

Chapter 54

ALARMS

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[HISTORY: Adopted by the Borough Council of the Borough of Bechtelsville 3-11-1996 by Ord. No. 230. Amendments noted where applicable.]

§ 54-1. Definitions and word usage.

- A. As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated, unless a different meaning clearly appears from the context:

ALARM — An audible signal emitted by a warning device indicating that a crime, fire, or other emergency situation warranting immediate action by the police department or fire company has occurred or is occurring. This definition shall include, but shall not be limited to, those alarm devices which provide for a telephoned warning message to the Boyertown Area Communication Center, or its successor.

ALARM DEVICE — An electrical (or electronic) or mechanical device designed to automatically transmit an alarm by wire, telephone, radio or other means:

- (1) To a person who is instructed to notify the Boyertown Area Communication Center, or its successor, of the alarm; or
- (2) To activate a bell or sounding device to be heard outside a building which is intended to alert the police or others to the existence of a crime, fire or other emergency situation warranting police or fire company action.

BOROUGH — Borough of Bechtelsville, Berks County, Pennsylvania, and its duly authorized agents, servants, or employees.

COMMUNICATION CENTER — The Boyertown Area Communication Center, or its successors.

FALSE ALARM — An alarm to which the police department or fire company respond resulting from the activation of an alarm device when a crime, fire or other emergency warranting immediate action by the police department or fire company has not in fact occurred.

FIRE COMPANY — The Keystone Fire Company, Bechtelsville, Pennsylvania, and all members thereof.

PERSON — An individual, corporation, partnership, incorporated association or other similar entity.

POLICE DEPARTMENT — The Colebrookdale Township Police Department and all the members thereof, or any other police department servicing the Borough of Bechtelsville and all the members thereof.

- B. In this chapter, the singular shall include the plural; the plural shall include the singular; and the masculine shall include the feminine and the neuter.

§ 54-2. Operational standards for alarm devices.

- A. If an alarm device is connected to a system required to transmit a message to the Communication Center, the duration of such message shall not exceed 30 seconds. The contents of the message shall be intelligible and in a format approved by the Communication Center.
- B. An alarm device need not contain a delay service which causes a delay to occur between the time the alarm device receives a triggering stimulus and the time the alarm device transmits an alarm.
- C. An alarm device connected to a system required to transmit a message to the Communication Center shall be designed to dial only specific telephone numbers designated by the Communication Center.
- D. If an alarm device is designed to cause a bell, siren or sound-making device to be activated on or near the premises on which the alarm device is installed at the time it gives an alarm, said alarm device shall be designed to deactivate the bell, siren or other sound-making device after five minutes of operation. Preexisting units must be modified for a five-minute device unless said unit cannot be modified without replacement.
- E. All alarm devices shall meet the applicable standards of the Underwriters Laboratories and/or the National Fire Protection Association, and/or other recognized industry standards, and shall be permitted under this chapter if in conformity thereto.
- F. The sensory mechanism used in connection with an alarm device must be adjusted to suppress false indications of fire or intrusion, so that the alarm device will not be activated by impulses due to transient pressure change in water pipes, short flashes of light, wind noises such as the rattling or vibrating of doors or windows, vehicular noise adjacent to the premises, or other forces unrelated to genuine alarm situations.
- G. The alarm device must be maintained by the owner or occupant of property protected by such alarm device in good repair to assure reliability of operation.

§ 54-3. False alarms.

- A. False alarms. No person owning or occupying any property within the Borough shall cause or allow to be caused a false alarm.
- B. Penalty for false alarms. A person that owns, uses or possesses an alarm device or automatic dialing device may not, after causing or permitting three false alarms to occur in a consecutive twelve-month period, cause or permit a subsequent false alarm to occur

in the same consecutive twelve-month period. A person that violates this subsection commits a summary offense and shall, upon conviction, be sentenced to pay a fine of not more than \$300 pursuant to 18 Pa.C.S.A. § 7511.¹

- C. When a false alarm occurs, the Borough shall, within 30 days from the date of the false alarm, notify the person who owns or occupies the property from which the false alarm emanated or other person causing said false alarm that a false alarm occurred and whether a false alarm charge is due and, if so, the amount thereof. Such notice shall be in writing and mailed to the property owner or occupant and/or person causing said false alarm at his last known address by regular mail, postage prepaid. Failure of the Borough to mail notice of assessment of a false alarm charge within 30 days from the occurrence of a false alarm shall preclude the Borough from assessing a false alarm charge for said false alarm.
- D. A false alarm charge shall be due and payable at the office of the Borough 30 days from the date of the mailing of the notice of assessment of the charge.
- E. Failure of a person who owned or occupied the property from which the false alarm emanated or the person who caused the false alarm to pay a false alarm charge on or before the date due shall constitute a violation of the chapter, and shall subject said person to the penalties set forth in § 54-7 hereof.

§ 54-4. Testing.

No person shall conduct or test any alarm device without first obtaining permission from the Borough. Where the equipment is keyed through an intermediary, no such permission is necessary unless the alarm or signal is to be relayed to the Communication Center.

§ 54-5. Administration and enforcement.

Administration and enforcement of this chapter shall be functions of the Borough and shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

- A. Authority to order the disconnection of an alarm device until such device is made to comply with operational standards set forth herein, but only when evidence of failure to comply with said standards imposes a burden upon the Borough as a result of false alarms.
- B. Authority, at reasonable times and upon written notice, to enter upon any premises within the Borough to inspect the installation and operation of an alarm device.

§ 54-6. Right to appeal.

Whenever, under the provisions of this chapter, the Borough is empowered to make a decision with respect to the installation, operation, maintenance, or disconnection of any alarm device, any person aggrieved by such decision may, within 10 days following the decision, file a

1. Editor's Note: Amended at time of adoption of Code (see Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. I).

written appeal therefrom with the Borough Council, whereupon the Borough Council shall promptly conduct a hearing and affirm, modify or reverse the decision appealed from. The decision of the Borough Council shall be final.

§ 54-7. Violations and penalties.

Any person, firm or corporation who shall violate any provision of this chapter shall, upon conviction thereof, be sentenced to pay a fine of not more than \$1,000, plus costs of prosecution, and, in default of payment of such fine and costs, to imprisonment for a term not to exceed 30 days.