

Unsanctioned Street Gatherings and Large Parties

Overview of the Community Response

Over the past several years, university communities across North America have seen an increase in unsanctioned street gatherings that have drawn crowds in the thousands. This poses a concern for the safety not only of the students who attend them, but for the neighbouring residents and for the community. For the past several years, in London, the unsanctioned gathering on Broughdale, known to students as FOCO, has been a growing concern.

Last year, a task force was formed to develop a collaborative response to the unsanctioned street gathering that is typically planned for Broughdale. Today, this group includes leadership from the City of London, London Police Service, London Fire Department, London Paramedic Services, The Middlesex-London Health Unit, Western University, Western University Students' Council and Fanshawe College. Together, these organizations have worked on a collaborative approach, focused on efforts to curb the activity, coordinate communication and convey consequences.

This year, with the risk of COVID-19 and extensive focus not only in London but globally on stopping the spread of this virus, efforts of the task force have shifted, with a goal of conveying the critical importance of following all Provincial orders and health precautions to prevent an outbreak in our community.

With restrictions on the size of outdoor gatherings, there is a high likelihood that activities will shift from one large street gathering to several indoor/individual household parties. Working together, organizations that are part of the task force are taking the following actions:

- Launched Project Learn (Liquor Enforcement and Reduction of Noise), an initiative to address community concerns at this time of year. Led by the LPS Community Oriented Response (COR) unit, this will run until September 25. As part of this program, members of the LPS auxiliary section will be in the areas around Western University and Fanshawe College to provide education and information about bylaws and crime-prevention tips related to personal and property safety.
- Ensuring consistent messaging about the importance of every member of our community sharing in the responsibility to stop the spread of COVID-19 by following all health and safety precautions, and by adhering to Provincial Orders
- Providing clarity about the limit on gatherings so that everyone understands that 50 people indoors and 100 people outdoors also requires not less than 2 metres of physical distance, and masks if you are in close contact with people who are not in your social circle
- Reminding students about the importance of limiting their social circles/bubbles to the no more than 10 people recommended by the Province.
- Taking an education first approach with all interactions, but also being ready to use additional options (such as fines and charges) as necessary.
- Proactively meeting with individuals and organizations (such as the Delta Upsilon Fraternity) to address concerns directly.

While all organizations involved on the task force hope that students are responsible and follow all health precautions with respect to the current pandemic, if there is a large unsanctioned gathering, multiple community agencies are prepared to respond collaboratively, as public safety is the top priority.

Reporting Concerns: The following chart provides information about how to report a concern.

Occupant Noise Complaints	London Police Service (519-661-5670)
Occupant Noise Complaints (as of September 25, Friday and Saturday evenings between 7:00 p.m. and 3:00 a.m.)	City of London By-Law (519-930-3517)
COVID-19 related complaints (during business hours)	Covidorderconcerns@london.ca or 519-661-4660
COVID-19 related complaints (after business hours)	covidorderconcerns@london.ca

(* Occupant noise complaints include parties and loud music, for example. For information about how to report all sound and noise complaints, visit <http://www.london.ca/city-hall/by-laws/Pages/Noise-By-law.aspx>)

If you have any questions about the work being done by the task force, please feel free to contact Patti McKague, Director, Strategic Communications (pmckague@london.ca / 519-661-2489 ext. 4783).