

Chapter 7

ALARM SYSTEMS

§ 7-1. Purpose; scope.

- A. The purpose of this chapter is to encourage alarm users and alarm companies to properly use and maintain the operational effectiveness of alarm systems and to reduce or eliminate false alarms and water intrusion events which may unduly divert law enforcement, fire and/or medical emergency services from responding to criminal activities or other emergencies. False alarms and Water Intrusion Events are subject to different enforcement structures reflecting the distinct nature of each condition and the ongoing obligations of property owners with respect to building infrastructure.
- B. This chapter governs alarm systems intended to summon law enforcement, fire and/or medical emergency response, provides for penalties for violations, establishes a system of administration; and incorporates the authority provided under General Business Law § 69-vvv with respect to alarm company liability.

§ 7-2. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated below:

ALARM ADMINISTRATOR — The Town Supervisor, or such other town officer or employee as the Town Supervisor may designate in writing, who shall be responsible for administering, controlling, and reviewing false alarm and water intrusion event reduction efforts under this chapter.

ALARM COMPANY — A business, operated by an individual, partnership, corporation or other entity, which sells, leases, maintains, services, repairs, alters, replaces, moves, installs or monitors an alarm system in an alarm site.

ALARM DISPATCH REQUEST — A notification to a law enforcement agency or fire department or medical emergency service that an alarm system signal, either manual or automatic, has been activated at a particular alarm site.

ALARM SITE — A single fixed premises or location served by an alarm system or systems, or one that may be the subject of a Water Intrusion Event.

ALARM SYSTEM — A device or series of devices, including but not limited to alarm systems interconnected with a radio frequency method such as cellular or private radio signals, which emit or transmit a remote or local audible, visual or electronic signal indicating an alarm condition and intended to summon, or whose activation results in the summoning of, the law enforcement and/or fire protection and/or medical emergency service of the municipality, whether directly, through a monitoring company, or through a third party. “Alarm system” shall not include an alarm installed on a vehicle or person unless the vehicle or personal alarm is permanently located at an alarm site.

ALARM USER — Any person, firm, partnership, corporation or other entity who or which uses or is in control of any alarm system at its alarm site.

AUTHORIZED FIRE OFFICIAL — The fire chief, deputy fire chief, assistant fire chief, or the individual formally designated as incident commander for a specific emergency response. ‘Incident commander’ means the person formally designated as in charge of a specific response pursuant to the Incident

Command System, not merely the first member of the fire department to arrive at the scene. The authority of an Authorized Fire Official under this chapter is limited to the circumstances expressly specified herein. Any member of the fire department, regardless of rank or officer status, may complete and deliver a Notice of Alarm Incident pursuant to § 7-9 of this chapter without being designated as an Authorized Fire Official.

AUTOMATIC VOICE DIALER — Any electrical, electronic, mechanical or other device capable of being programmed to send a prerecorded voice message, when activated, over a telephone line, radio or other communication system to a law enforcement agency or fire department.

CANCELLATION — The process by which an alarm company providing monitoring verifies with Woodstock Emergency Dispatch and the alarm user or responsible party that a false dispatch has occurred and that there is not an existing situation at the alarm site requiring law enforcement response. Cancellation of an alarm dispatch request does not affect the dispatch of fire department or medical emergency personnel to an alarm site.

CONVERSION — The transaction or process by which one alarm company begins monitoring of a previously unmonitored alarm system or an alarm system previously monitored by another alarm company.

DURESS ALARM — A silent alarm system signal generated by the manual activation of a device intended to signal a life-threatening situation or a crime in progress requiring law enforcement, fire department and/ or medical emergency response.

