

TOWN OF WOODSTOCK, VERMONT
ALARM ORDINANCE

SECTION 1. AUTHORITY.

This ordinance is adopted by the Select Board of the Town of Woodstock under authority granted in 24 V.S.A. §§ 1971 and 2291 (14), (15).

SECTION 2. PURPOSE.

Human error and mechanical malfunctions of alarms in the Town of Woodstock result in a significant number of false alarms to which Woodstock Emergency Services Personnel must respond. This requires the unnecessary deployment of personnel and vehicles to non-emergency situations and causes unnecessary expenditure of public funds.

This ordinance is enacted to encourage responsible use of alarms, including proper maintenance of alarm equipment. The intent of this ordinance is to reduce the number of false alarms, conserve public resources, abate a public nuisance, and enhance the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the Town of Woodstock.

SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this ordinance, the following words and/or phrases shall apply:

Alarm Monitoring Company: A commercial or private alarm monitoring company that notifies Woodstock Emergency Services Personnel of the alarm activation upon receiving notification of an alarm.

Alarm System: Any mechanism or device that is used for the detection of fire, health hazard or unauthorized entry and which is designed to emit an audio or visual signal and/or to transmit to an Alarm Monitoring Company a signal, message, warning, or other indication of an occurrence requiring response by Woodstock Emergency Services Personnel.

Alarm System User: Any person, partnership, firm, association, or any other entity in control and/or ownership of any building, structure, premises, or facility where an Alarm System is installed, operated or maintained.

False Alarm: The activation of an Alarm System and/or the subsequent notification given by an Alarm Monitoring Company or others that an emergency exists when an emergency does not exist, and to which Woodstock Emergency Services Personnel have responded.

Key Lock Box: A small wall-mounted safe that holds building keys to allow entrance to the building by emergency response personnel.

Tape Dialer Device: An Alarm System that directly transmits to the Woodstock Dispatch Center via telephonic or electronic means, a prerecorded message requesting a response by Woodstock

Emergency Services Personnel.

Technically qualified Person: A Master Electrician or journeyman holding a type S commercial fire alarm system license.

Woodstock Emergency Services Personnel: Ambulance, constable, fire protection and police protection personnel employed by the Town of Woodstock.

Woodstock Dispatch Center: The communications department that provides dispatch services for Woodstock Emergency Services Personnel.

SECTION 4. TAPE DIALER PROHIBITION

It shall be unlawful to install, operate, or use a Tape Dialer Device in the Town of Woodstock. The installation, operation or use of a Tape Dialer Device shall result in the imposition of a Tape Dialer Penalty.

SECTION 5. ALARM SYSTEM STANDARDS

Alarm Systems shall have been evaluated and approved by Underwriters Laboratories, shall have the designation of being “U.L. Listed” and shall exhibit the mark of being U.L. Listed.

Alarm Systems shall be inspected and serviced annually by a person holding a Vermont master electrician license, journeyman electrician license, and/or a journeyman type-s commercial fire alarm system license issued in accordance with 26 V.S.A. Chapter 15. At a minimum, annual service of an Alarm System shall include cleaning of all detectors and other components of the Alarm System.

Alarm Systems emitting an audible signal shall be manually or automatically shut off within thirty minutes after being activated. Failure to shut off an audible signal within thirty minutes after being activated shall result in the imposition of an Audible Alarm Signal penalty.

SECTION 6. KEY LOCK BOX required, and KEY LOCK BOX STANDARDS

All buildings in the Town of Woodstock having a Fire Alarm System shall be equipped with a Key Lock Box containing a current set of keys capable of opening the building where the Alarm System is located. (This requirement may be waived by the Municipal Manager upon consultation with the Fire Chief/ or the Police Chief). , No such requirement exists for premises protected by a burglar alarm.

No Key Lock Box system shall be used, operated, or maintained in the Town of Woodstock that is not a KNOX BOX Rapid Entry System manufactured by the Knox Company.

