

Chapter 57

ALARMS

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[HISTORY: Adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Upper Dublin 5-13-1986 as Title 7, Ch. 1, of the 1986 Code. Amendments noted where applicable.]

§ 57-1. Definitions. [Amended 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286, §1]

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

ALARM COMPANY—An entity that provides a service or protective system, or group of such systems, operated privately for an alarm user by a person, firm or corporation, and which maintains trained personnel and accepts signals or other messages from automatic protection devices at a protected premises reporting an emergency at a stated location and which has a duty to relay immediately by live voice or other communication method through designated channels, including and primarily through 9-1-1 telephone call answering points to emergency responders, particularly the Police Department or Fire Company. **[Added 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286]**

ALARM EQUIPMENT SUPPLIER—Any person, firm or corporation who sells or leases or installs automatic protection devices.

ALARM REGISTRATION FORM—Form provided by the Code Enforcement Department to be updated and returned annually to the Code Enforcement Department by every alarm user; also “permit.” **[Added 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900]**

ALARM SYSTEM—Any commercial or residential automatic protection device or any commercial audible alarm system. **[Added 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900]**

ALARM USER—Any individual, partnership, unincorporated association, corporation, trust or other legally recognized entity in control of any premises having an automatic protection device which notifies the Police Department or Fire Company, either directly or indirectly, and requires the response of the Police Department or Fire Company. **[Added 7-13-1993 by Ord. No. 843; amended 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900; 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286]**

ANSWERING SERVICE—A service whereby trained employees in attendance at all times receive prerecorded voice messages from automatic protection devices reporting an

emergency at a stated location and who have the duty to relay immediately by live voice any such emergency message over a designated or direct trunkline to the communications center of the Police or Fire Department.

AUDIBLE ALARM—Any device, bell, horn or siren which is attached to the interior or exterior of a building and emits a warning signal audible outside the building and designed to attract attention when activated by criminal act or other emergency requiring the Police Department or Fire Company to respond. **[Amended 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900; 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286]**

AUTOMATIC PROTECTION DEVICE—Also “automatic protective device.” An electrically operated instrument, composed of sensory apparatus and related hardware, which automatically transmits an alarm or signal to be relayed to the Police Department or Fire Company. **[Amended 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900; 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286]**

CENTRAL STATION PROTECTIVE SYSTEM—A protective system, or group of such systems, operated privately for customers by a person, firm or corporation which maintains supervisors and accepts recorded messages from automatic protection devices at a central station having trained operators and guards in attendance at all times that have the duty to take appropriate action upon receipt of a signal or message, including the relaying of messages by designated or direct trunkline to the communications center of the Police or Fire Department.

CHIEF OF FIRE DEPARTMENT—The Chief of the Fire Department of Upper Dublin Township.

CHIEF OF POLICE—The Chief of the Upper Dublin Township Police Department.

CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT—The Code Enforcement Department of the Township of Upper Dublin. **[Added 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900]**

DESIGNATED TRUNKLINE **[Repealed 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900]**

DIRECT TRUNKLINE **[Repealed 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900]**

EMERGENCY RESPONDER [FIRST RESPONDER]—An individual or organization that responds in an official or officially authorized capacity to situations that endanger health, safety, or property. **[Added 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286]**

FALSE ALARM—Any signal activated by an automatic protection device, any audible alarm or any other kind of direct or indirect signal given the Police Department or Fire Company to which police or firemen respond, which alarm or signal is not the result of a burglary, fire, robbery or similar emergency. **[Amended 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900; 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286]**

FIRE COMMUNICATIONS CENTER—The fire communications room and other rooms which house auxiliary communication equipment.

FIRE DEPARTMENT—The Township of Upper Dublin Fire Department. **[Amended 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286]**

FIRE MARSHAL—The Fire Marshal appointed by the Board of Commissioners of Upper Dublin Township.

INTERMEDIARY—An alarm company as herein defined. **[Amended 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286]**

KEY—To use a telephone line and equipment for transmitting a message either directly or indirectly by an automatic protection device.

PERMIT—See “alarm registration form.” **[Amended 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900]**

POLICE COMMUNICATIONS CENTER—The police communications room and other rooms which house auxiliary communication equipment.

POLICE DEPARTMENT—The Upper Dublin Township Police Department. **[Amended 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900]**

PRIMARY TRUNKLINE **[Repealed 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900]**

SECONDARY TRUNKLINE **[Repealed 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900]**

SECRETARY—The Secretary of the Township of Upper Dublin.

