

## Chapter 54

### ALARM SYSTEMS

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**[HISTORY: Adopted 5-10-1993 Annual Town Meeting, Art. 42. Amendments noted where applicable.]**

#### § 54-1. **Definitions.**

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

**ALARM SYSTEM** - An assembly of equipment and devices, arranged to signal the presence of a hazard requiring urgent attention and to which police and/or fire are expected to respond.

**ALARM USER or USER** - Any person on whose premises an alarm system is maintained within the town except for alarm systems on motor vehicles. Excluded from this definition and from the coverage of this bylaw are communication center personnel and persons who use alarm systems to alert or signal persons within the premises in which the alarm system is located of an attempted unauthorized intrusion or holdup attempt, and Town of Halifax controlled alarm systems. If such a system, however, employs an audible signal emitting sounds to signal persons and outside the premises, such system shall be within the definition of "alarm system," as that term is used in this bylaw, and shall be subject to this bylaw.

**AUTOMATIC DIALING DEVICE** - An alarm system which automatically sends over regular telephone lines, by direct connection or otherwise, a pre-recorded voice message or coded signal indicating the existence of the emergency situation that the alarm system is designed to detect.

**COMMUNICATION CENTER** - An office to which remote alarm and supervisory signaling devices are connected, where operators supervise circuits.

**FALSE ALARM:**

- A. The activation of an alarm system through mechanical failure, malfunction, improper installation or negligence of the user of an alarm system or of his employees or agents.
- B. Any signal or oral communication transmitted to the Police Department when in fact there has been no unauthorized intrusion or attempted unauthorized intrusion into a premise and no attempted robbery or burglary at a premises.
- C. Any signal or oral communication transmitted to the Fire Department when in fact there has been no fire or medical emergency at a premises.

**§ 54-2. Administrative rules.**

The Police Chief and Fire Chief may promulgate such rules as may be necessary for the implementation of this bylaw.

**§ 54-3. Direct connection to Police and/or Fire Department.**

- A. All alarms must be authorized by the Police and/or Fire Chief prior to being connected to the Police and/or Fire Department.
- B. In accordance with the normal practices in effect in the town, the Police and Fire Chief shall have the authority to request bids or proposals from alarm companies in order to furnish, at no cost to the town, a communications console and the necessary telephone lines which are compatible to the receipt of alarm signals from alarm systems whose lines are connected to the Police and/or Fire Department. Each of the said bids shall set forth the annual fee each alarm user will be required to pay the alarm company for services rendered with respect to the communications console. Such services shall be set forth in the form of a written contract between the alarm company and each alarm user. The provisions of this Subsection B relate solely to the aforementioned communications console, connections to the said console by alarm users and fees and charges related to the installation and maintenance of the console. Any alarm user may contract with any alarm company of his choice for the sale, installation, maintenance and/or servicing of the alarm system to be installed on his premises.
- C. The alarm user, or the alarm business contracting for servicing the alarm user's alarm system, shall be responsible for obtaining the leased telephone line between the alarm users premises and the alarm receiving equipment at the Police and/or Fire Department and for furnishing the appropriate interface equipment, if required, in order to provide an input signal which is compatible with the receiving equipment used to operate the communications console.

**§ 54-4. Control and curtailment of signals emitted by alarm systems.**

- A. Every alarm user shall submit to the Police and/or Fire Chief and the alarm company who maintains the system at the police and/or fire communications console the names and the telephone numbers of at least two (2) other persons who can be reached at any time day or night, and who are authorized to respond to an emergency signal transmitted by an alarm system that is installed. The names, addresses and telephone number of the responders must be kept current at all times by the alarm user and the alarm company.
- B. All alarm systems directly connected to the police and/or fire station shall be equipped with a test device which will give a ten-second delay or longer prior to alarm system activation in order to warn the alarm user of an open alarm circuit.
- C. No alarm system shall emit a continuous, intermittent or uninterrupted noise for more than thirty (30) minutes, and the owner or tenant in any building who installs, operates or maintains an alarm system that violates this provision shall be fined not more than two hundred dollars (\$200.) for each day such system is in operation. Any alarm system that is designed to emit a noise which cannot be shut off or is not shut off or curtailed after thirty (30) minutes of continuous, intermittent or uninterrupted noise due to the absence or unavailability of the alarm user or those persons designated by him under Subsection A of this section, which disturbs the peace, comfort or repose of a community, or a neighborhood of the area where the alarm system is located, shall constitute a public nuisance. Upon receiving complaints regarding such a continuous, intermittent or uninterrupted noise, the Police and/or Fire Chief shall endeavor to contact the alarm user under Subsection A of this section in an effort to abate the nuisance. The Police and/or Fire Chief shall cause to record the names and addresses of all complainants and the time each complaint was received.

**§ 54-5. Testing of equipment.**

No alarm system designed to transmit emergency messages directly to the police and/or fire department shall be worked on, tested or demonstrated without obtaining permission from the Police and/or Fire Chief. Permission is not required to test or demonstrate alarm devices not transmitting emergency messages directly to the Police and/or Fire Department.

**§ 54-6. Emergency notification list.**

Every business establishment within the town, whether alarmed or not, shall provide written notice to the Police and/or Fire Chief listing the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of at least two (2) persons who may be reached at any time, day or night, and who are authorized to respond to any emergency which has caused the Police and/or Fire Department to be dispatched to said premises. Such notice shall be kept current at all times reflecting any changes in authorized personnel.

**§ 54-7. False alarms.**

- A. Any user of an alarm system which transmits false alarms shall be assessed a fine of twenty-five dollars (\$25.) after the third false alarm. Thereafter, each fine shall increase at increments of twenty-five dollars (\$25.) for each subsequent false alarm in each calendar year, as follows: fourth: twenty-five dollars (\$25.); fifth: fifty dollars (\$50.); sixth: seventy-five dollars (\$75.); etc., to a maximum of three hundred dollars (\$300.). Such fines shall be in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 21D.
- B. All fines will be payable to the Town of Halifax, c/o Treasurer. Fines not paid within thirty (30) days will be reviewed for possible court action, interest and costs of collection.
- C. Alarm systems that have continuous false alarms or a series of malfunctions shall be reviewed by the Police and/or Fire Chief and shall be fined an additional three hundred dollars (\$300.) if a serious attempt has not been made to correct fire alarm system so that it does not malfunction, or the Police and/or Fire Chief may order that the user of the alarm system discontinue use of the alarm system.