Chapter 34 - NOISE

Footnotes:
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Cross reference— Motor vehicles and traffic, Ch. 32; nuisances, Ch. 35.

§ 34-1. - Findings of fact.

It is found and declared that:
(1) the making and creation of excessive, unnecessary noise within the City is a condition which has existed for some time and the extent and volume of such noise is increasing;
(2) the making, creation or maintenance of such excessive, unnecessary, unnatural or unusual noise, prolonged in time, place and use, affects and is a detriment to public health, comfort, convenience, safety, welfare and prosperity of the residents of the City; and
(3) a substantial body of scientific and technological knowledge and expertise exists by which noise is recognized as sound which is excessive and thereby unwanted and rejectable, and may be substantially abated; and
(4) the necessity in the public interest for the provisions and prohibitions hereinafter contained and enacted is declared as a matter of legislative determination and public policy in pursuance of and for the purpose of securing and promoting the peace and quiet for the greater assurance of public health, comfort, convenience, safety, welfare and prosperity of the City and its inhabitants.

(Code 1970, § 21-22.1; Code 1980, § 34-1)

§ 34-2. - Definitions.

(a) The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:
(1) Ambient sound pressure level is the all-encompassing noise associated with a given environment, being usually a composite of sounds from many sources, near and far, statistically equivalent to L90; the percentile noise level exceeded 90 percent of the time based on any measurement period of not less than ten minutes or more than 30 minutes.
(2) A-weighted sound level means the sound pressure level in decibels as measured on a sound level meter using the A-weighting network. The level so read is designated as dBA.
(3) Construction means any site preparation, assembly, erection, substantial repair, alteration, or similar action, excluding demolition, for or of public or private rights-of-way, structures, utilities, or similar property.
(4) Continuous sound means any sound, essentially without interruption, which exists for a period of six minutes or more.
(5) Decibel (dB) means a unit for measuring the volume of a sound, equal to 20 times the logarithm to the base 10 of ratio of the pressure of the sound measured to the reference pressure which is 20 micropascals (20 micronewtons per square meter), denoted as dB.
(6) Demolition means any dismantling, intentional destruction or removal of structures, utilities, public or private right-of-way surfaces, or similar property.

(7) Device means any mechanical object or piece intended to produce, or which produces, the resultant effect objectively sought when operated or used.

(8) Emergency means any occurrence or set of circumstances involving actual or imminent physical trauma or property damage which demands immediate action.

(9) Emergency vehicle means vehicles of the Fire, Police, and Highway Patrol Departments and legally authorized ambulances and emergency vehicles of State Departments or any political subdivisions thereof and vehicles of public service corporations.

(10) Emergency work means any work performed for the purpose of preventing or alleviating physical trauma or property damage threatened or caused by an emergency.

(11) Excessive sound means that sound level which elicits complaints usually independent of each other in the estimate of the sound's being acceptable or unacceptable.

(12) Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) means the value specified by the manufacturer as the recommended maximum loaded weight of a single motor vehicle. In cases where trailers and tractors are separable, the gross combination weight rating (GCWR), which is the value specified by the manufacturer as the recommended maximum loaded weight of the combination vehicle, shall be used.

(13) Impulsive sound means sound pulses of short duration, usually less than one second, with an abrupt onset and rapid decay.

(14) \( L_{90} \) percentile level means the time-averaged sound pressure level, A-weighted, that is exceeded in any time measurement period 90 percent of that time.

(15) \( L_{10} \) percentile level means the time-averaged sound pressure level, A-weighted, that is exceeded in any time measurement period ten percent of that time.

(16) \( L_{1} \) percentile level means the time-averaged sound pressure level, A-weighted, that is exceeded in any time measurement period one percent of that time.

(17) Measurement period means that total amount of time used in the measurement of sound levels for a given incident not including time intervals, or their total time, between intervals of actual sound measurement time. Limits are as stated in Subsection (a)(1), not less than ten minutes and not more than 30 minutes.

(18) Motor vehicle means every vehicle self-propelled on land and every vehicle propelled by electric power obtained from overhead trolley wires, but not operated upon rails; provided, however, the definition of motor vehicle shall not include implements of husbandry.