VERIFIED RESPONSE—The process by which an alarm company attempts to contact a person at the premises protected by the alarm system by telephone and/or other electronic means to determine whether an alarm signal is valid or the result of an actual emergency before requesting the dispatch of emergency personnel in an attempt to avoid an unnecessary alarm dispatch request. A person on site at the protected premises who can properly be identified must verify whether an alarm signal is a valid emergency alarm prior to notification of an alarm to emergency responders. **[Added 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286]**

§ 57-2. Timing mechanism required; exceptions. [Amended 7-13-1993 by Ord. No. 843]

Except as provided in Subsections A and B of this section, alarm users must equip audible alarms with a timing mechanism that will disengage the audible alarm after a maximum period of 15 minutes and leave the alarm disengaged until the alarm is serviced. Audible alarms without such a timing mechanism shall be unlawful in the Township and must be disconnected by the alarm user within 90 days from the effective date of this chapter, or the alarm user will be subject to a penalty as set forth in § 57-12 of this chapter. The following shall be excepted from the provisions of this section:

- A. Audible fire alarm signals provided for the evacuation of occupants of industries, institutions and other similar premises.
- B. Audible signals provided to indicate water flow in an automatic fire sprinkler system.

§ 57-3. (Reserved).¹

¹ Editor's Note: Former § 57-3, Keying to direct primary and secondary lines, was repealed 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900.

§ 57-4. Registration of installation and permit required. [Amended 7-13-1993 by Ord. No. 843; 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900; 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286, §2]

- A. Before any alarm system is installed, enlarged, extended or modified, a permit to use such alarm must be obtained from the Code Enforcement Department. A permit for alarm system use shall be in addition to any permits required by applicable building and construction codes. **[Amended 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286]**
- B. Within 120 days from the effective date of this chapter and thereafter within 30 days of the installation of any new or modified alarm system, every alarm user in the Township shall furnish as required by the Code Enforcement Department a registration of such installation, which alarm registration form shall include, but not be limited to, the following information: **[Amended 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286]**
- (1) The name, residence and telephone number of the user.
 - (2) The address where the device is installed and the telephone number of that address.
 - (3) The name, address and telephone number of the alarm company authorized to provide verified response as required by this chapter or gain access to the address where the device is installed. **[Amended 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286]**
 - (4) The name and telephone number of the alarm equipment supplier and of any person other than the alarm equipment supplier who is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the automatic protection device.
 - (5) A local emergency name and telephone number for the premises.
 - (6) Any additional information requested on the alarm registration form.
- C. (Reserved). **[Amended 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286]**
- D. All information furnished pursuant to these sections shall be kept confidential and shall be for the use of the Township only. **[Amended 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286]**
- E. Failure to provide registration information required by this section shall subject the alarm user to a penalty as set forth in § 57-12 of this chapter.

§ 57-5. Requirements. [Amended 7-13-1993 by Ord. No. 843; 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900]

Automatic protection devices installed in the Township shall meet the following requirements:

- A. The sensory mechanism used in connection with an automatic protective device must be adjusted to suppress false indications of fire or intrusion, so that the device will not be actuated by impulses due to fleeting pressure changes in water pipes, short flashes of light, the rattling or vibrating of doors and windows, vibrations to the premises caused by the passing of vehicles or any other force not related to genuine alarms.
- B. All components comprising such a device must be maintained by the user in good repair to assure maximum reliability of operation.
- C. Equipment is required to be installed in such a way as to neutralize electrical surges on the

alarm system.

- D. In all newly installed fire alarm systems, the sensory mechanism used in smoke detectors for fire alarm systems shall be installed with an alarm verification system that will attempt to reset the detector once prior to transmitting an alarm activation signal. In the event that a second signal is received from the same zone or an adjacent zone prior to verification, the system will go into alarm without delay.

§ 57-6. User manual required. [Amended 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900]

Each alarm equipment supplier who sells or leases an automatic protection device in the Township after the effective date of this chapter shall furnish operating instructions, a circuit diagram and maintenance manual to the user.

§ 57-7. Repair service.

- A. Each alarm equipment user in the Township shall arrange for repair service to be available directly or through an agent on a 24-hour-per-day basis, seven days a week, to repair such device or to correct any malfunction that may occur. **[Amended 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900]**
- B. The alarm user shall be responsible for having the device disconnected or repaired as quickly as possible after notice that the automatic protection device is not functioning properly.

