

Section 930- Public Safety Alarm Systems
Registration and Regulation

930.01. Purpose and Scope. The purpose of this section is to protect the public safety services of the city from misuse of alarms and to provide for the maximum possible service to alarm users, to encourage alarm users to maintain the operational reliability and proper use of alarm systems and to reduce false alarms. This section provides regulation for the use of police, fire, and medical alarms, requires registration, establishes fees, and establishes a system of administration.

930.03 Definitions. Subdivision 1. For the purposes of this section the terms defined in this subsection have the meanings given them.

Subd. 2. “Alarm Administrators” are the Chief of Police, or designee, who is responsible for the registration and regulation of the city’s police alarms, including, but not limited to burglary, panic, hold-up, medical and duress; and the Fire Chief, or designee, who is responsible for the registration and regulation of the city’s fire alarms, including, but not limited to water flow, carbon monoxide, and smoke and heat detection.

Subd. 3. “Alarm business” means and includes any person engaged in selling, leasing, maintaining, servicing, replacing, moving, installing, or monitoring any alarm or alarm installation.

Subd. 4. “Alarm system” means any mechanical, electrical, or electronic device installed in a building or on real property intended to warn of a possible need for emergency, police, fire, or medical services, except: “Alarm system” does not include any such device in a residential occupancy designed for the sole purpose of alerting only the occupants within a single unit or dwelling.

Subd. 5. “Alarm user” means any person, owner, occupant, tenant, firm, partnership, association, corporation, company, or organization of any kind upon whose premises, building, structure, or facility an alarm system is maintained.

Subd. 6. “Audible alarm” means a device designed for the detection of smoke or fire or of an unauthorized entry on the premises, which alarm actuates or generates an audible sound on or near the premises.

Subd. 7. “Automatic dialing device” means a device that is interconnected to a telephone line or system and is programmed to select a predetermined telephone number and transmit by voice, message or coded emergency signal a need for response of police, fire, or medical personnel.

Subd. 8. “Burglary Alarm” means any system, device, or mechanism for the detection and reporting of criminal intrusion, or attempted intrusion upon an alarm site to a remote receiving station for the purpose of dispatching law enforcement personnel.

Subd. 9. “False Alarm” means an alarm message or signal initiated and transmitted either automatically or manually through an alarm system which summons a response by police, fire or medical personnel when no fire, smoke, criminal activity, medical or other emergency exists.

Subd. 10. “False Alarm” shall also mean the failure or refusal of an alarm user or authorized designee to respond upon request to the activated alarm system location to assist police/fire personnel, whether or not an emergency exists.

Subd. 11. “False Alarm” DOES NOT include an alarm caused by violent conditions of nature, utility line mishaps, power outages or other unusual circumstances which are determined to be beyond the control of the alarm system or user.

Subd. 12. "Fire Alarm System" means any system, device, or mechanism for the detection or reporting of a possible fire or other hazardous conditions.

Subd. 13. "Hold-up Alarm" means a silent alarm signal generated by the manual activation of a device intended to signal a robbery in progress to law enforcement personnel.

Subd. 14. "Local Alarm System" means any alarm system that enunciates an alarm only by an interior and/or exterior audible sounding device and is not monitored by an alarm company.

Subd. 15. "Panic/Medical Alarm" means an audible or silent alarm system signal generated by the manual activation of a device intended to signal a life-threatening or emergency situation requiring the dispatch of public safety personnel including, but not limited to, duress, medical, and ambush alarms.

Subd. 16. "Public Safety Personnel" means people authorized to maintain, assist, or enforce public safety, including police, fire, and medical personnel.

930.05. Registration, Application, Fees, Transferability, Exemptions. Subdivision 1. Registration required. Every alarm user shall be required to register annually each alarm classification (police or fire) on the alarm user's premises on a form provided by the City to the appropriate Alarm Administrator. This registration will expire December 31st of each year. Each alarm registration form must include the following information that the city has deemed necessary to administer the alarm ordinance:

- a) The name, complete address (including apartment/suite number), and telephone numbers of the person or business who will be the registrant and be responsible for the proper maintenance and operation of the alarm system;
- b) The classification of the alarm site as either residential (includes apartment, condo, etc.), commercial or multiple dwelling units;
- c) For each alarm system located at the alarm site, the classification of the alarm system, i.e. fire, burglary, holdup, panic or other and for each purpose whether audible, silent or motion;
- d) Mailing/Billing address if different from the alarm site;
- e) A list of the names and phone numbers of people who have the ability to control the alarm system;
- f) The name, address, and telephone number of the alarm company monitoring the system;
- g) The name and 24-hour emergency number of the alarm/sprinkler service company and owner's authorization for public safety personnel to notify them if a service call is necessary, and
- h) Such other pertinent information as may be from time to time required by the city.

Subd. 2. Fees/Nonrefundable. The fee for the initial registration and annual renewal for an alarm site is set by city council resolution and must accompany each alarm registration. The fees shall reflect the cost to the city to administer the registration of alarm systems. Registration and annual renewal fees are nonrefundable. The initial registration fee must be submitted to the alarm administrator(s) prior to, but no later than seven (7) days after the alarm installation or alarm takeover.

Subd. 3. Existing alarm systems are subject to the annual registration fees and regulations set forth in this ordinance. All permits issued prior to the effective date of this ordinance are null and void.

