

## ARTICLE 51

### ALARM SYSTEMS

#### Section 1 Definitions

For the purpose of this by-law the following terms, phrases, words and their derivations shall have the meanings given herein. When not inconsistent with the context, words used in the present tense include the future; words used in the plural number include the singular number; and words in the singular number include the plural number. The word "shall" is always mandatory and not merely directory.

- a. The term "Alarm System" means an assembly of equipment and devices or a single device such as a solid state unit which plugs directly into a 110 volt AC line, arranged to signal the presence of a hazard requiring urgent attention and to which police are expected to respond. Fire alarm systems and alarm systems, which monitor temperature, smoke, humidity, or any other condition not directly related to the detection of an unauthorized intrusion into a premises or an attempted robbery at a premises are specifically excluded from the provisions of this by-law.
- b. The term "Alarm User" or "User" means 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 by-law are central station 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. If such a system, however, employs an audible signal emitting sounds or a flashing light or beacon designed to signal persons outside the premises, such system shall be within the definition of "alarm system," as that term is used by this by-law, and shall be subject to this by-law.
- c. The term "Automatic Dialing Device" refers to an alarm system which automatically sends over regular telephone lines, by direct connection or otherwise, a prerecorded voice message or coded signal indicating the existence of the emergency situation that the alarm system is designed to detect.
- d. The term "Central Station" means an office to which remote alarm and supervisory signaling devices are connected, where operators supervise circuits or where guards are maintained continuously to investigate signals.
- e. The word "Town" means Town of Natick.
- f. The term "Communications Console" means the instrumentation on alarms console at the receiving terminal of a signal line which, through both visual and audible signals, indicates an activation of an alarm system at a particular location, or which indicates line trouble.

- g. The term "Direct Connect" means an alarm system which has the capability of transmitting system signals to and receiving them at the Natick Police Department Communications Center.
- h. The term "False Alarm" means (1) the activation of an alarm system through mechanical failure, malfunction, improper installation or negligence of the user of alarm system or of his employees or agents; (2) any signal or oral communication transmitted to the police department requesting, or requiring, or resulting in a response on the part of the police department, when in fact there has been no unauthorized intrusion or attempted unauthorized intrusion into a premises and no attempted robbery or burglary at a premises. Excluded from this definition are activations of alarm systems caused by power outages, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, malfunction of telephone transmission lines and similar conditions.
- i. The term "Interconnect" means to connect an alarm system to a voice grade telephone line, either directly or through a mechanical device that utilizes a standard telephone for the purpose of using the telephone line to transmit an emergency message upon the activation of the alarm system.
- j. The term "Police Chief" means the Chief of Police of the Town of Natick Police Department, or any authorized agent thereof.
- k. The term "Police" or "Police Department" means the Town of Natick Police Department, or any authorized agent thereof.
- l. The term "Public Nuisance" means anything which annoys, injures or endangers the comfort, repose, health or safety of any person(s) or of any community or neighborhood.
- m. The term "Selectmen" means the Natick Board of Selectmen.

## **Section 2           Administrative Rules**

The Police Chief may promulgate such rules as may be necessary for implementation of this by-law.

## **Section 3           Automatic Dialing Devices - Interconnection to Natick Police Department**

- a. No automatic dialing device shall be interconnected to any telephone numbers at the police department after the effective date of this by-law.
- b. Within six (6) months after the effective date of this by-law, all automatic dialing devices interconnected to any telephone numbers at the police department shall be disconnected therefrom. The user of each such device shall be responsible for having the device disconnected upon notification by the Police Chief.

#### **Section 4            Automatic Dialing Devices - Intermediary Services**

Any person using an automatic dialing device may have the device interconnected to a telephone line transmitting directly to:

- a. a central station;
- b. an answering service; or
- c. any privately-owned or privately operated facility or terminal.

#### **Section 5            Direct Connection to Police Department**

a. All alarms must be authorized by the Police Chief prior to being connected to the police department.

b. In accordance with the normal practices in effect in the town, the Police Chief shall have the authority to request bids or proposals from 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 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, except that no fee shall be assessed to the municipality for any alarms or connections to the console from properties owned by the municipality.

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 paragraph (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 user's premises and the alarm receiving equipment at the police 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.

d. The provisions of this article concerning false alarms shall apply to all alarm users or persons having direct connect systems, except municipal, county and state agencies and religious organizations.

## **Section 6                    Control and Curtailment of Signals Emitted by Alarm Systems**

- a.        Every alarm user shall submit to the Police Chief and the alarm company who maintains the system at the police communications console the names and telephone numbers of at least two 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, and who can open the premises wherein the alarm system is installed. The names, addresses and telephone numbers 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 Station shall be equipped with a test device which will give a ten-second delay or longer prior to the alarm system activation in order to warn the alarm user of an open alarm circuit.
  
- c.        Any alarm system that is heard audibly in a residential neighborhood in excess of five (5) times in any seven (7) day period, and any alarm system emitting a continuous and uninterrupted signal for more than thirty (30) minutes which cannot be shut off or otherwise curtailed due to the absence or unavailability of the alarm user or those persons designated by him under paragraph (a) of this section, and 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 an alarm system, the Police Chief shall endeavor to contact the alarm user under paragraph (a) of this section in an effort to abate the nuisance. The Police Chief shall cause to record the names and addresses of all complaints and the time each complaint was received.

