

ARTICLE 735

Emergency Alarm System

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735.01 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions shall apply in the interpretation and enforcement of this Article:

“Abort Window” means a period of time after a sensor initiated alarm condition that allows the user additional time to disarm the system before an alarm is transmitted.

“Alarm Administrator” means the City of Bethlehem Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED).

“Alarm Company” means a person in the business of selling, providing, maintaining, servicing, repairing, altering, replacing, moving, installing, or monitoring an Alarm System in an Alarm Site. An Alarm Company must be licensed as a Telecommunication Installer as outlined in Article 1703 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Bethlehem and possess a valid City of Bethlehem Business Privilege License as per City of Bethlehem Business Privilege & Mercantile Tax Regulations.

“Alarm Dispatch Request” means a notification to the Police Communications Center that an alarm, either manual or automatic, has been activated at the location where the alarm is installed.

“Alarm Registration” or “Permit” means authorization granted by the Alarm Administrator to an Alarm User to operate an Alarm System.

“Alarm Site” means a single fixed premises or location served by an Alarm System or Systems. Each unit, if served by a separate Alarm System, or alarm partition, or emergency contact list in a multi-unit building or complex, shall be considered a separate Alarm Site.

“Alarm System” means a device or series of devices, including, but not limited to, hardwired systems and 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 law enforcement response, including Local Alarm Systems. Alarm System does not include an alarm installed in a vehicle or on someone's person unless the vehicle or the personal alarm is permanently located at a site.

“Alarm User” means any person who has contracted for Monitoring, repair, installation or maintenance from an Alarm Company for an Alarm System; or who owns, uses, operates, or is responsible for an Alarm System, whether or not it is monitored, maintained or repaired under contract.

“Business Alarm” means an alarm system installed in a building or site such as a store, factory or office. For the purposes of this article it would include apartment/multi unit living buildings and any building or structure other than a single family dwelling.

“Central Monitoring Service” means any vendor provided service whereby activations of alarm systems are received from alarm systems, and such activations are then reported to the City’s Emergency Communications Center on behalf of the operator, owner, or lessee of the alarm system.

“City” means the City of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

“Communicator Delay” means a period of time which elapses before the control panel sends a transmission to the central station. See “Abort Window”.

“Conversion” means the transaction or process by which one Alarm Company begins the servicing and/or Monitoring of a previously unmonitored Alarm System or an Alarm System previously serviced and/or monitored by another Alarm Company.

“Cross Zoning” means a way of configuring logic within the control panel such that two or more zones of the security system are interdependent to cause an alarm condition.

“Delayed Zone” means a zone or circuit configured to provide a time delay, when tripped, before an alarm is generated.

“Duress Alarm” means a silent Alarm System signal generated to signal that the Alarm User requires law enforcement response.

“Emergency Communications Center” means the City of Bethlehem’s Communications Center located at 10 East Church Street, which handles all police, fire, EMS, and other emergency communications.

“Exit Time” means the period of time allowed, after arming a security system, to exit the premise without tripping an alarm.

“Exit Time Restart” means an option provided where a violation, restoral, and then a second violation of an entry/exit zone prior to the end of the Exit Time shall restart the Exit Time.

“False Alarm” means an Alarm Dispatch Request to the Police Communications Center, when the responding law enforcement officer finds no evidence of a criminal offense, attempted criminal offense, or other emergency, after having completed a timely investigation of the Alarm Site.

“Holdup Alarm” means a Duress Alarm signal generated by the manual activation of a device intended to signal a robbery in progress.

“Local Alarm System” means any Alarm System, which is not monitored, that annunciates an alarm only at the Alarm Site.

“Monitoring” means the process by which a monitoring Alarm Company receives notification of an alarm activation, and/or relays an Alarm Dispatch Request to the Police Communication Center for the purpose of summoning law enforcement to the Alarm Site.

“One Plus Duress Alarm” means the manual activation of a silent alarm signal by entering at an Arming Station 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).

“Operator” or “Alarm User” means any person, firm, corporation, owner, or lessee who operates an alarm system within the City.

“Option” means a functional or performance feature that may be implemented as a selectable part of a product’s performance capability.

“Panic Alarm” means 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 response.

“Person” means an individual, corporation, partnership, association, organization or similar entity.