All Key Lock Boxes shall be installed by the building owner in a location approved by the Chief of the Woodstock Fire Department.

Failure to install and maintain a Key Lock Box System as required above shall result in the imposition of a Key Lock Box Violation penalty.

SECTION 7. ALARM SYSTEM REGISTRATION

All Residential Alarm Systems in the Town of Woodstock shall be registered with the Woodstock Municipal Manager. An Alarm System Registration shall be valid for one year from the date of issuance. The fee for an Alarm System Registration shall be \$50.00.

Annually, on or before January 1 of each year (commencing January 1, 2009) or within five days of the installation of a new Residential Alarm System, an Alarm System User shall submit to the Woodstock Municipal Manager an application containing the following written information on a form approved by the Municipal Manager:

For purposes of this ordinance, commercial properties that are subject to the State of Vermont, Department of Public Safety, Fire Protection Division regulations and are required to test and maintain their alarm systems annually are not subject to the fines contained in Section 9, A, 3 and 4 of this ordinance, but are subject to fines outlined in 9, A, 1 and 2.

Premises protected by an alarm system that is limited to a burglar alarm, are not subject to fines specified under section 9 E of this ordinance.

All alarm system registration's shall expire on December 31 of every year.

1. Name, address and telephone number of the Alarm System User.
2. Name, address and telephone number of the Alarm Monitoring Company.
3. Full locatable directions to the premises where the Alarm System is located, including street name and 911 address number.
4. Information on the type of Alarm System installed at the premises.
5. Floor plans for the premises indicating the location of the Key Lock Box, alarm control panel, main electrical panel, hazardous or flammable materials, and such other information as may be pertinent to emergency service providers.
6. Name, addresses and telephone number of the emergency contact person who can be notified to unlock the premises and deactivate the Alarm System.
7. Proof that the Alarm System is U.L. Listed.
8. Proof that the Alarm System has been inspected and serviced by a technically qualified person in the preceding 90 days in accordance with Section V.

9. Proof that a Knox Box has been installed.

Upon review of an application, and determination that the application is complete, the Alarm System will be registered by the Municipal Manager. If the application is deemed incomplete, it will be returned to the Alarm System User with a note as to what information is missing from the application.

Failure to register an Alarm System shall result in the imposition of a Failure to Register penalty, which shall be levied in addition to false alarm response charges.

SECTION 8. FALSE ALARMS

Upon written notice following any False Alarm, the Chief of the Woodstock Fire Department, or the Woodstock Police Chief, may order that an Alarm System User file a written report within seven days indicating that the Alarm System has been inspected and repaired by a technically qualified person. Failure to obtain the necessary inspection or to file said written report within the prescribed time shall result in the imposition of a Failure to Report penalty.

A False Alarm from an unregistered Alarm System shall be penalized from the first False Alarm.

SECTION 9. PENALTIES AND ENFORCEMENT

A violation of this ordinance shall be a civil matter enforced in accordance with the provisions of 24 V.S.A. §§ 1974a and 1977 et seq. Any law enforcement officer of the Town of Woodstock shall be authorized to issue municipal complaints pursuant to this Ordinance.

A. False Alarms.

No penalty shall be imposed against an Alarm System User for the first False Alarm within a twelve-month period, except for False Alarms from an illegal dialer alarm or from an unregistered Alarm Systems as described below. No penalty shall be imposed against an Alarm System User for the second False Alarm within a twelve-month period if, following a first False Alarm, the Alarm System User has submitted a written report in conformance with Section 8 above. If such a report has not been submitted, the following shall apply:

1. The penalty for the second and subsequent offenses for a False Alarm, from a registered alarm system, requiring response by Woodstock fire protection personnel within a twelve-month period shall be \$600.00. The waiver fee shall be established at \$400.00 for the second offense and \$500.00 for the third and subsequent offenses during a twelve-month period.
2. The penalty for the second and subsequent offenses for a False Alarm requiring response by any other Woodstock Emergency Services Personnel within a within a twelve-month period shall be \$250.00. The waiver fee shall be established at \$150.00 for the second offense and \$200.00 for the third and subsequent offenses during a twelve-month period.
3. The penalty for the first offense for a False Alarm from an unregistered Alarm System requiring response from Woodstock fire protection personnel within a twelve month period shall be \$600.00 and the penalty for the second and subsequent offenses within a twelve month period

shall be \$500.00 for each offense. The waiver fee shall be established at \$500.00 for the first offense and \$400.00 for the second and subsequent offenses.