§ 57-8. (Reserved). [Amended 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286, §3]

§ 57-9. (Reserved). [Amended 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286, §4]

§ 57-10. Fees. [Amended 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900; 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286, §5]

Alarm users shall pay such permit and permit renewal or repair fees as the Township shall set by resolution from time to time.² The Township may set permit fees and adopt regulations to implement this chapter from time to time.

§ 57-11. (Reserved). [Amended 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286, §6]

§ 57-12. Violations and penalties. [Amended 8-9-1988 by Ord. No. 753; 12-19-1989 by Ord. No. 776; 7-13-1993 by Ord. No. 843; 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900]

- A. During a period of 30 days after installation of a new alarm system or the modification of an existing system, the owner thereof shall be permitted three false activations without penalty only if the alarm system has been registered in accordance with § 57-4 of this

² Editor's Note: See Ch. 110, Fees.

chapter. If the alarm system is not registered in accordance with the requirements of this chapter, each false activation will incur a penalty as outlined in Subsection C below.

B. False activations shall incur penalties as follows:

- (1) Upon the expiration of the 30-day test period provided for in Subsection A of this section, the owner of an alarm system that is registered pursuant to § 57-4 of this chapter shall be permitted one false activation without penalty for any cause whatsoever, including misuse, accidental activation or equipment malfunction.
- (2) If more than one false activation occurs within 12 months following a false activation, the alarm user will be subject to a penalty as outlined in Subsection C below.
- (3) If a false activation occurs more than 12 months after a previous false activation and the alarm system is registered in accordance with the requirements of this chapter, the subsequent false activation shall be without penalty for any cause whatsoever, including misuse, accidental activation or equipment malfunction.
- (4) If a false activation occurs more than 12 months after a previous false activation but the alarm system is not registered in accordance with the requirements of this chapter, the subsequent false activation will incur a penalty in accordance with Subsection C below.

C. The Township shall notify an alarm user of a false activation on his property. Subject to the provisions of Subsections A and B above, within a twelve-month period following a false activation without penalty, or if the alarm system is not registered in accordance with this chapter, the alarm user may elect to avoid prosecution by paying the Township \$25 for the first penalized false activation, \$100 for the second penalized false activation and \$300 for the third penalized false activation, provided that payment is made within 48 hours after receipt of the notice.

D. For all subsequent false activation violations in any 12-month period following a false activation without penalty or in each case where the alarm user does not elect to avoid prosecution as set forth above, the alarm user shall be liable for prosecution and, if found guilty, shall pay a fine of not more than \$600, plus costs of prosecution, to be collectible before any District Justice as like fines or penalties are now by law collectible.

E. If an alarm system is not registered in accordance with the requirements of this chapter, for every alarm activation, whether false or for cause, in addition to any penalty the alarm user may incur as outlined above, the alarm user shall pay a fine of \$50.

F. Violation of any of the regulations set forth in this chapter other than false activations as outlined above shall result in a fine of not less than \$25 nor more than \$600, plus costs of prosecution, to be collectible before any District Justice as like fines or penalties are now by law collectible.

§ 57-13. Enforcement. [Amended 12-12-1995 by Ord. No. 900; 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286, §7]

Authorized officials of the Code Enforcement Department, the Fire Marshal, or any police officer are hereby empowered to enforce all provisions of this chapter and to write citations for any alarm violations.

§ 57-14. Verified response. [Added 3-11-2014 by Ord. No. 14-1286, §8]

An alarm user and/or property owner shall implement verified response for a fire alarm system installed in a residential dwelling unit within one year of the effective date of this section.

- A. Alarm verification. An alarm company shall not retransmit a fire alarm signal to emergency responders until an attempt is made to verify the accuracy of a fire alarm signal originating from a residential dwelling unit. Verification shall be made within 90 seconds of receipt of a fire alarm signal. If the alarm user or other properly identified person on site at the dwelling unit is contacted and can confirm that no emergency condition exists, then the alarm signal shall not be retransmitted. In all other situations, the alarm signal shall be immediately retransmitted.
- B. Alarm verification exceptions. Waterflow alarms, and manual pull station alarms shall be immediately retransmitted without alarm verification when they can be distinguished by the alarm company from other fire alarm systems on the protected premises.

