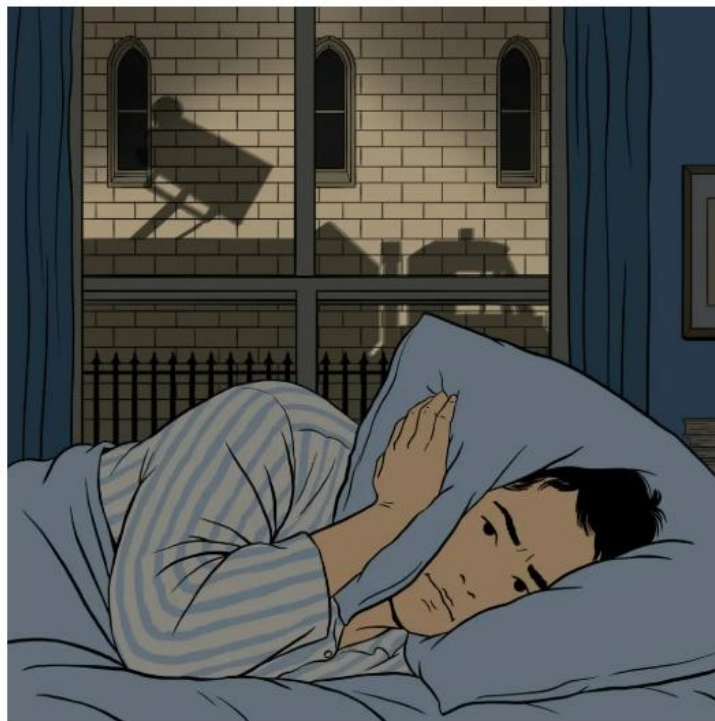


The New York Times

ASK REAL ESTATE

The Garbage Trucks Outside Are Too Loud! What Can I Do?

Trash collection vehicles could be louder than what the city code allows. To prove it, these are the options.



Nadia Pillon



By **Jill Terreri Ramos**

Aug. 8, 2026

Q: I live on the Upper West Side, across the street from a church that uses a private carter to haul garbage away. The trucks arrive between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. and make

loud clanging, banging and churning noises punctuated by beeping. I'm tired and frustrated! I have tried to nicely notify the church, and also asked the city for help. I don't want to be a community organizer or lead some campaign — I just want a good night's sleep. What can I do?

A: Private carters, or commercial waste haulers, do collect trash overnight across the city. But the city's [noise code](#) places limits on how loud garbage trucks operating within 50 feet of residential properties can be: In general, the sound cannot exceed 80 A-weighted decibels between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. when measured from at least 35 feet away.

The trucks keeping you up at night could be louder than that. The problem is how to prove it.

You can file a noise complaint with 311, but getting an inspector to come out to hear the noise at the right time could be difficult.

To establish whether the trucks are in violation of the code, you can hire a private company to measure the noise, or purchase your own sound meter and keep a log of the disturbances. Then you can take the report to the church to encourage it to fix the problem. If that doesn't work, share the information with your City Council member and the Department of Environmental Protection. Urge your council member to send the report to the department with a request to begin an investigation, said [Maria I. Beltrani](#), a partner at Schwartz Sladkus Reich Greenberg Atlas L.L.P.

Your desire to avoid leading a community effort is understandable, but your complaints will go much further if you are able to get your neighbors to sign on.

The alternative is to install thicker interior windows, a sound-masking machine, or both, said Alan Fierstein, owner of Acoustilog, which provides professional acoustic measurement and testing.

The city is [rolling out new regulations for commercial waste collection](#) in an effort to make private sanitation operations more efficient and reduce environmental impact. The system will be implemented on the west side Manhattan next spring. Fewer private sanitation trucks on the road are expected as a result. And because of the overhaul, the church might be required to choose a different company with, possibly, quieter trucks.