(19) Muffler means a device for abating the sound of escaping gases of any internal combustion engine.

(20) Noise means any sound which annoys or disturbs humans or which causes or tends to cause an adverse psychological or physiological effect on humans.

(21) a. Noise disturbance means any plainly audible sound which:
   1. injures or endangers the safety or health of a human; or
   2. annoys or disturbs a reasonable person of normal sensitivities; or
   3. endangers or injures personal or real property.

   b. Plainly audible means where the listener clearly can hear the content of the sound produced by the noise source. Sounds which may be clearly audible include, but are not limited to, musical rhythms, spoken words, vocal sounds, and engine noises.
(22) Powered model vehicle means any self-propelled airborne, waterborne, or landborne plane, vessel, or vehicle, which is not designed to carry persons, including, but not limited to, any model airplane, boat, car, or rocket.

(23) RMS sound pressure means the square root of the time average square of the sound pressure, denoted PRMS.

(24) Sound means temporal and spatial oscillation in pressure, particle displacement, particle velocity, or other physical parameter, in a medium with internal forces that causes progressively alternate compression and rarefaction of that medium, and which propagates at finite speed to distant points and can evoke an auditory sensation.

(25) Sound level meter means an instrument which includes a microphone, amplifier, RMS detector, integrator or time averager, output meter, and weighting networks used to measure sound pressure levels.

(26) Sound pressure means the instantaneous difference between the actual pressure and the average barometric pressure at a given point in space, as produced by sound energy.

(27) Sound pressure level means 20 times the logarithm to the base 10 of the ratio of the RMS sound pressure to the reference pressure of 20 micropascals \((20 \times 10^{-6})\text{N/m}^2\). The sound pressure level is denoted \(L_p\) or SPL and is expressed in decibels (dB).

(b) All technical terminology used in this chapter which is not defined in this chapter or in Chapter 1 of this Code shall be construed in conformance with the applicable publication of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), or its successor body.

(Code 1980, § 34-2; Ord. No. 19581, § 2, 5-29-91; Ord. No. 24138, § 2, 9-28-10)


§ 34-3. - Prohibited generally.

(a) It shall be unlawful, except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, for any person to make, continue, allow or cause to be made, continued or allowed any excessive noise or noise disturbance. Noise disturbance violations include noise as defined in Section 34-2(a)(21). Excessive noise violations include noise that exceeds or fails to comply with noise permit restrictions, exceeds the sound level standards of Section 34-6 of this chapter or exceeds any other distance or time limitations prescribed in this chapter.

(b) A person who is making noise in compliance with the provisions and limitations of Sections 34-5(1-4), 34-5(6-7), 34-6, 34-7 or 34-7.1 of this chapter shall not be charged with violating paragraph (a) of this section.

(c) A person who is making noise in compliance with the provisions and limitations of Section 34-5(5) of this chapter shall not be charged with violating paragraph (a) of this section unless the noise is plainly audible within any dwelling unit which is not the source of the sound.

(CODE 1970, § 21-24.1; CODE 1980, § 34-3; ORD. NO. 24138, § 2, 9-28-10; ORD. NO. 24941, § 2, 8-12-14)

§ 34-4. - Specific prohibitions.

(a) The following acts, among others and not to exclude other such acts, if they produce a noise disturbance or excessive noise, are declared to be in violation of this chapter, except and unless a noise permit has been issued by the City Manager:
(1) Animals and birds. Owning, maintaining, harboring, or maintaining for hire any animal or
animals, bird or birds, which produce frequent or prolonged noisemaking, whether originating
from public or private facilities, except publicly owned and/or publicly operated zoos. Police
dogs are exempt from this section under the conditions enumerated in Section 8-137.

(2) Structural or roadway construction, demolition, and/or repair. Unless specifically exempted by
Section 34-5 of this chapter or as permitted pursuant to Section 34-7.1, structural or roadway
construction, demolition, and/or repair. Performance of construction, demolition, and/or repair
work at or on any structural or roadway project or undertaking whether by manual or mechanical
means, such as to produce noise beyond the sound pressure levels established as local limits
within the zoning district classifications and times of day as set out by Table I, Section 34-12.