FALSE ALARM — An alarm dispatch request to a law enforcement agency when the responding officer finds no evidence of a criminal offense or attempted criminal offense or a danger or damage to the alarm site due to wind or animals or fallen trees or prolonged power outages after having completed a timely investigation of the alarm site. “False alarm” shall also mean an alarm dispatch request to a fire department when the responding fire department finds no evidence of a fire or a danger to the alarm site due to acts of nature or prolonged power outages that would warrant such alarm dispatch request, other than a water intrusion event as defined in this chapter. “False alarm” shall also include any alarm dispatch request attributable to improper installation or siting of an alarm system by the alarm user, chronic user error in the operation of an alarm system, or any recurring or preventable condition at the alarm site that the alarm user knew or should have known would trigger an alarm dispatch request. Knowledge shall be presumed if the alarm user has previously received a Notice of Alarm Incident pursuant to § 7-9 of this chapter. Where the Alarm Administrator determines that an alarm dispatch request was caused by improper installation by the alarm company, defective equipment supplied or leased by the alarm company, alarm company or central station error, or an alarm system deficiency for which the alarm company is responsible, such activation shall be addressed exclusively under § 7-10C of this chapter and shall not be counted against the alarm user under § 7-10A.

HOLDUP ALARM — A silent alarm system signal generated by the manual activation of a device intended to signal a robbery in progress.

KEYPAD — A device that allows control of an alarm system by the manual entering of a coded sequence of numbers or letters.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY — The Sheriff, Chief of Police, or the commissioner, superintendent or director of a law enforcement agency or an authorized representative.

LICENSE — A license issued to an alarm company to sell, install, monitor, repair, or replace alarm systems by an authority having jurisdiction.

LOCAL ALARM SYSTEM — Any alarm system that annunciates an alarm system signal only at the alarm site by an interior or exterior audio device.

MONITORING — The process by which an alarm company receives signals from an alarm system and relays an alarm dispatch request to the municipality for the purpose of summoning law enforcement, fire department and/or medical emergency response to the alarm site.

NOTICE OF ALARM INCIDENT — The three-part standardized form prescribed by the Alarm Administrator pursuant to § 7-6 of this chapter, completed by fire department personnel or law enforcement on scene at an alarm dispatch, recording the property address and the reason for the response. The form shall be distributed as set forth in § 7-9 of this chapter.

NUISANCE — A recurring, preventable, or ongoing condition at the premises that the property owner or occupant knew or should have known was likely to require emergency response. Knowledge shall be presumed if the property owner or occupant has previously received a Notice of Alarm Incident pursuant to § 7-9 of this chapter.

ONE PLUS DURESS ALARM — The manual activation of a silent alarm signal by entering at a keypad a code that adds one to the last digit of the normal arm/disarm code, e.g., normal code: 1234; one plus duress code: 1235.

PANIC — An audible alarm system signal generated by the manual activation of a device intended to signal a life-threatening or emergency situation requiring law enforcement, fire department and/or medical emergency response.

PERSON — An individual, corporation, partnership, association, organization or similar entity.

SMOKE AND/OR HEAT DETECTOR AND/OR CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) DETECTOR — Any device which, when activated by fire or smoke or CO, is designed to alert to said emergency only the occupants of the building in which the smoke and/or heat and/or CO detector is located.

TAKEOVER — The transaction or process by which an alarm user takes over control of an existing alarm system which was previously controlled by another alarm user.

VERIFY — An attempt, by the alarm company or its representative, to contact the alarm site by telephonic or other electronic means, whether or not actual contact with a person is made, before requesting law enforcement, fire department and/or medical emergency dispatch, in an attempt to avoid an unnecessary alarm dispatch request.

WATER INTRUSION EVENT — A condition at an alarm site attributable to the absence, failure, or inadequacy of a sump pump or other drainage system that results in an alarm dispatch request or a 911 call requiring fire department response. Knowledge that a Water Intrusion Event is likely to require emergency response shall be presumed if the property owner or occupant has previously received a Notice of Alarm Incident pursuant to § 7-9 of this chapter.

ZONES — Subdivisions into which an alarm system is divided to indicate the general location from which an alarm system signal is transmitted.

§ 7-3. Alarm Systems and Water Intrusion Events in multi-tenant buildings.

