

2025 -- S 1148

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- NOISE LIMITS FOR MOTOR  
VEHICLES

Introduced By: Senator Valarie J. Lawson

Date Introduced: June 11, 2025

Referred To: Senate Housing & Municipal Government

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Section 31-45-5 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-45 entitled "Noise Limits  
2 for Motor Vehicles" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3           **31-45-5. Motor vehicle radios, stereos and audio systems.**

4           (a) It shall be unlawful for any motor vehicle with a radio, stereo or audio system to produce  
5 sound which exceeds those limits specified in this chapter. Police cars, ambulances and fire engines  
6 shall not be subject to this section. Local cities and towns may, at their discretion, issue temporary  
7 exemption by special permit upon a showing of good cause. Violations of this section are subject  
8 to fines enumerated in § 31-41.1-4.

9           (b) Any municipality may, by ordinance, authorize a law enforcement officer, at the time  
10 of issuing a citation for a violation of this section or a local ordinance prohibiting excessive noise,  
11 to impound any radio, electric sound amplification device or other sound-producing device used in  
12 the commission of the violation if the person charged with such violation is the owner of the radio,  
13 electric sound amplification device or other sound-producing device.

14           (c) The ordinance shall provide for a post-impoundment hearing which shall be initiated  
15 by a municipality attorney and held between the time of impoundment and not more than fourteen  
16 (14) days afterwards, at which any defense may be asserted, during which time the sound-producing  
17 device shall remain in the custody of the applicable law enforcement agency. The ordinance may  
18 provide for impoundment of a vehicle for not more than five (5) working days pending disposition

1 of the violation hearing to permit the municipality or its authorized agent to remove the radio,  
2 electric sound amplification device or other sound-producing device if the vehicle is owned by the  
3 person charged with the violation and the sound-producing device may not be easily removed from  
4 the vehicle at the site of the alleged violation. Upon removal of the sound-producing device, an  
5 impounded vehicle shall be returned to its rightful owner.

6 (d) The ordinance promulgated pursuant to the provisions of subsection (b) of this section  
7 may provide for recovery by the municipality of the cost of impounding the sound-producing  
8 device and, if a vehicle is impounded, the cost of impounding the vehicle and removing the sound-  
9 producing device. The ordinance promulgated pursuant to the provisions subsection (b) of this  
10 section shall provide that, upon final disposition of the citation for the violation of this section or a  
11 local ordinance prohibiting excessive noise, and payment of any fines and cost imposed, the sound-  
12 producing device shall be returned to its rightful owner.

13 (e) The municipality may dispose of any impounded sound-producing device or, following  
14 the procedure for an abandoned vehicle under §§ 31-22-14, 31-22-15, 31-22-17 and 31-22-18, any  
15 impounded vehicle which has remained unclaimed for a period of ninety (90) days after final  
16 disposition of the violation hearing.

17 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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- 1           This act would authorize municipalities to enforce noise violations and provide for the
- 2   impoundment of radio or other sound-producing equipment until resolution of the noise violation
- 3   hearing.
- 4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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