“Residential Alarm” means an alarm system installed in a single family dwelling.

“Responder” means an individual capable of reaching the Alarm Site and has both authorized access to the Alarm Site and the code to the Alarm System.

“SIA Control Panel Standard CP-01 means the ANSI” is an American National Standard Institute approved Security Industry Association – SIA CP-01 Control Panel Standard, as may be updated from time to time, that details recommended design features for security system control panels and their associated arming and disarming devices to reduce the incidence of false alarms. Control panels built and tested to this standard by Underwriters Laboratory (UL), or other nationally recognized testing organizations, will be marked to state: “Design evaluated in accordance with SIA CP-01 Control Panel Standard Features for False Alarm Reduction”.

“Silent Alarm” means a protective system that does not emit an audible signal or tone, when activated at a protected site.

“Swinger Shutdown” means an operating mode in which the control panel, when a sensor or zone is repeatedly tripping, ignores the trips on that zone after a limited number of them.

“Takeover” means 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” means an attempt by the Alarm Company, or its representative, to contact the Alarm User through the enhanced verification standard below to determine whether an alarm signal is valid before requesting law enforcement dispatch, in an attempt to avoid an unnecessary Alarm Dispatch Request.

Enhanced Alarm Verification of Burglar Alarm Signals

“Enhanced Verification” means the attempt by the monitoring facility personnel to verify that no emergency appears to exist at the alarm site, by means of more thorough procedures such as 2 (two) or more verification calls, live audio or video, cross zoning, other means or a combination of the procedures or adherence to current SIA standards for enhanced verification.

“Zones” means division of devices into which an Alarm System is divided to indicate the general location from which an Alarm System signal is transmitted.

735.02 APPROVED ALARM COMPANIES

A. No Alarm Company shall own, operate, lease, install, or maintain an Alarm System at an Alarm Site in the City of Bethlehem unless they are licensed as a Telecommunication Installer as outlined in Article 1703 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Bethlehem and possess a valid City of Bethlehem Business Privilege License as per City of Bethlehem Business Privilege & Mercantile Tax Regulations and comply with this ordinance. This does not include companies that are solely subcontracted as the “monitoring” company – which may be located in another state.

B. The Alarm Administrator shall provide all licensed Alarm Companies with a copy of this Article and shall maintain a list of approved Alarm Companies.

735.03 ALARM REGISTRATION PERMIT REQUIRED; TRANSFERABILITY;
FALSE STATEMENTS; AND ALARM SYSTEM REGISTRATION FOR
APARTMENTS COMPLEXES

A. No Alarm Company or Alarm User shall own, operate, lease, install, or maintain an Alarm System at an Alarm Site without an approved Alarm Registration issued by the City of Bethlehem Alarm Administrator.

B. A Separate Alarm Registration is required for each Alarm Site. An Alarm Registration may be granted subject to any special conditions stated thereon, if it is deemed necessary by the Alarm Administrator or Police Department.

C. Upon receipt of a completed Alarm Registration application form and the Alarm Registration fee, the Alarm Administrator shall register the applicant unless the applicant has: (1) failed to pay an Alarm System fine or required fee; or (2) had an alarm registration for the Alarm Site suspended or revoked, and the violation causing the suspension or revocation has not been corrected; (3) other conditions exist that hinders the proper operation of the Alarm System in compliance with this Article.

D. The Alarm Registration shall be made available or clearly posted at the Alarm Site.

E. An Alarm Registration will automatically terminate: on the 31st of December each year; or upon change in occupancy or sale or transfer of the property for which it was originally issued. The Permit cannot be transferred to another Person or Alarm Site.

F. An Alarm User and the Alarm Company shall inform the Alarm Administrator of any change or update that alters any of the information listed on the Alarm Registration application within three (3) business days. Failure to renew the Alarm Registration or make proper notification of changes shall result in a fine and/or the revocation of the Alarm Registration.

G. An Alarm Registration granted hereunder shall be accepted upon the express condition that the Alarm User shall indemnify and hold the City harmless from and on account of any and all damages arising out of the activities of the registrant, Alarm User, Alarm Company, or use of the Alarm System.

H. Any false statement of a material fact made by an applicant for the purpose of obtaining an Alarm Registration shall be sufficient cause for refusal to issue a registration.