In the event that the Police Chief is unable to contact the alarm user, or member of the alarm user's family, or those persons designated by the alarm user under paragraph (a) of this section, or if the aforesaid persons cannot or will not curtail the audible signal being emitted by the alarm system, and if the Police Chief is otherwise unable to abate the nuisance, he may direct a police officer or a firefighter or a qualified alarm technician to enter upon the property outside the home or building in which the alarm system is located and take any reasonable action necessary to abate the nuisance.

If entry upon the property outside the home or building in which the alarm system is located is made in accordance with this section, the person so entering upon such property (1) shall not conduct, engage in, or undertake any search, seizure, inspection or investigation while he is upon the property; (2) shall not cause any unnecessary damage to the alarm system or to any part of the home or building; and (3) shall leave the property immediately after the audible system has ceased. After an entry upon property has been made in accordance with this section, the Police Chief shall have the property secured, if necessary. The reasonable costs and expenses of abating a nuisance in accordance with this section may be assessed to the alarm user, said assessment not to exceed \$50.00.

Within ten (10) days after abatement of a nuisance in accordance with this section, the alarm user may request a hearing before the Selectmen and may present evidence showing that the signal emitted by this alarm system was not a public nuisance at the time of the abatement; that unnecessary damage was caused to his property in the course of the abatement; that the costs of the abatement should not be assessed to him; or the requirements of this section were not fulfilled. The Selectmen shall hear all interested parties and may, in its discretion, reimburse the alarm user for the repairs to his property necessitated by the abatement, or excuse the alarm user from paying the costs of abatement.

### **Section 7            Testing of Equipment**

No alarm system designed to transmit emergency messages directly to the police department shall be worked on, tested or demonstrated without obtaining permission from the Police Chief. Permission is not required to test or demonstrate alarm devices not transmitting emergency messages directly to the police department. An unauthorized test constitutes a false alarm.

### **Section 8            Emergency Notification List**

Every business establishment within the Town whether alarmed or not shall provide written notice to the Police Chief listing the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of at least two persons who may be reached at any time, day or night and the two are authorized to respond to any emergency which has caused the police to be dispatched to said premises. Such notice shall be submitted during the first month of each year and shall be kept current at all times reflecting any changes in authorized personnel. Owner-residents shall be excluded from this paragraph.

### **Section 9            False Alarms**

a.        When emergency messages are received by the police department that evidence false alarms, the Police Chief shall take action as may be appropriate under paragraphs (b), (c), (d) and (e) of this section and, when required by the terms of the aforementioned paragraphs, order that use of an alarm system be discontinued.

b.        After the police department has recorded three (3) separate false alarms within the calendar year from an alarm system, the Police Chief shall notify the alarm user, in person, by telephone, or by mail of such fact and require the said user to submit, within fifteen (15) days after receipt of such notice, a report describing efforts to discover and eliminate the cause or causes of the false alarms. If the said user, on the basis of absence from the town, or on any other reasonable basis requests an extension of time for filing the report, the Police Chief may extend the fifteen (15) day period for a reasonable period. If the said user fails to submit such a report within fifteen (15) days or within any such extended period, the Police Chief shall order that use of the alarm system be discontinued. Any such discontinuance shall be effectuated within fifteen (15) days from the date of the receipt of the Police Chief's order.

c. In the event that the Police Chief determines that a report submitted in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section is unsatisfactory, or that the alarm user has failed to show by the report that he has taken or will take reasonable steps to eliminate or reduce false alarms, then the Police Chief shall order that use of the alarm system be discontinued. Any such discontinuance shall be effectuated within fifteen (15) days from the date of receipt of the Police Chief's order.

d. In the event that the police department records five (5) false alarms within the calendar year from an alarm system, the Police Chief may order that the user of the alarm system discontinue use of the alarm system for the calendar year, but for not less than six (6) months from the date the alarm was disconnected. In the event that the police department records eight (8) false alarms within the calendar year from an alarm system, the Police Chief shall order that the user of the alarm system discontinue use of the alarm system for the calendar year, but for not less than six (6) months from the date the alarm was disconnected.

e. Any user of an alarm system which transmits false alarms shall be assessed a penalty of one hundred (\$100.00) dollars for each false alarm in excess of three (3) occurring within the calendar year. All fines assessed hereunder shall be paid to the town Treasurer for deposit in the general fund. Upon failure of the user of an alarm system to pay two (2) consecutive fines assessed hereunder within sixty (60) days of assessment the Police Chief shall order that the user discontinue use of the alarm system. Any such discontinuance shall be effectuated within fifteen (15) days from the date of receipt of the Police Chief's order.

f. Any user of an alarm system who has, in accordance with this section, been ordered by the Police Chief to discontinue use of an alarm system may appeal the order of discontinuance to the Selectmen. Notice of an appeal shall be filed with the Town Clerk within ten (10) days of the date of the order of discontinuance. Thereafter the Selectmen shall consider the merits of the appeal, and in connection therewith shall hear evidence presented by all interested persons. After hearing such evidence, the Selectmen may affirm, vacate or modify the order of discontinuance.

## **Section 10            Penalties**

The following acts and omissions shall constitute violations of this by-law punishable by fines of up to \$100.00:

- a. failure to obey an order of the Police Chief to discontinue use of an alarm system, after exhaustion of the right of appeal;
- b. failure to disconnect an automatic dialing device from any telephone numbers at the police department within six (6) months after effective date of this by-law;
- c. interconnection of an automatic dialing device to any telephone numbers at the police department after the effective date of this by-law;
- d. failure to pay two (2) or more consecutive fines assessed under this by-law within sixty (60) days from the date of assessment;
- e. failure to comply with the requirements of Section 6;
- f. failure to comply with the requirements of Section 8.

Each day during which the aforesaid violations continue shall constitute a separate offense.