

**CHAPTER 2
ALARMS**

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2-1 Purpose *

This Ordinance has been adopted to protect public safety and welfare by developing regulations and procedures which reduce the likelihood of false alarms. False alarms are a public nuisance; they needlessly waste the time and resources of the Town's public safety departments, and can negatively impact the preparedness and responsiveness of police, fire, and rescue personnel.

2-2 Statutory Authority *

This Ordinance has been promulgated under the authority granted the Town's Legislative Body by 24 V.S.A. § 2291(14).

2-3 Definitions

- a. **Alarm System -** Any alarm device which automatically dials the emergency telephone number of the Police, Fire Department or Rescue Squad and uses a pretaped or prerecorded message to alert that an emergency exists or that the services of such department are needed. "Alarm System" shall also mean any alarm device which automatically emits an audible, visual or other response upon the occurrence of any hazard or emergency, and is intended to alert a person outside the building to the existence of said hazard or emergency. The term shall also include fire alarms for the purposes of this local law, and includes alarm signals transmitted to privately operated central stations.

* 2/21/95 Amended to conform to "Municipal Ordinance Enforcement Act", so called.

- b. **Dial Alarm or Dialing Device -** Any fire, police, or rescue alarm device which is a telephone device or telephone attachment which automatically or electronically selects a telephone line connected to police headquarters, or other station, and reproduces a prerecorded message to report a criminal act or other emergency requiring Police, Fire Department, or Rescue Squad response.
- c. **False Alarm -** The activation of an alarm through negligence of an alarm user, or employee, improper installation, mechanical failure, malfunction, or any other cause which results in the Police, Fire, or Rescue Squad responding, where it is determined after investigation that no criminal or emergency activity or attempted criminal or emergency activity has occurred.
- d. **Police Emergency Number -** Any telephone number designated by the Chief of Police as a telephone number through which members of the public may report an emergency or request public assistance.
- e. **Issuing Officials -** The Town Officials authorized to issue complaints in the enforcement of this Ordinance.

2-4 Filing Requirements

The user of every alarm system maintained in the Town, except those installed in motor vehicles, shall file with the Police Department the information requested on a form approved and provided by the Chief of Police.

Such filing requirements are applicable to all alarm systems, whether they are directly connected to the police headquarters, or are monitored in some other manner.

2-5 Permit Requirements

The Chief of Police is hereby authorized to grant a revocable permit to any owner, lessee, or occupant of property located in the Town to operate, maintain, install, or modify a police, rescue, or fire alarm device. No such device shall be allowed to operate unless a permit has been issued.

2-6 Dialing Devices

All dialing devices operated by automatic means shall transmit messages only to such numbers as may be designated for such a purpose by the Chief of Police of the Town.

2-7 Limitations on Dialing Devices

No person shall use, operate, or install any dialing device that will, upon activation, automatically dial, call, or connect with the telephone number designated by the Chief of

Police, for the purpose of receiving such alarm messages, more than twice for any one incident.

2-8 Delay

Upon the activation of a burglary (break-in) alarm, there shall be a mandatory delay of at least fifteen (15) seconds before the transmission of a signal to the Police Department, to enable the user to abort the signal in the event that it was triggered inadvertently. This delay shall not be applicable to a robbery (holdup), fire, or medical emergency alarm.

2-9 Timing Device*

With the exception of fire alarms, users of alarm systems emitting an audible, visual, or other response shall install, or cause to be installed, an automatic timing device which shall deactivate such alarm so that it will remain activated for no more than fifteen (15) minutes.

2-10 Disconnection

In the event that an alarm system emitting an audible or other similar response shall fail to be deactivated within the time limitation specified in Section 2-9, the Town shall have the right to take such action, including entry, as may be necessary in order to disconnect any such alarm.

2-11 Administrative Rules

The Chief of Police shall determine police response to alarms, and such response shall be confidential information for the protection of persons responding.

2-12 Fees**

An annual fee of \$30.00 shall be assessed for all alarm permits.

2-13 Civil Designation *

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.

2-14 Penalties ***

a. Any person who fails to comply with the provisions of this Ordinance (excluding Section 2-14b) shall be punished by a fine of \$100.00. Each day that such a violation continues shall constitute a separate violation. The waiver fee shall be set at \$50.00.

* 6/11/02 Excluded fire alarms from timing device requirements.

** 6/11/02 Changed fee from \$75.00 to \$30.00 and extended it to all alarms

*** 2/21/95 Amended to conform to "Municipal Ordinance Enforcement Act", so called.

b. Penalties for false alarms shall be assessed by the Police Department upon alarm users as follows:

1. One to two false alarms per calendar year - a verbal warning.
2. Three false alarms per calendar year - a written warning. Said warning shall state the time and date of the three false alarms recorded, and inform the user in question that he/she shall be subject to a fine, as specified in paragraph b.3 of this Section, if future false alarms occur.
3. Four or more false alarms per calendar year - a fine of \$200.00 per offense. The waiver fee shall be set at \$100.00.

2-15 Enforcement *

Issuing officials authorized to enforce this Ordinance shall be any Manchester Police Officer.

2-16 Limitation of Liability

Neither the Town of Manchester nor any of its officers shall be under any obligation or duty to an alarm user, or to any other person hereunder, by reason of this Ordinance. The Town of Manchester specifically disclaims liability for any damages which may be caused by failure to respond to an alarm.

2-17 Severability

If any part or parts of this Ordinance are for any reason held to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

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* 2/21/95 Amended to conform to "Municipal Ordinance Enforcement Act", so called.