I. Alarm systems installed or operated in apartment complexes:

- (1) By the individual tenant - the tenant shall be considered the Alarm User and in addition to the requirements of the Article, shall provide the name of a representative of the apartment owner or manager who is capable of granting access to the Alarm Site.

- (2) as a fixture of the apartment complex or an amenity for each residential unit – the owner or property manager of the apartment complex shall be considered the Alarm User and in addition to the requirements of the Article, shall provide a master list of tenants to the Alarm Administrator for all units, including any unoccupied units.

735.04 ALARM SYSTEM USE

In order to assure proper response to an Alarm Site and to minimize False Alarms, an Alarm User shall:

- (1) Notify the Alarm Administrator with any changes to the information contained on the Alarm Registration form including emergency contact information and Responder information within seven (7) business days of the change.
- (2) Assure a valid Alarm Registration renewal has been issued effective on the 1st of January each year.
- (3) Maintain the Alarm Site and the Alarm System in a manner that will assure the proper operation of the Alarm System; and maintain a set of written operating instructions at each alarm site.
- (4) The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of at least two (2) persons who are authorized to respond to an emergency and gain access to the address and deactivate the alarm system where the device is installed.
- (5) Adjust the mechanism or cause the mechanism to be adjusted so that an alarm signal audible on the exterior of an Alarm Site will sound for no longer than ten (10) minutes after being activated, or meets the minimum requirements under Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.
- (6) Not activate an Alarm System for any reason other than an occurrence of an event that the Alarm System was intended to report.
- (7) Not use Automatic Voice Dialers.

735.05 ALARM INSTALLATION AND MONITORING

A. The Alarm Company performing Installation shall also:

- (1) Apply for and obtain a valid Alarm Registration from the Alarm Administrator seven (7) business days prior to the installation.

- (2) Use alarm control panel(s) which meet SIA Control Panel Standard CP-01 capabilities or they have the following minimum features:
 - a) Abort window
 - b) Cross zoning
 - c) Communicator delay
 - d) Delayed zoning
 - e) Swinger shutdown
 - f) Exit time restart
 - (3) Provide written and oral instructions to each Alarm User for the proper use and operation of their Alarm System. Such instructions will specifically include all instructions necessary to turn the Alarm System on and off, and how to avoid False Alarms.
 - (4) Provide notification of the availability of a 7 day no dispatch period for intrusion alarms during which time the alarm company will have no obligation to and will not respond to any alarm signal from an alarm site and will not make an alarm dispatch request to law enforcement, even if the signal is the result of an actual alarm event.
 - (5) Complete and review with the customer both the Installer & Customer False Alarm Prevention Program Checklist. A copy of the completed documents shall be provided to the Alarm Administrator.
 - (6) Not program Alarm Systems so that they are capable of sending One Plus Duress Alarms. Alarm Companies may continue to report One Plus Duress Alarms received from existing Alarm Systems programmed with One Plus Duress Alarms. However, when a takeover, conversion, or modification occurs, or for reasons deemed necessary by the Alarm Administrator for appropriate response, the One Plus Duress Alarm capability from such Alarm Systems must be removed.
 - (7) Not install a device to activate a Holdup Alarm which consists of a single action, non-recessed button.
 - (8) Not install Automatic Voice Dialers.
- B. The Alarm Company shall also:
- (1) Notify the Alarm Administrator with any changes to the information contained on the Alarm Registration form including emergency contact information and Responder information within three (3) business days; If the Alarm Company utilizes a separate monitoring company, then in addition to notifying the Alarm Administrator, the Alarm Company shall

also notify the alarm monitoring company of the changes to the information on the Alarm Registration form.

- (2) On or before the 1st of January each year, provide the Alarm Administrator an updated, alphabetical list of all active Alarm Sites being monitored within the City of Bethlehem, and upon request with Alarm User information and information required for the Alarm Registration form renewal. Alarm Registrations not receiving the renewal information shall become subject to suspension and/or revocation on the 2nd of January each year.
- (3) Report alarm signals to the Police Communications Center by using telephone numbers designated by the Police Department.
- (4) Attempt enhanced verification of every alarm signal, except Duress or Holdup Alarm activations before requesting a police response to an Alarm System signal.
- (5) All pre-existing systems will have 6 months from the passage of this ordinance to come into compliance with enhanced verification.
- (6) Communicate Alarm Dispatch Requests and Alarm Dispatch Verified Cancellations to the Police Communications Center in a manner and form determined by the Police Department.