(3) Exhausts. Discharge into the open air of the sound-laden exhaust from, or escape of excessive
sound from working parts of the transmission or conveyance of fluids or solids through piping,
conduit, or by way of other mechanical transport, stationary, portable or mobile engine or
engines or motorized vehicle or vehicles.

(4) Horns, whistles, sirens, firearms, explosives or fireworks. Sounding of horns, whistles, siresn,
firearms or other such alarm or announcement device, whether manual or power-operated, or
the detonation of fireworks or explosives except as required as warning of fire, natural disaster
or other impending or incidental danger, or which may be required as a part of law enforcement,
by emergency, or as excepted by Section 34-5.

(5) Radios, television equipment, electronic audio equipment, musical instruments and similar
devices. Operating or permitting the use or operation of any device designed for sound
production, amplification, or reproduction, including but not limited to any radio, musical
instrument, phonograph, television set, tape recorder, loud speaker, or other similar device:
   a. if plainly audible within any dwelling unit which is not the source of the sound; or
   b. on public property or on a public right-of-way so as to be plainly audible 50 feet or more
      from such device, except as authorized by permit.

(6) Boisterous, belligerent, or clamorous noisemaking. Shouting, carousing, singing or other
prolonged noisemaking.

(7) Watercraft. Operation of any motorized surface boat or underwater vehicle, whether on land,
water impoundment, lake, stream, diversion channel, or astride a conveyance.

(8) Powered models or toys. Operation of powered models or toys.

(b) Airport and aircraft operations. It shall be unlawful to run, test, or otherwise operate aircraft engines
on the ground or operate an airport facility in such a manner as to cause or tend to cause noise
disturbance or excessive noise. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit, restrict,
penalize, or enjoin or in any manner regulate the movements of aircraft which are, in all respects,
conducted in accordance with or pursuant to applicable Federal laws or regulations, or air traffic
control instructions.

(c) Places of public entertainment. Operating, or permitting to be operated, in any place of public
entertainment during any hour of operation when patrons or customers may be expected, any
loudspeaker or sound amplifier which produces, reproduces or amplifies sound, at a point normally
to be occupied by a patron or customer, which produces a noise disturbance, unless a conspicuous,
legible sign, readable by a person with 20/20 vision at a distance within ten feet of it, is posted at or
within five feet of each public entrance and not more than five feet above the level of the ground,
floor, or other entrance threshold, which sign shall state:

"WARNING: SOUND LEVELS WITHIN
MAY CAUSE PERMANENT HEARING
IMPAIRMENT"

This provision shall not be construed to allow the operation of such loudspeaker or sound amplifier in
such manner as to create a noise disturbance beyond the premises or as to violate Paragraph (d) below.
(d) Noise sensitive zone. Creation of a noise disturbance or excessive noise within 500 feet of any school, other such institution of learning, church, hospital, convalescent hospital or mass-care home, hotel or motel, or court of law, so designated by outdoor signage, is prohibited during the facility's hours of operation and noise permits shall not be issued for such areas during the facility's hours of operation. This subsection is intended to protect only the above-listed facilities, and for enforcement the complaining party must be an authorized representative of the facility including, but not limited to, the owner, operator, manager or director. This subsection shall not apply to public event facilities, located on City owned or public trust owned property, or the Bricktown Entertainment Area, as defined in Section 38-610 of this Code.

(e) Property owner as violator. No property owner, lessor or lessee shall knowingly allow any automobile, motorcycle, minibike or other vehicle which creates a noise disturbance or which creates noise that violates Section 34-6 to be driven across his property. Nothing in this section shall be construed as to prohibit the arrest of the operators of said vehicles in accordance with Section 34-9.

§ 34-5. - Exemptions.

The following sources of potentially excessive sound shall be exempt from noise control regulations:

1. safety signals and alarm devices, storm warning sirens or horns and the authorized testing of such equipment, emergency vehicle sirens or horns used when responding to an emergency, and emergency pressure relief valves.

2. noise created for which the permittee has received a noise permit that was issued pursuant to Section 34-7, if such event is being conducted in accord with the provisions of such permit.