- A. Each tenancy or apartment unit, if served by a separate alarm system in a multi-tenant building or complex, shall be considered a separate alarm site.
- B. Tenant Responsibility. For purposes of enforcing this chapter against an individual residential or nonresidential alarm site, the tenant is responsible for false alarms attributable to the alarm system within the tenant's unit and for Water Intrusion Events attributable to conditions within the tenant's exclusive control.
- C. Owner Responsibility. The building owner is responsible for false alarms attributable to alarm systems serving common areas or the building as a whole, and for Water Intrusion Events attributable to building systems, including but not limited to sump pumps, drainage systems, and other infrastructure outside the tenant's exclusive control. Where a tenant has assumed responsibility for maintenance of a sump pump or drainage system by written agreement, the tenant shall be responsible for any Water Intrusion Event attributable to that system.
- D. For purposes of this section, "exclusive control" means conditions within the tenant's unit that the tenant has the right and ability to maintain, repair, or remediate without landlord involvement.

§ 7-4. Duties of alarm user.

- A. An alarm user shall:
 - (1) Maintain the alarm site and the alarm system in a manner that will minimize or eliminate false alarms;
 - (2) Make every reasonable effort to respond or cause a representative (whom the alarm user may predesignate by written notification to the Alarm Administrator) to respond to the alarm system's location within 30 minutes when notified by the municipality to deactivate a malfunctioning alarm system, to provide access to the alarm site or to provide alternative security for the alarm site;
 - (3) Cause the alarm site address to be posted in a conspicuous place, such as a mailbox, tree, signage where driveway meets the road or highway, and/or on a building facing the road or highway or common driveway;
 - (4) Adjust the mechanism or cause the mechanism to be adjusted so that an alarm system signal audible on the exterior of an alarm site will sound for no longer than 15 minutes after being activated;
 - (5) Have a properly licensed alarm company inspect the alarm system after two false alarms within a twelve-month period. The Alarm Administrator may waive an inspection requirement if it determines that the false alarm(s) could not have been related to a defect or malfunction in the alarm system. After four false alarms within a twelve-month period the alarm user shall have a properly licensed alarm company modify the alarm system to be more false alarm resistant or provide additional user training as appropriate. The alarm company shall fill out

and return to the Alarm Administrator an Installer False Alarm Prevention Checklist (see Appendix A)¹ provided by the Alarm Administrator; and

(6) Maintain at each alarm site a set of written operating instructions for each alarm system.

B. An alarm user shall not:

- (1) Manually activate an alarm system for any reason other than an occurrence of an event that the alarm system was intended to report.
- (2) Use an automatic voice dialer.

§ 7-5. Duties of alarm company.

- A. Upon enactment of this chapter, an alarm company shall not program an alarm system so that it is capable of sending one plus duress alarms. Alarm companies may continue to report one plus duress alarms received from alarm systems programmed with one plus duress prior to enactment of this chapter. However, upon enactment of this chapter, when a takeover or conversion occurs or an alarm user requests an alarm system inspection or modification pursuant to § 7-4A(5) of this chapter, an alarm company shall remove the one plus duress alarm capability from such alarm system.
- B. Upon enactment of this chapter, an alarm company shall not install a device activating a holdup alarm which is a single-action nonrecessed button. An alarm company shall remove all single-action nonrecessed buttons when a takeover or conversion occurs.
- C. After completion of an installation, an alarm company employee shall review with the alarm user the Alarm User False Alarm Prevention Checklist (see Appendix B)² and provide the Alarm Administrator with a copy of said checklist.
- D. An alarm company performing monitoring services shall:
 - (1) Report alarm system signals by using the telephone number(s) designated by the Alarm Administrator;
 - (2) Document an attempt to verify every alarm system signal, except a duress or holdup alarm activation, before requesting law enforcement and/or fire department response to an alarm system signal;
 - (3) Communicate alarm dispatch requests to the municipality in a manner and form determined by the Alarm Administrator;
 - (4) Communicate cancellations to the municipality in a manner and form determined by the Alarm Administrator;
 - (5) Ensure that all alarm users of alarm systems equipped with a duress or holdup alarm are given adequate training as to the proper use of the duress or holdup alarm;

¹ . Editor's Note: Appendix A is on file at the Town Clerk's office.

² . Editor's Note: Appendix B is on file at the Town Clerk's office.