4. The penalty for the first offense for a False Alarm from an unregistered Alarm System requiring response from any other Woodstock Emergency Services Personnel within a twelve month period shall be \$300.00 and the penalty for the second and subsequent offenses within a twelve month period shall be \$250.00 for each offense. The waiver fee shall be established at \$200.00 for the first offense and \$150.00 for the second and subsequent offenses.

B. Audible Alarm Signals

The penalty for the first offense for any audible alarm signal that sounds for more than thirty minutes after activation within a twelve month period shall be \$200.00 and the penalty for the second and subsequent offenses shall be \$300.00 for each offense. The waiver fee shall be established at \$100.00 for the first offense and \$150.00 for the second and subsequent offenses.

C. Failure to Register an Alarm System

The penalty for a failure to register an Alarm System shall be \$200.00 and the waiver fee shall be established at \$100.00.

D. Failure to Report

The penalty for a Failure to Report service of an alarm system, following a false alarm activation, shall be \$150.00 and the waiver fee shall be established at \$100.00.

E. Key Lock Box Violation

The penalty for the first offense for a Key Lock Box Violation shall be \$200.00 and the penalty for the second and subsequent offenses shall be \$300.00 for each offense. The waiver fee shall be established at \$100.00 for the first offense and \$200.00 for the second and subsequent offenses.

F. Tape Dialer Violation

The penalty for the first offense for a Tape Dialer Violation, regardless of whether or not the call was false, shall be \$600.00 and the penalty for the second and subsequent offenses shall be \$800.00 for each offense. The waiver fee shall be established at \$400.00 for the first offense and \$500.00 for the second and subsequent offenses.

SECTION 10. LIABILITY

The Town's regulation of Alarm Systems and Key Lock Boxes shall not constitute acceptance by the Town of Woodstock for any liability to maintain any equipment, to answer alarms, or to take any action in connection therewith.

SECTION 11. SEVERABILITY

If any section, subsection, phrase, or any part thereof, is for any reason held to be invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity or effectiveness of the remaining portions of this ordinance or any part thereof.

SECTION 12. PUBLICATION AND POSTING

This Ordinance shall be entered in the Select Board minutes, filed with the Town Clerk, and posted in at least five (5) conspicuous places within the Town. A summary of this Ordinance shall be published in the Vermont Standard, not later than fourteen (14) days following the date specified below when this Ordinance is adopted.

SECTION 13. INFORMATION

The Woodstock Municipal Manager, whose telephone number is 457 - 3456, and whose address is 31 The Green, Woodstock, VT 05091, is a person knowledgeable about the Ordinance and is available to answer questions and provide persons with a full text thereof.

SECTION 14. RIGHT TO PETITION

Citizens of the Town of Woodstock are further hereby notified that within forty-four (44) days from the date of adoption they may petition for a vote on the above Ordinance at an annual or special town meeting as provided in 24 V.S.A. § 1973.

SECTION 15. ADOPTION and EFFECTIVE DATE

This Ordinance is hereby adopted by the Select Board of the Town of Woodstock on this the 20th day of May, 2008, and shall, unless a petition is filed as provided by law, become effective upon sixty (60) days from this date.

TOWN OF WOODSTOCK

SELECT BOARD

Margaretta F. Howe, Chair

Jack Anderson

Preston Bristow

John D. Doten, Jr.

Bruce C. Gould

