

Isle of Wight County, Virginia, Code of Ordinances >> CHAPTER 2. - ADMINISTRATION. >> [Article VI. - False Alarms.](#) >>

**Article VI. - False Alarms.** For state law as to authority of the County to regulate alarm systems, see Code of Va., §§ 15.2-911.

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**Sec. 2-15.- Purpose.**

The purpose of this article is to minimize unnecessary use of the county's emergency services by reducing the number of false alarms and regulating the installation and maintenance of alarm systems. (10-18-07.)

**Sec. 2-16.- Definitions.**

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this Article, shall have the meaning ascribed to them herein, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Alarm system\means any device or system that transmits a signal that indicates a hazard or occurrence requiring an emergency response. The term "alarm system" shall not include a personal, direct telephonic call requesting emergency services.

Alarm user and user\mean the occupant of premises protected by an alarm system.

Answering service\means a telephone answering service that receives emergency signals from alarm systems and informs the County emergency communications center.

Automatic dialing service\means a device interconnected to a telephone line and programmed to indicate a need for emergency response.

Chief\means any one of the volunteer fire department fire chief's or their designee.

False alarm\means any alarm signal received by the county emergency communications center which is not in response to an actual or possible emergency. False alarms include negligently activated signals, signals due to faulty, malfunctioning or improperly installed or maintained equipment, and signals purposely activated to summon fire, rescue and/or law enforcement personnel in non-emergency situations. False alarms do not include signals activated by unusually severe weather conditions, utility conditions or other causes which the chief or the Sheriff determines were beyond the user's control.

Indirect alarm transmittal\ means any alarm system which causes a third party or answering service to notify the county emergency communications center of an alarm activation.

Installer\ means any person who installs, services, monitors, sells or leases any alarm system.

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, to transmit an emergency message upon the activation of the alarm system.

Negligently activated signals\ means signals transmitted due to carelessness or negligence in installation, maintenance or operation of an alarm system.

Non-emergency situations\ means situations where an immediate response by fire personnel is not necessary to protect life or property.

Sheriff\ means the Isle of Wight County Sheriff or his designee. (10-18-07.)

### **Sec. 2-17.- Penalty.**

Violations of Sections 2-18, 2-19 and 2-20 shall be punishable as a Class 1 misdemeanor. (10-18-07.)

### **Sec. 2-18.- User data form.**

Upon installing an alarm system, all users shall submit a county data form to the county emergency communications center with the following information: name and location of the alarmed premises; type of alarmed premises (residential or commercial); normal operating hours, if commercial; individuals designated by the user to respond when notified; manufacturer, model and type of alarm system; name, address and telephone number of the service company; zone of alarm, if applicable; and other applicable information. This requirement shall not be applicable to single-unit heat and smoke detectors four or less in number. (10-18-07.)

### **Sec. 2-19.- Training of persons using system; maintenance of system.**

It shall be the responsibility of alarm system users to provide training to employees, tenants or other persons about activation of the alarm system in emergency situations and about proper operation of the alarm system, including setting, activating and resetting the alarm. All instructions about alarm systems and procedures shall be in writing and shall be available for inspection by the appropriate county employees or agents. The user shall also be responsible for maintaining the alarm system in proper working order. (10-18-07.)

### **Sec. 2-20.- Automatic dialing devices.**

It shall be unlawful for any person to install, sell, lease, use or cause or allow to be installed, sold, leased or used, within the county, automatic dialing devices or systems which are set or programmed to directly contact the county emergency communications center without the prior approval of the sheriff. (10-18-07.)

### **Sec. 2-21.- Deliberate false alarms.**

It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly activate or cause to be activated an alarm system in a non-emergency situation without just cause. This shall not prohibit periodic testing of direct transmittal systems when the county emergency communications center has been notified in advance. (10-18-07.)

### **Sec. 2-22.- Service fee for false alarms.**

- (a) Response by fire and/or rescue personnel. Fees in the following amount shall be assessed against commercial alarm system users for false alarms resulting in response by fire and/or rescue personnel and occurring during any period of one hundred eighty successive days, and against residential alarm system users during any period of ninety successive days. Alarm system users shall pay such service fee for false alarms within thirty days of billing.
- (1) First false alarm No charge
  - (2) Second false alarm No charge
  - (3) Third false alarm \$100.00
  - (4) Fourth false alarm \$250.00
  - (5) Fifth and subsequent false alarms \$500.00
- (b) Response by sheriff's office personnel. Fees in the following amounts shall be assessed against commercial alarm system users for false alarms resulting in response by sheriff's office personnel and occurring during any period of one hundred eighty successive days, and against residential alarm system users during any period of ninety successive days. Alarm system users shall pay such service fee for false alarms within thirty days of billing.
- (1) First false alarm No charge
  - (2) Second false alarm No charge

- (3) Third false alarm \$50.00
- (4) Fourth false alarm \$75.00
- (5) Fifth and subsequent false alarms \$150.00
- (c) Exceptions. Service fees shall not be charged for false alarms from alarm systems in premises owned, leased, occupied or under the control of the United States, the Commonwealth of Virginia, political subdivisions of the Commonwealth of Virginia, or any of their officers, agents or employees while they are acting or are employed in their official capacity. However, all other requirements of this article shall apply to such systems.
- (d) Billing; interest on unpaid charges. The chief and the sheriff shall notify the county emergency communications center of each false alarm to which they respond and such information shall be retained and maintained by the county emergency communications center. At the end of each month, the emergency communications manager shall notify the Isle of Wight County Treasurer of service fee assessments for false alarms. The emergency communications manager shall provide the name of the alarm system user, the address of the false alarm, and the amount due for the false alarm. The Isle of Wight County Treasurer shall bill the user and notify the emergency communications manager when any account is more than thirty days in arrears. Any account more than thirty days in arrears shall be subject to interest at the legal rate provided by the Code of Virginia, commencing when the account is more than thirty days in arrears. (10-18-07.)