- (6) Communicate any available information, such as north, south, front, back, floor or unit number, etc., about the location of the alarm system;
- (7) Communicate the type of alarm system activation: silent or audible, interior or perimeter;
- (8) Provide the alarm user registration number when an alarm dispatch request is made;
- (9) Endeavor to contact the alarm user when an alarm dispatch request is made; and
- (10) Maintain, for a period of at least 12 months, records relating to alarm dispatch requests. Records shall include the name, address and phone number of the alarm user, the alarm system zone(s) activated, the time of alarm dispatch request, and evidence of an attempt to verify. The Alarm Administrator may request copies of such records for individually named alarm users.

E. Alarm Company Liability for Deficiency-Caused False Alarms.

- (1) Pursuant to General Business Law § 69-vv, an alarm company shall be subject to civil fines as set forth in § 7-10C of this chapter when an alarm dispatch request is attributable to: (i) a deficiency in the alarm system; (ii) improper installation of the alarm system by the alarm company or an alarm agent; (iii) defective equipment in the alarm system; or (iv) an error of the alarm company, alarm agent, or central station. For purposes of this subsection, defective equipment leased by an alarm company to an alarm user shall be deemed equipment of the alarm company regardless of when the deficiency arose.
- (2) An alarm company shall not be subject to civil fines under this subsection where the alarm system was not deficient upon installation, but the relevant component degraded through normal wear and tear after installation, provided that the alarm company had no notice of the deficiency.
- (3) Nothing in this subsection limits the authority of the Alarm Administrator to issue civil citations to an alarm company pursuant to § 7-9B of this chapter.

§ 7-6. Duties of Alarm Administrator.

A. Dispatch and Communication Duties. The Alarm Administrator shall:

- (1) Designate a manner, form and telephone number(s) for the communication of alarm dispatch requests.
- (2) Issue a unique cancellation code to the reporting central station upon receipt of a signal from an alarm system to the alarm dispatch center.

B. The Alarm Administrator shall establish a procedure to record such information on alarm dispatch requests necessary to permit the Alarm Administrator to maintain records, including but not limited to the following information. The responding law enforcement officer or authorized fire official shall relay this information at the time of clearance to emergency dispatchers, who shall then record said information on the call record.

- (1) Identification of the alarm site;
- (2) Date and time the alarm dispatch request was received;
- (3) Date and time of law enforcement officer or authorized fire official arrival at the alarm site;

- (4) Zone, if available;
- (5) Name of alarm user or representative at the alarm site, if any;
- (6) Identification of the responsible alarm company, if known;
- (7) Whether unable to locate the address; and
- (8) Cause of the alarm system signal, if known.

C. Record-Keeping and Enforcement Duties. The Alarm Administrator shall:

- (1) Prescribe the form and content of the Notice of Alarm Incident pursuant to the requirements in § 7-9C of this chapter, and update such form from time to time as necessary, without requirement of further amendment to this chapter;
- (2) Maintain a running record of all Notices of Alarm Incident received, organized by property address;
- (3) Determine, upon review of such records, when the applicable fine threshold has been crossed for a given property, and issue fines in accordance with § 7-10 of this chapter; and
- (4) Notify the alarm user and, if known, the alarm company, in writing by certified mail of any fine issued under this chapter.

D. If, in the judgment of the Alarm Administrator, an alarm system is not being used or maintained in a manner that ensures proper operation and suppresses false alarms, the Alarm Administrator may require a conference with the alarm user and the alarm company responsible for the repair of the alarm system to review the circumstances of each false alarm.

§ 7-7. Control of public nuisances.

- A. Abatement of nuisance authorized. Upon receiving a complaint regarding a nuisance as defined in this chapter, the police department and/or the fire department shall endeavor to contact the alarm user or designated representative(s) in an effort to abate the nuisance. In the event that the police department and/or the fire department is/are unable to contact the alarm user or those designated as contacts, or if the aforesaid persons cannot or will not curtail the audible signal being emitted by the alarm system, and if the police department and/or the fire department is/ are otherwise unable to abate the nuisance, the police department or authorized fire official may direct a law enforcement officer, fire department personnel, or qualified alarm technician to enter in and upon the property, home or building in which the alarm system is located and take any action necessary to abate the nuisance.
- B. Procedure and cost of abatement. After an entry upon the property has been made in accordance with this section, the police department and/or the fire department shall have the property secured, if necessary. The reasonable cost and expense of abating a nuisance in accordance with this section, including personnel costs and any costs incurred in engaging a qualified alarm technician, locksmith, glazier, or other contractor necessary to abate the nuisance or secure the premises following entry, shall be assessed to the alarm user and, if so assessed, shall constitute a charge upon the real property at which the alarm site is located, collectible in the same manner as a tax lien.