3. disaster or other emergency, or, as result of such disaster, demanding the immediate undertaking by operators and/or mechanical devices for disaster operations or disaster relief.

4. organized sporting events.

5. noncommercial public speaking and public assembly activities conducted on any public space or public right-of-way.

6. interstate railway locomotives and trains en route, and not engaged in switching operations within residential land use classifications between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

7. performance of construction, demolition, and/or repair work at or on any structural or roadway project or undertaking whether by manual or mechanical means, in the DBD Downtown Business District.

§ 34-6. - Community sound level standards.

(a) Classification of use districts. Land use zoning district classifications shall be as set out in the zoning ordinance distinguishable as residential, commercial, and agricultural/industrial land use classifications, within which sound levels of Table I of Section 34-12 shall be locally measurable and applied by the use of L90, L10, and L1 percentile levels computed within each time interval of all time intervals used to quantify any measurement period for the evaluation of a given alleged violation from a stationary source of sound or as may be otherwise specifically provided in this Chapter. It shall be unlawful for any person to operate or to permit to be operated any stationary source of
sound which, during any sound level measurement period time interval thereof when measured at
the boundary or at any point within the property affected by such sound:

(1) creates a unit percentile sound level (L1) greater than 15 dB(A), above its ambient sound
pressure level (L90) limit, as indicated within a given time division of land use classifications of
Table I; or

(2) creates a 90th percentile sound level (L90) or a tenth percentile sound level (L10) which
exceeds limits as set out within a given time division of land use classifications of Table I;

(3) sound projected from one use district into another use district of a lesser sound level limit shall
not exceed such lesser sound level measured at the boundary of such use district;

(4) for any stationary source of sound which emits impulsive sound, the limits set forth in Table I
shall be reduced by five dB(A).

(b) Sound level measurement. Sound level measurements shall be undertaken with a sound level meter
of Type 2 or better as specified in American National Standards Institute Publication SI.4-1971 or its
successor publication, using the A-weighted network scale, in conformance with standards thus
promulgated. A field use acoustical calibrator shall be used to verify calibration of the sound level
meter before and after noise measurements are taken any day. All equipment used in sound level
measurement shall be calibrated to standards traceable to the National Bureau of Standards and
shall be recalibrated at least once each year, computed from the date of the previous calibration.

(c) "Stationary source of sound" means a device which creates sound while fixed in position, including
but not limited to residential, commercial, industrial or agricultural machinery, pumps, fans,
compressors, air conditioners and refrigeration equipment.

(Code 1980, § 34-6; Ord. No. 19581, § 4, 5-29-91; Ord. No. 24138, § 2, 9-28-10)

§ 34-7. - Permit.

(a) Application for a permit for relief from noise restrictions designated in this chapter may be made to
the City Manager or his authorized representative. Any such application shall be submitted at least
ten business days before the date for which the permit is requested, and shall set out clearly the
specified location and boundaries where the permit shall apply, the type of noise to be produced as
identified in Section 34-4, the location and source of the noise, identification of the individual or
individuals responsible for ensuring compliance with the permit, identification of any organization
involved in the generation of the noise to be permitted, dates and times for which the permit is
requested, and any other information that is pertinent to determining whether a noise permit may be
allowed in such a limited manner that the noise would not be a detriment to the public health,
comfort, convenience, safety, welfare and prosperity of City residents. If the noise-producing activity
is to be conducted on private property, the applicant shall provide proof of permission from the
property owner to conduct the noise activity for which the permit is sought. If the noise-producing
activity is to be conducted on public property, the applicant may be required to provide or apply for
an activity permit.

(b) A permit may be granted only upon sufficient and reliable showing in said application that such
conditions indicate one or more of the following to be true:

(1) additional time is necessary for the applicant to alter or modify his activity or operation to comply
with this chapter;

(2) the activity, operation, or noise source will be of temporary duration, and cannot be performed in
a manner that would comply with other sections of this chapter; or

(3) no other reasonable alternative is available to the applicant.

