

City's New Unruly Gathering Ordinance to Take Effect May 20, 2010

On April 20, 2010 the San Luis Obispo City Council adopted Ordinance No. 1546 (9010 Series) adding Chapter 9.13 to the San Luis Obispo Municipal Code prohibiting unruly gatherings on private property. The ordinance is designed to reduce or discourage the number of large gatherings or parties in City neighborhoods. The new Unruly Gathering Ordinance provisions take effect on May 20, 2010.

The key elements of the Unruly Gathering Ordinance include:

1. Number of Attendees: Involves 20 people or more; AND
2. The gathering involves unlawful conduct that creates a substantial disturbance in a significant segment of a neighborhood

Unlawful Conduct which results in a substantial disturbance can include such things as excessive noise, public drunkenness, serving alcohol to minors, fighting, urinating in public, crowds overflowing into yards, sidewalks, or streets, or similar unlawful behaviors.

The fines for an Unruly Gathering citation start at \$700.00 for each host of the gathering; there are no warnings and no option for community service. In addition, the Police Dept. will notify the property owner of the unruly gathering violation. The property owner may be fined \$500.00 if they allow additional unruly gathering to occur on their property.

The new Unruly Gathering Ordinance is not intended to replace the City's noise ordinance, which is quite broad and addresses various kinds of noise violations, not just those associated with loud music and parties. Rather, the proposed Unruly Gathering ordinance is intended to address gatherings on private property that have a significant impact on the surrounding neighborhood and tend to use excessive police resources to control. The ordinance allows administrative action against property owners if subsequent violations occur at their property after they have received adequate notice of an unruly gathering violation (by mail from the San Luis Obispo Police Department).

For additional information, please contact Neighborhood Services Manager, Ardith Tregenza at (805) 781-7186.