§ 7-8. Implementation.

- A. Any alarm system which would be prohibited under the provisions of this chapter shall be removed or deactivated after conversion and/or takeover.
- B. None of the provisions of this chapter shall apply to:
 - (1) Police, fire or medical emergency alarm devices installed in buildings, motor vehicles, or trailers owned by the Town of Woodstock or by any fire company; or
 - (2) Smoke and/or heat and/or CO detectors, as defined in § 7-2 of this chapter, located in any building or structure.
- C. Notwithstanding § 7-8(B)(2), where activation of a smoke, heat, or CO detector results in an alarm dispatch request, such activation may be evaluated under § 7-10A if the Alarm Administrator determines it constitutes a False Alarm as defined in this chapter.

§ 7-9. Enforcement.

- A. Penalties for violation of this chapter shall be as set forth in § 7-10 of this chapter. Enforcement may also be by civil action in the Town of Woodstock Justice Court or any other court of competent jurisdiction, upon resolution by the Woodstock Town Board to initiate such action.
- B. An alarm company may be issued a civil citation:
 - (1) If the law enforcement officer and/or authorized fire official responding to the false alarm determines that an on-site employee of the alarm company directly caused the false alarm.
 - (2) For failure to verify, if the Alarm Administrator determines the existence of a consistent pattern or written policy against verification.
 - (3) If the Alarm Administrator determines that an alarm company employee made a false statement concerning the inspection of an alarm site or the performance of an alarm system.
 - (4) Pursuant to General Business Law § 69-vvv, an alarm company may be issued a civil citation when the Alarm Administrator determines that an alarm dispatch request was caused by a deficiency in the alarm system, improper installation, defective equipment, or an error of the alarm company, alarm agent, or central station, subject to the safe harbor set forth in § 7-5E(2) of this chapter.
 - (5) An alarm company shall not be issued a civil citation under paragraph (4) above for an alarm dispatch request attributable solely to user error or to a condition at the alarm site that is the responsibility of the alarm user.
- C. Notice of Alarm Incident; Reporting Procedure.
 - (1) Any member of the fire department responding to an alarm dispatch shall complete a Notice of Alarm Incident form on scene. The form shall record the property address, the date and time of the response, and the reason for the alarm dispatch as observed by the responding fire department member.
 - (2) The completed Notice of Alarm Incident shall be distributed as follows: one copy shall be left with the property owner or occupant or posted in a conspicuous place at the alarm site if no

person is present; one copy shall be retained by the fire department; and one copy shall be transmitted to the Alarm Administrator within ten business days of the response.

- (3) Fire department personnel completing and delivering a Notice of Alarm Incident pursuant to this subsection act in a ministerial capacity only. They are not the fining authority under this chapter and are not acting as law enforcement agents.
- (4) The Alarm Administrator shall review all Notices of Alarm Incident received, maintain a record thereof by property address, and apply the applicable fine schedule set forth in § 7-10 of this chapter when the relevant threshold is crossed.
- (5) The Notice of Alarm Incident procedure set forth in this subsection is modeled on the existing chimney fire reporting structure and is authorized pursuant to the agreement of the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Woodstock Fire District, as memorialized by resolution dated July 9, 2026.

D. The Woodstock Town Board may, from time to time, adopt rules and regulations for the implementation and enforcement of this chapter.

§ 7-10. Penalties for offenses.