(c) A permit may be granted only for an effective time period of three consecutive days or less. A permit
may be renewed if an urgent necessity exists, for three consecutive days or less. No permit shall be
granted beyond the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. in a residential zoning district or a Planned Unit Development or Simplified Planned Unit Development containing use and development regulations of the residential districts described in § 59-6100.1 of the Oklahoma City Municipal Code, or 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight in a nonresidential zone. No more than three noise permits shall be issued for the same location within a residential district as described in § 59-6100.1 of the Oklahoma City Municipal Code, or within any Planned Unit Development or Simplified Planned Unit Development containing use and development regulations of the residential districts described in said section during any calendar year, except in cases of urgent necessity.

(d) A noise permit shall identify the specific location or boundaries where the permit shall apply, the type of noise as identified in Section 34-4 of this chapter, and the location and source of the noise permitted, the individual or individuals responsible for ensuring compliance with the permit, any organization involved in the generation of the noise to be permitted, dates and times for which the permit is valid, and any other restriction that is pertinent to restrict the noise so as not to be a detriment to the health, comfort, convenience, safety, welfare and prosperity of City residents. A permit shall expressly designate a distance, not to exceed 2,500 feet, beyond which the permittee shall not be permitted to create a noise disturbance or excessive noise.

(e) The City Manager or designee may deny a noise permit when it appears that issuing the noise permit would unreasonably and unnecessarily be a detriment to the public health, comfort, convenience, safety, welfare and prosperity of the public. In determining the propriety of the permit request, the City Manager or designee may consider factors including, but not limited to, the following:

1. the zoning of the involved areas;
2. population density;
3. the natural acoustics of the area involved;
4. whether the permit would impact a Noise Sensitive Zone;
5. impact upon traffic, parking and pedestrian rights-of-way;
6. support or objection by adjacent property owners and occupants;
7. prior noise complaints involving the same applicant or location;
8. past compliance or lack of compliance with noise permits;
9. past convictions by the applicant for similar activities in any area of the City;
10. insufficient or incomplete permit application;
11. insufficient time to process the application;
12. false or misleading information on the application.

(f) A denial of a permit application shall be issued in writing and shall specify the reason or reasons for denial.

(g) When a citation for violation of the terms of a noise permit is issued, such permit shall be deemed automatically revoked.

(h) The permittee shall maintain a legible copy of the permit at the location and during the period of time for which the permit has been issued. Failure to maintain the permit is a violation.

(Code 1970, § 21-24.5; Code 1980, § 34-7; Ord. No. 24138, § 2, 9-28-10; Ord. No. 24838, § 2, 3-4-14)

§ 34-7.1. - Construction/demolition noise permit.
A person planning to conduct construction or demolition activities may apply to the Director of the Department of Development Services for a permit for relief from noise restrictions in this chapter, unless exempted by Section 34-5. The Director or the Director's designee may require such information from the applicant as deemed necessary to make a determination for reasonable limitations upon the noise, giving due consideration to both the activities necessary to accomplish the construction/demolition and the health, safety and welfare of the citizens. Any limitations and noise mitigation requirements shall be included in the construction/demolition noise permit. The Director or designee may revoke the permit due to violation of the terms of the permit and a citation may be issued pursuant to Section 34-10.

(Ord. No. 24138, § 3, 9-28-10)

§ 34-8. - Duties and responsibilities of municipal departments.

(a) All departments and agencies of the City shall, to the fullest extent consistent with other ordinances, carry out their programs in such a manner as to further the policy of this chapter and in cooperation with the enforcement of it.

(b) All departments whose duty it is to review and approve new projects or changes to existing projects, that result, or may result, in the production of excessive sound levels shall consult with the agent of enforcement prior to such approval.

(c) Any written contract, agreement, purchase order, or other instrument whereby the City is committed to the expenditure of $750.00 or more in return for goods or services shall contain provisions requiring compliance with this chapter.

(d) Any product which has been certified by the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to Section 15 of the Noise Control Act of 1972, including amendments subsequent thereto, as a low noise emission product and which he determines is suitable for use as a substitute, shall, by the City, be procured and used in preference to any other product, provided that such certified product is reasonably available and has a procurement cost which is not more than 125 percent of the least expensive type of product for which it is certified as a substitute.

(e) All departments responsible for a capital improvements budget and program shall prepare an analysis of the noise impact of any proposed improvements in accordance with noise assessment guidelines established by the agent of enforcement. Proposed capital improvements include land acquisition, building construction, highway improvements, and utilities and fixed equipment installation.

