

Chapter 3
ALARM SYSTEMS

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Chapter 3 ALARM SYSTEMS

Sec. 3.1. Definitions.

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:

Alarm device

Any device, instrument, alarm, siren, light, signal, appliance, equipment or like facility or item, whether self-contained and powered or otherwise, which transmits, communicates or emits, directly or indirectly, or which communicates by telephone, wire, radio or other media, any signal, light, sound, notice or warning of fire, flood, burglary, theft, robbery, criminal activity or emergency to the general public, any public department or official or to the city. Alarm devices shall include, but not be limited to, burglar alarms, fire alarms, smoke or heat detection devices, automatic protection devices, water detection alarms, flood detection alarms, theft alarms, police alarm devices, hold-up alarms, dial alarms, intrusion alarms, intrusion devices and similar items.

Alarm system

One (1) or more alarm devices connected or interacting with each other.

Licensed alarm system service

Any person who has obtained a license from the city upon meeting certain standards and paying the required fee to operate a service whereby trained personnel and employees have the duty to immediately respond to signals from alarm devices or alarm systems, to relay immediately by live voice communications any such emergency signal or message to the appropriate department of the city and to the customer or to an agent designated by the customer who pays for such service and responds to such emergency by providing detective, private police or emergency service in accordance with any contract with its customer.

Licensed answering service

A telephone answering service which has obtained a license from the city upon meeting certain standards and paying the required fee to operate a telephone answering service which includes a service whereby trained employees in attendance at all times receive prerecorded messages or signals from alarm devices or alarm systems, reporting an emergency at a stated location and who have the duty to relay immediately by live voice communication any such emergency message to the appropriate department of the city and to the customer or an agent designated by the customer who pays for such service.

Sec. 3.2. Penalty.

Violations of this chapter are punishable as provided in Section 1-8.

Sec. 3.3. Findings.

The city commission finds:

1. New and inexpensive alarm devices and alarm systems have been developed by modern technology which transmit and communicate, by telephone, radio, wire or other media, messages or warnings, or which either automatically or by persons activating them, emit various sounds, lights, signals and warnings of fire, flood, robbery, burglary, theft, criminal activity or emergency, to the general public, to public officials or to the city.
2. That the use of such alarm devices and alarm systems is subject to abuse because of the creation of:
 - (1) Noise, light, and disturbance of excessive duration and intensity;
 - (2) False alarms which unduly burden the public, police, utility, communication and other facilities.
3. That the diversion of personnel and equipment in response to unnecessary false alarms creates a nuisance and endangers the community.
4. That the burdens placed on public facilities and communication media by uncontrolled alarm devices and alarm systems interfere with orderly government functions, and deter manpower and personnel from the performance of public duties to detriment and expense of the citizens of the city.
5. That it is necessary in the public interest by the exercise of its police power for the city to regulate alarm devices and alarm systems and in some instances to impose reasonable license fees for the additional administrative costs to the public occasioned by such regulation.

Sec. 3.4. Exceptions.

1. This chapter shall not apply to any private alarm device or alarm system which does not connect to any public telephone line or public communication system and which cannot be heard or seen by the general public outside of the private premises within which the same may be situated.
2. This chapter does not apply to, and is subject to, any existing state or federal statute, rule regulation pertaining to alarms, alarm devices or alarm systems situated in or upon state or federal buildings, property or vehicles.
3. Nothing herein contained shall be construed to prevent the reporting of an emergency in person, by telephone or by live voice communication through ordinary city department reporting channels for handling and priority according to the procedures of the applicable department.
4. Any bank or financial institution which is required by the Bank Protection Act of 1968 to have an appropriate device for notifying the police department that a burglary or robbery has occurred may arrange to have a signaling device installed in the police department upon application made to the chief of police upon forms provided by him if the chief of police of the city determines that:
 - (1) The termination of such signal or telephone line will constitute no hindrance to regular city activities;

- (2) The financial institution seeking the signal or termination line agrees that no message will be signaled thereon unless an agent of the financial institution is available at all times to provide access to the premises;
- (3) The financial institution seeking the termination line or signal maintains adequate equipment and work force to repair, maintain or otherwise service the applicable alarm system;
- (4) The chief of police of the city or his agents shall have the right, at all reasonable times and upon oral notice, to inspect any signaling device. Should the chief of police find that such signaling device repeatedly fails to operate and provides false alarms then he may, by written notice to the particular financial institution, terminate its privilege to have equipment and indicators in the communication center of the police department and require a prompt removal thereof at the expense of the financial institution.

Sec. 3-5. Prohibitions and Restrictions.

