/or noise monitoring at NoiseTO@toronto.ca
- Visit www.toronto.ca/noise

Thank you!