(Code 1970, § 21-25.1; Code 1980, § 34-8)

§ 34-9. - Violation procedures.

(a) The procedures for enforcing the provisions of this chapter pertaining to stationary sources of sound are as follows:

(1) in lieu of filing a complaint with the Municipal Court, the enforcement officer responsible for enforcement of any provision of this chapter may issue an order requiring abatement of any source of sound alleged to be in violation of this chapter within a reasonable time period. A reasonable time is such length of time as may fairly, properly, and reasonably be allowed or required having regard to the nature of the noise level and the attending circumstances.

(2) an abatement order shall not be issued when the enforcement officer has reason to believe that there will not be compliance with the abatement order.

(3) an abatement order is only applicable to noise violations from a stationary source of sound and is not applicable to any other violation of this chapter.
(b) In order to implement and enforce this chapter and for the general purpose of noise abatement and control, the enforcement officer or his representative shall have, in addition to any other authority vested in him, the power to:

1. upon presentation of proper credentials, enter and inspect any private property or place and inspect any report or records at any reasonable time when granted permission by the owner, or by some other person with apparent authority to act for the owner. When permission is refused or cannot be obtained, a search warrant may be obtained from a court of competent jurisdiction upon showing of probable cause to believe that a violation of this chapter may exist. Such inspection may include administration of any necessary tests.

2. stop any motor vehicle, motorcycle, or motorboat reasonably suspected of violating any provision of this chapter, and issue a notice of violation or abatement order which may require the motor vehicle, motorcycle, or motorboat to be inspected or tested as the enforcement officer may reasonably require.

(Code 1980, § 34-9; Ord. No. 19581, § 5, 5-29-91; Ord. No. 24138, § 4, 9-28-10)

Cross reference—Inspections generally, § 2-66 et seq.

§ 34-10. - Penalty.

(a) Any person who violates any provision of this chapter shall be guilty of a Class "a" offense against the City. Any person guilty of a second or subsequent offense of violating any provision of this chapter shall be guilty of a Class "b" offense.

(b) Each day of violation of any provision of this chapter shall constitute a single offense if the disturbance is continuous. If the disturbance is not continuous, each violation of any provision of this chapter shall constitute a separate offense, although committed on the same day.


§ 34-11. - Injunctive relief.

As an additional remedy, any activity, conduct, or the operation or maintenance of any device, instrument, vehicle or machinery which is continuing in nature and in violation of any provision hereof, and which causes discomfort or annoyance, or which endangers the comfort, repose, health or peace of residents in the area, or which exceeds the community noise standards as set forth in Section 34-6, or which produces a noise disturbance, shall be deemed, and is declared to be, a public nuisance and may be subject to abatement summarily by a restraining order or injunction issued by a court of competent jurisdiction. Further, an injunction or restraining order may be issued pursuant to the statutes of the State of Oklahoma.

(Code 1970, § 21-26.4; Code 1980, § 34-11; Ord. No. 19456, § 4, 8-7-90; Ord. No. 19581, § 6, 5-29-91)

§ 34-12. - Table of sound level limits.

The following table shall apply to the provisions of this chapter:

| TABLE I: LIMITING SOUND LEVELS FOR LAND USE DISTRICTS |
| Zoning district classifications | time | L<sub>90</sub> | L<sub>10</sub>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R-A, RA-2, R-1, HP, R-1ZL, R-2, R-3, R-3M, R-4, R-4M, R-MH-1, R-MH-2, NC*, C-CBD*, PUD*, SPUD*, CUP*, BC*, NB*, DBD*, DTD-1*, DTD-2* (residential)</td>
<td>7:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.</td>
<td>55 dBA</td>
<td>65 dBA</td>
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<td>10:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>10:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m.</td>
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*The Director shall make a determination on CUP, PUD, SPUD, NC, C-CBD, BC, NB, DBD, DTD-1 and DTD-2 zoning districts as to their classification.

(Code 1980, § 34-12; Ord. No. 19581, § 7, 5-29-91; Ord. No. 24036, § 1, 3-23-10)