1. Except as otherwise provided in this chapter no person shall use or cause to be used any alarm device or alarm system:
 - (1) Which does not meet the applicable standards of the Underwriters' Laboratories;
 - (2) Which if installed in a building or structure in the city does not conform to all applicable city and state standards; or
 - (3) Which transmits or emits any sound, signal, warning, light or noise which is the same or substantially the same as any signal, sound, light or siren presently adopted or in use by any department of the city or by any police, fire, ambulance, emergency or civil defense vehicle.
2. No person, except a public utility engaged in the business of providing communications services and facilities, shall use or operate, attempt to use or operate, or cause to be used or operated, any alarm device or alarm system that will upon activation initiate any intrastate call and deliver a recorded message, alarm or notice, to any department of the city, unless the prior written approval of the head of the appropriate city department has been obtained.
3. No person shall place any monitoring panels and announcing or receiving equipment in any department or building of this city unless written approval of the head of the appropriate city department has been obtained.
4. The city manager, in coordination with the department head concerned, may approve an application in writing for the location of a private secondary telephone line or termination of an alarm device or system in a building or department of the city provided that any such applicant shall show, and the city manager shall find:
 - (1) Such line or terminations necessary to the proper handling of emergency calls to the applicable city department;

- (2) Such line or termination shall constitute no hindrance or undue burden to regular city activities;
 - (3) The applicant is qualified and meets the standards established by this chapter;
 - (4) The applicant shall, if required, have obtained the license and paid the fee required by this chapter;
 - (5) The applicant agrees that no warning or alarm will be sent to any department of the city unless an agent of the applicant is available at all times who has access to the premises;
 - (6) The applicant provides reasonable and adequate procedures, to be approved by the head of the applicable department, to test and prevent false alarms.
5. Any written application submitted under the foregoing subsection shall contain detailed and specific information identifying:
- (1) The applicant;
 - (2) The applicant's address and occupation;
 - (3) The location of the alarm device and system and the premises to be protected;
 - (4) The type and nature of the alarm device or system to be used; and
 - (5) Provisions relating to false alarm and testing procedures.

Sec. 3.6. License.

Any person engaged in the telephone answering service business or in the business of selling, furnishing, leasing or servicing alarm devices or alarm systems, or who provides services incident thereto and who intends to or shall relay messages, reports, notices, alarms or signals from alarm devices or systems to the city shall submit a Business License application in writing to the Business License Officer together with a license fee as provided in Chapter 16, Fee Schedule, Sec. 16-282. The Business License Officer shall, in coordination with the head of the applicable department, issue a license for the permit provided the applicant provides the information required under Section 3-5:

1. Agrees to maintain a sufficient number of operators on duty at all times to assure that all messages received from alarm devices or alarm systems are relayed immediately by live voice communication to the appropriate city department concerned through appropriate communication channels according to procedures established by the head of the appropriate department of the city.
2. Agrees to treat all messages, signals, alarms or notices from alarm devices or alarm signals with the highest priority and give immediate preference to any such alarms.
3. Shall post instructions to, and properly train, all personnel in the manner of handling alarms and emergency messages pursuant to reasonable standards adopted by the

head of the applicable department of the city.

4. Shall keep and maintain its premises securely locked in a manner approved by the chief of police of the city to insure that unauthorized persons will not have access to the premises or the records or facilities therein.
5. Agrees not to disclose to unauthorized persons information which would adversely affect the security of the city.
6. Shall, where applicable, maintain adequate equipment and work force to repair, maintain or otherwise service applicable alarm devices, alarm systems or answering services which are under its control or supervision.
7. Shall establish reasonable procedures relating to false alarms and testing as required by the head of the applicable city department.
8. Agrees to keep and maintain reasonable statistical data and records which might be required by the appropriate department head such as records or alarms received, date, time, and place thereof, by whom made, alarm device and location, customer names, etc.

(Ord. 2011-402, eff. 2011-Oct-19)

Sec. 3-7. Specifications, Standards.

Any alarm device or alarm system shall:

1. Where applicable, meet the code requirements specified herein.
2. Have a sensory mechanism of such standard and subject to adjustment so as to suppress false indications of alarm, fire, water, light or intrusion.
3. Be designed and constructed so as not to be actuated by impulses due to transient pressure changes in water pipes, short flashes of light, wind noises such as rattling or vibrating doors or windows, vehicular noise adjacent to the installation, or by other forces unrelated to genuine emergency or alarm.
4. Be maintained by the owner, lessee or user in good repair to assure reliability of operation.
5. Be subject to inspection upon reasonable occasions by the head of the applicable city department or his representative to assure compliance with this chapter.
6. Be subject to abatement and removal as a public nuisance should it be shown to continuously fail to operate properly or to provide an unreasonable number of false alarms.

Sec. 3-8. Malfunctioning Device Prohibited.

It is declared to be unlawful and a nuisance to have, possess, keep or maintain any alarm device or alarm system which continuously fails to operate properly or which provides,

transmits or emits an unreasonable number of false alarms.

Sec. 3-9. Termination of Facilities at Police Department.

There shall be no alarm device or alarm system allowed within the police communication facilities unless such device shall meet the following requirements:

1. Such device shall meet all specifications of this Chapter.
2. The person providing the terminal shall have made application as provided in section 3-6.
3. The terminal shall be approved by the chief of police for compatibility with existing facilities, for safety and for usability by police dispatch and patrol personnel.
4. The device shall be removed within thirty (30) days upon the determination by the chief of police that it does not comply with any provision of this chapter.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent installation of facilities by government law enforcement agencies or to financial institutions required by the Bank Protection Act of 1968 (as amended) to have alarm devices or systems.

(Ord. 2011-402, eff. 2011-Oct-19)