

LOCAL LAW NO. ____ OF 2026

TOWN OF WOODSTOCK

A LOCAL LAW AMENDING CHAPTER 7 (ALARM SYSTEMS) OF THE CODE OF THE
TOWN OF WOODSTOCK

Section 1. Purpose and Legislative Findings. The Town Board of the Town of Woodstock finds and declares as follows:

The Town of Woodstock is served entirely by the Woodstock Fire District, whose volunteer fire department responds to all fire, alarm, and emergency dispatch calls within the Town. The volunteer nature of the department makes the effective deployment of its members a matter of acute public concern. The Town Board finds that a significant and growing share of fire department responses, currently estimated at approximately thirty percent of total calls, are attributable to nuisance conditions that are recurring, preventable, and within the control of property owners and alarm system users. These include improperly sited smoke, heat, or carbon monoxide detectors, malfunctioning alarm systems, chronic user error, and recurring water intrusion events attributable to absent or inadequate sump pumps. Such responses divert volunteer firefighters from genuine emergencies, accelerate fatigue among members, and impose unnecessary costs on the community.

The Town Board further finds that the existing provisions of Chapter 7 of the Town Code, originally adopted in 2001, require updating to address these conditions effectively. Specifically, the Town Board finds that: (a) the existing false alarm fine schedule is inadequate as a deterrent, with maximum fines that have not been adjusted in over a decade; (b) the chapter does not address recurring preventable emergency responses that do not involve an alarm system, including water intrusion events requiring fire department response; (c) the chapter does not incorporate the authority conferred upon municipalities by General Business Law § 69-vvv, enacted in 2025, to hold alarm companies accountable when false alarms are attributable to equipment deficiency, improper installation, or central station error; and (d) the existing definition of “Law Enforcement Authority” incorrectly includes fire department personnel in a manner inconsistent with their actual legal status under state law, creating ambiguity about the scope of their authority.

The Town Board further finds that the Woodstock Fire District’s Board of Fire Commissioners has authorized fire department personnel to participate in the Notice of Alarm Incident reporting structure established by this local law, modeled on the existing chimney fire reporting practice, pursuant to which fire department members document alarm responses in a ministerial capacity and transmit records to the Town’s Alarm Administrator for enforcement purposes. This structure preserves the appropriate separation between the fire department's operational role and the Town's enforcement authority.

The Town Board further finds that Water Intrusion Events and false alarms warrant different enforcement structures. False alarms are typically attributable to alarm system equipment or user behavior that can be corrected within a defined period, and the rolling twelve-month framework

reflects the expectation that such corrections will be made. Water Intrusion Events, by contrast, are attributable to the absence or inadequacy of property infrastructure (most commonly sump pumps and drainage systems) that the property owner has an ongoing obligation to maintain. Because the failure to correct such conditions represents a continuing choice rather than a transient error, the Town Board finds that Water Intrusion Event violations should not reset annually but should remain on record until the underlying condition is documented as corrected through the remediation reset process provided.

This local law is intended to reduce nuisance emergency responses, protect the volunteer fire department from unnecessary fatigue, hold accountable those property owners and alarm companies whose preventable conduct generates unnecessary dispatches, and update Chapter 7 to reflect current law and operational practice.

Section 2. Legislative Authority. This local law is adopted pursuant to the powers conferred upon the Town Board of the Town of Woodstock by Section 10 of the Municipal Home Rule Law and Section 64 of the Town Law.

Section 3. Chapter 7 of the Woodstock Town Code is hereby stricken and replaced with the new language appended hereto as Appendix A.

Section 4. Severability. The invalidity of any section, sub-section, paragraph, sentence, clause, phrase, word, or other part of this Local Law shall not affect the validity of any other part of this Local Law, which can be given effect without such part or parts.

Section 5. Effective Date. This Local Law shall take effect immediately upon filing in the office of the Secretary of State of New York as provided by law.

APPENDIX A