- A. False Alarm Fine Schedule. An alarm user shall be subject to warnings and fines based on the number of false alarms at an alarm site within a twelve-month period measured from the date of the first false alarm at that alarm site. Upon the expiration of that initial twelve-month period, false alarms shall thereafter be counted within the twelve months immediately preceding the most recent false alarm under review. The applicable fine schedule is as follows:
- (1) First false alarm: written warning.
 - (2) Second false alarm: written warning, with notice that further false alarms within the twelve-month period will result in fines in accordance with this schedule.
 - (3) Third false alarm: fine of \$250.
 - (4) Fourth false alarm: fine of \$500.
 - (5) Fifth false alarm and each additional false alarm: fine of \$1,000.
 - (6) Remediation Reset. Upon submission to the Alarm Administrator of documentation satisfactory to demonstrate that the underlying condition giving rise to the False Alarm classification has been corrected, including correction of an improper alarm installation or siting of an alarm system or a recurring or preventable condition at the alarm site, the Alarm Administrator may reset the False Alarm counter for that alarm site to zero. The burden of demonstrating remediation is on the alarm user.
- B. Water Intrusion Event Fine Schedule. A property owner or occupant, as determined pursuant to § 7-3 of this chapter in the case of multi-tenant buildings, shall be subject to a warning and fines based on the number of Water Intrusion Events at the alarm site. There is no annual reset for Water Intrusion Event violations; the warning issued upon the first Water Intrusion Event constitutes permanent notice to the property owner or occupant.

- (1) First Water Intrusion Event: written warning, with notice that further Water Intrusion Events will result in fines in accordance with this schedule.
 - (2) Second Water Intrusion Event: fine of \$250.
 - (3) Third Water Intrusion Event: fine of \$500.
 - (4) Fourth Water Intrusion Event and each additional Water Intrusion Event: fine of \$1,000.
 - (5) Remediation Reset. Upon submission to the Alarm Administrator of documentation satisfactory to demonstrate that the underlying condition has been corrected, including but not limited to installation or replacement of a sump pump or drainage remediation, the Alarm Administrator may reset the Water Intrusion Event counter for that alarm site to zero. The burden of demonstrating remediation is on the property owner or occupant.
- C. Alarm Company Fine Schedule. An alarm company or central station shall be subject to a fine for each alarm dispatch request attributable to alarm system deficiency, improper installation, defective equipment, or alarm company or central station error, as determined by the Alarm Administrator pursuant to § 7-9B(4) of this chapter.
- (1) Per qualifying incident: fine of \$250.
 - (2) Where the Alarm Administrator determines that the same alarm company has been responsible for three or more qualifying incidents within a rolling twelve-month period across any alarm sites within the Town, each additional qualifying incident within that period: fine of \$500.
- D. Notice and Payment. Notice of fines shall be sent by certified mail from the Alarm Administrator to the property owner of the alarm site. Fines shall be payable to the Town of Woodstock within 30 days of the date of the notice. Fines not paid within 30 days shall be subject to a late payment penalty of ten percent (10%) of the unpaid fine amount for each thirty-day period, or portion thereof, during which the fine remains unpaid, up to a maximum penalty equal to the original fine amount. Unpaid fines and accrued penalties may be added to the property tax bill for the alarm site and collected in the same manner as delinquent real property taxes.
- E. Cancellation. If the alarm is cancelled, as defined in this chapter, prior to law enforcement arriving at the alarm site, this shall not be considered a false alarm for the purpose of warning or fines.
- F. Alarm Company Direct Cause. If the law enforcement officer or authorized fire official responding to the false alarm determines that an on-site employee of the alarm company directly caused the false alarm, this shall not be considered a false alarm for the purpose of warning or fines.

§ 7-11. Notification.

- A. The responding law enforcement officer or fire department personnel shall leave notice to the alarm user after each false alarm or water intrusion event and shall provide a copy of such Notice of Alarm Incident to the Alarm Administrator. The notice shall conform to the stipulations contained in § 7-9C of this chapter and shall include the applicable schedule of fines.
- B. The Alarm Administrator shall notify the alarm user in writing and the alarm company, if known.

§ 7-12. Government immunity.

Any and all liability and consequential damage resulting from the failure to respond to an alarm system signal or any water intrusion event is hereby disclaimed and governmental immunity as provided by law is retained. Law enforcement, fire department and/or medical emergency response may be based on factors such as availability of police, fire and/or medical emergency units, priority of calls, weather conditions, traffic conditions, emergency conditions and staffing levels.