

Sound Masking Coordination

Ensuring seamless integration with mechanical and lighting systems.

Customer resource • factual guide • Vancouver / BC commercial project context

Key takeaway: Sound masking performance depends on coordination. Speaker placement, zoning, HVAC noise, ceiling geometry, lighting, sprinklers, controls, paging, and access can all affect the final result.

Coordinate with the reflected ceiling plan

Masking layout	Place speakers or emitters to achieve uniform coverage without clustering around lighting, diffusers, beams, or ceiling features.
Ceiling type	Direct-field systems often suit exposed or specialty ceilings. Indirect/plenum systems depend on ceiling tile, plenum height, deck shape, and obstructions.
Access	Controllers, cabling, power supplies, amplifiers, and network devices need safe access for commissioning and future service.

Mechanical coordination

HVAC noise floor	Masking should be tuned around real background conditions. Loud HVAC cannot be “fixed” by masking; very quiet HVAC may require more careful masking calibration.
Diffusers and returns	Avoid placing devices where air turbulence, grilles, or return paths create uneven sound fields or maintenance conflicts.
Zoning	Different ceiling heights, room uses, partitions, and HVAC zones may need separate masking zones or output channels.

Lighting, electrical, and controls

Power and network	Confirm controller locations, power circuits, low-voltage pathways, firestopping, and network requirements early.
Paging / background music	Some systems can integrate paging or background music. Confirm priorities, routing, source levels, and who owns the audio head-end.
Controls	Avoid giving untrained users broad control over masking levels. Use owner-approved access, schedules, and locked settings where appropriate.

Life safety and code coordination

Do not obstruct life-safety systems	Coordinate with sprinklers, smoke detection, fire alarm notification, emergency voice communication, exit signage, and access panels.
Confirm approval path	Where masking integrates with paging, building audio, or life-safety systems, confirm requirements with the design team and authority having jurisdiction.
Document exceptions	Record any coverage limitations caused by ceiling features, inaccessible areas, tenant phasing, or landlord restrictions.

Use note: This guide is intended for customer education and early coordination. It is not a code ruling, engineered specification, or substitute for field measurements where a numeric performance target is required.