735.06 ALARM SYSTEM PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

The Alarm Administrator may require a conference with an Alarm User and the Alarm Company responsible for the repair or monitoring of the Alarm System to review the circumstances of each False Alarm.

735.07 SUSPENSION OF RESPONSE

Unless there is separate indication that there is a crime in progress or an emergency exists, the Commissioner of Police or his designee may suspend or alter the type of law enforcement response to an Alarm Site for which the Alarm Registration is revoked or where excessive false alarms have occurred.

735.08 REVOCATION OF ALARM REGISTRATION

The Alarm Administrator may revoke or suspend an Alarm Registration for an Alarm Site, as deemed necessary for specific reasons including, but not limited to:

- (1) Any violation of, or failure to comply with, this Article;

- (2) A false statement of a material fact made on Alarm Registration or renewal;
- (3) Failure to make payment of a fine or required fee by the Alarm Business or Alarm User;
- (4) Improper installation, operation, monitoring, or malfunction resulting in excessive false alarms.

735.09 APPEAL FROM DENIAL OR REVOCATION OF AN ALARM REGISTRATION

A. If the Alarm Administrator denies the issuance or renewal of an Alarm Registration, or suspends or revokes it, the Alarm Administrator shall send written notice of the action and a statement of the right to an appeal, by certified mail, to both the Alarm User and the Alarm Business.

B. The Alarm User, or the Alarm Business on behalf of the Alarm User, may appeal the decision of the Alarm Administrator to the Commissioner of Police by filing a written request for a review setting forth the reasons for the appeal within thirty (30) days after receipt of notice. If a request for appeal is not made within thirty (30) days, the action is final.

C. Filing of a request for appeal shall stay the action by the Alarm Administrator suspending or revoking a registration until the Police Commissioner has completed the review. The decision of the Police Commissioner is final.

735.10 REINSTATEMENT OF REGISTRATION

A Person whose Alarm Registration has been revoked may be issued a new permit if the Person: submits an updated application; and pays all required fees and pays, or otherwise resolves all citations and fines; and submits a certification from an Alarm Business that the Alarm System has been inspected and repaired, as necessary, for compliance with this Article.

735.11 FEES

A. The fee for an Alarm Registration is Twenty-five (\$25.00) Dollars for a residential alarm and Fifty (\$50.00) Dollars for a business alarm. No refund of a registration will be made. The initial Alarm Registration fee must be submitted to the Alarm Administrator not less than fifteen (15) days before the Alarm System installation or at the time of an Alarm System Takeover. New Alarm registrations fees after March 31 will be prorated.

B. A registration update form must be submitted no later than December 31 so that the registration may continue for the following year. Alarm Registrations not being renewed by January 2nd shall be subject to suspension and/or revocation. Renewal Alarm Registrations will be subject to a late fee of \$25.00 if not renewed and paid before February 1 of each succeeding year.

C. In the event of a third or fourth False Alarm activation at an Alarm Site, within any calendar period, beginning January 1st, the Alarm User shall be charged a fee for service from the City. This fee shall be Seventy-five (\$75.00) Dollars for each of those false alarm activations during that calendar period. The fifth and subsequent False Alarm or inadvertent activations, within this same calendar period will necessitate a Two Hundred (\$200.00) Dollar fee for service for each occurrence of a False Alarm activation during said period.

D. Extreme weather, testing or repair of telephone lines or any other extraordinary circumstances not under control of the alarm user may be considered by the alarm administrator and exempted from the False Alarm fees.

735.99 PENALTIES

A. Any Person who violates any provision of this Article shall be subject to the following penalties:

- (1) First violation – A fine of One Hundred (\$100.00) Dollars;
- (2) Second violation - A fine of Two Hundred (\$200.00) Dollars;
- (3) Third and each subsequent violation - A fine of Five Hundred (\$500.00) Dollars.

(Ord. 3137. Passed 8/18/87; Ord. 3242. Passed 2/7/89; Ord. 2011-4. Passed 3/1/11)