Subd. 4. Failure to Register. An alarm user that fails to register as required herein shall be subject to a fine set forth by Council resolution. Unregistered alarm systems are not exempt from the other requirements and fines set forth in this ordinance.

Subd. 5. Transferability. Alarm user registrations are not transferable from one person to another or from one location to another.

Subd. 6. Exemptions. The provisions of this section are not applicable to alarm systems affixed to motor vehicles, boats, trailers, and recreational motor vehicles.

930.07 Duties of Alarm User. Alarm users whose alarm site is located within the City shall:

- a) Maintain the premises and alarm system in a manner that will minimize or eliminate false alarms;
- b) Maintain a current key-holder list with their alarm company;
- c) Notify the alarm company of a false alarm activation as soon as the user is aware of the false alarm;
- d) Not manually activate an alarm for any reason other than an occurrence of an event that the alarm system was intended to report; and
- e) Make every reasonable effort to respond to the alarm system's location within 30 minutes after being notified to provide access to the premises or to secure the premises.

930.09. Duties of Alarm Company. Alarm companies installing or monitoring systems shall:

- a) Install and use only burglary control panels that meet Security Industry Association standards, including the standard that requires a false alarm prevention feature to be programmed to the factory default;
- b) Not install an alarm system that uses smoke or other gases to incapacitate intruders;
- c) Complete an alarm verification process for all residential alarm signals prior to requesting a response by the police or fire department;
- d) Complete an alarm verification process for all commercial burglary alarm signals prior to requesting a response by the police department;
- e) Maintain a current record accessible to the alarm administrator at all times that includes the names of the alarm users serviced by the company, the addresses of the protected properties, the type of alarm system, the original installation date and subsequent modifications, if any, for each protected property, a record of the date and time of alarm dispatch requests to each protected property, a record of false alarms at each property with evidence of the company's attempt to verify the alarm and an explanation of the cause of the false alarm;
- f) Provide each of its alarm system users with operating instructions for their alarm system, including a written explanation of the company's verification process and a telephone number to call for assistance;
- g) Work cooperatively with the alarm system user and the Alarm Administrator to determine the cause of any false alarm and to prevent recurrences; and
- h) Establish a training period during the first seven (7) days following the installation of any alarm system during which the alarm user and staff will be trained on the proper use of the system (See 930.08. Subd. 2 for testing requirements.).

930.11. False Alarm Fines. Subdivision 1. For each Police false alarm in excess of two (2) per calendar year (January 1 through December 31) and for each Fire false alarm in excess of one (1) per calendar year (January 1 through December 31), a fine shall be paid by the alarm user to the City of Hopkins. This fine shall be set by City Council resolution.

Subd. 2. False Alarm Billing. If a false alarm charge remains unpaid beyond 60 days, unpaid fees and fines may be collected by assessing the amounts against the property where the false alarm occurred.

930.13. Prohibited Acts. Subdivision 1. Automatic Dialing Devices. No person shall use or cause to be used any automatic dialing device that automatically selects any telephone line to the City, police, fire or any of its departments or divisions.

Subd. 2. Testing of Equipment. No alarm system designated to summon police, fire or medical personnel shall be tested or demonstrated without first notifying the Hopkins Public Safety Dispatch Center. The unannounced testing of equipment that results in notification and response by police, fire or medical personnel shall be in violation of this section and designated as a false alarm.

Subd. 3. Intentional False Alarms. No person shall intentionally activate a false alarm or otherwise, directly or indirectly, cause a false response of police, fire, or medical personnel. Persons intentionally causing false fire alarms shall be held financially responsible for the cost as set forth by Council resolution.

930.15. Required Access to Site. The Hopkins Police Department will only respond to a burglary alarm site once within a 24-hour period unless the alarm company has checked the alarm system, verified the alarm and is able to locate a key-holder who will provide police officers access to the site.

930.17. Audible Alarms. Alarm systems with audible sounds shall not sound for a period exceeding 15 minutes unless otherwise authorized.

930.19. Appeal Process. An alarm user who has been charged with a false alarm fine may appeal in writing to the Alarm Administrator within ten (10) days after notice was mailed. The Alarm Administrator will issue a decision in writing. An alarm user may appeal the decision of the Alarm Administrator by submitting a request in writing to the City Manager, or designee, within ten (10) days after notice of the decision was mailed.

930.21. Liability of the City. The regulation of alarms does not constitute acceptance by the city of liability to maintain equipment, to answer alarms, or to respond to alarms in any particular manner. The city has no responsibility for any consequential damage resulting from the city's failure to respond to an alarm.

930.23. Administrative Rules. The city manager, or designee, shall promulgate such rules as may be necessary for the implementation and enforcement of this section, and for the determination of the grounds for any suspension or revocation of a registration.

930.25. Enforcement and Penalties. Violation of any part of this ordinance will be considered a misdemeanor. In addition to criminal penalties, violations are subject to civil penalties as set by Council.

930.27. Confidentiality. Except as otherwise provided by law, information submitted pursuant to this section or rules issued hereunder are confidential and exempt from discovery. Subject to the requirements of confidentiality, the city manager may develop, maintain, and publish statistics pertaining to the uses, purposes, and other pertinent data necessary or desirable in the enforcement of this section.