

ORDINANCE NO. 18
JEFFERSON COUNTY ALARM SYSTEMS ORDINANCE

The Jefferson County Board of Supervisors does ordain as follows:

18.01 TITLE. This ordinance shall be known as the Jefferson County Alarm Systems Ordinance.

18.02 DECLARATION OF PURPOSE. The purpose of this ordinance is to provide minimum standards and regulations applicable to burglar, fire and holdup alarm systems, alarm business and alarm users. Both society in general and public safety in particular will be aided by providing a useful and usable system of private security which properly balances quick response by law enforcement with minimization of law enforcement time spent on alarms which are false or otherwise not the intended function of private security systems.

18.03 DEFINITIONS. Within this chapter, the following terms, phrases and words and their derivations have the meanings given herein:

(1) The term "alarm business" means any business in which the owners or employees engage in the activity of altering, installing, leasing, maintaining, repairing, replacing, selling or servicing alarm systems.

(2) The term "alarm system" means an assembly of equipment and devices or single device such as a solid-state unit which plugs directly into 110-volt AC line or otherwise receives electrical energy arranged to signal the presence of a hazard requiring urgent attention and to which the Sheriff's Department is expected to respond. In this ordinance the term "alarm system" shall include the terms "automatic holdup alarm systems", "burglar alarm systems", "holdup alarm systems", and "manual holdup alarm systems" as those terms are hereinafter defined, and fire alarm systems which monitor temperature, humidity or any other condition directly related to the detection of fire. Excluded from this definition and from the coverage of this ordinance are alarm systems used to alert or signal persons within the premises in which the alarm system is located, of an attempted, unauthorized intrusion or holdup attempt, or fire.

(3) The term "annunciator" means the instrumentation on an alarm console at the receiving terminal of a signal line through which both visual and audible signals show when an alarm device at a particular location has been activated, or which, in the event of malfunction, may also indicate line trouble.

(4) The term "answering service" refers to a telephone answering service providing among its services the service of receiving on a continuous basis through trained employees, emergency signals from alarm systems, and thereafter immediately relaying the message by live voice to the Dispatch Center of the Sheriff's Department.

(5) 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.

(6) The term "automatic holdup alarm system" means an alarm system in which the signal transmission is initiated by the action of the robber.

(7) The term "manual holdup alarm system" refers to an alarm system in which the signal transmission is initiated by the direct action of the person attacked or by an observer thereof.

(8) The term "burglar alarm system" refers to an alarm system which signals an entry or attempted entry into the area protected by the system.

(9) The term "direct connect" means an alarm system which has the capability of transmitting system signals to the Sheriff's Department Dispatch Center.

(10) The term "false alarm" means the activation of an alarm system through mechanical failure, malfunction, improper installation, or the negligence of the owner or lessee of an alarm system, or of his employees or agents or other undetermined cause. False alarm does not include alarms caused by tornadoes, other violent climatic conditions, or intermediate disruption of telephone circuits beyond the control of the alarm company and/or alarm owner/lessee. [am. Ord. 98-44, 12-08-98]

(11) 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.

(12) The term "central station" means an office to which remote alarm and supervisory signaling devices are connected, where operators supervise the circuits.

(13) The term "primary trunk line" means a telephone line leading directly into the Dispatch Center of the Sheriff's Department that is for the purpose of handling emergency calls on a person to person basis and which is identified as such by a specific number included among the emergency numbers listed in the telephone directory, or numbers in sequence therewith.

(14) The term "subscriber" means a person who buys or leases or otherwise obtains an alarm system and thereafter contracts with or hires an alarm business to monitor and/or service the alarm system.

18.04 ADMINISTRATIVE RULES. The Jefferson County Sheriff shall promulgate such rules as may be necessary for the implementation of this ordinance. Such rules shall require the approval of the Law Enforcement Committee and shall be open to inspection by the public.

18.05 AUTOMATIC DIALING DEVICES. No person shall interconnect any automatic dialing device to a Sheriff's Department primary trunk line. No person shall permit such devices, which were installed prior to the effective date of this ordinance, to remain interconnected from any property owned or controlled by that person. Such devices may be connected to a central station or

an answering service. Relaying messages so received to the Sheriff's Department shall only be done person to person on the telephone line. The Law Enforcement Committee may approve a direct line installation between a central station or answering service to the Sheriff's Department, with full costs to be borne by the intermediate service. Direct dial alarm devices used by physically handicapped persons are specifically exempt from this section.

18.06 DIRECT CONNECTIONS TO THE SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT. Alarms from premises may be terminated in the Sheriff's Department by direct connect. Such connections must receive individual approval of the Sheriff. Such connections shall be accomplished in the following manner:

(1) All connections shall terminate in the annunciator panel.

(2) Any subscriber or alarm user who obtains authority from the Sheriff to terminate its alarm system in the Sheriff's Department may contract with any alarm business of its choice for the sale, installation, maintenance and/or servicing of the alarm system to be installed on its premises.

(3) The alarm subscribers approved for a direct connection to the Sheriff's Department, or the alarm business contracting for servicing the subscribers' alarm systems, shall be responsible for obtaining the leased telephone line between a subscriber's premises and the alarm-receiving equipment at the Sheriff's 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 standard annunciator panel.

(4) The alarm subscriber will provide the Sheriff's Department with 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 the automatic alarm device, and who can open the premises wherein the device is installed.

(5) Only burglar, holdup and fire alarms will be permitted for direct connection.

18.07 TESTING. (1) No alarm system designed to transmit emergency messages directly to the Sheriff's Department shall be tested or demonstrated without prior notification of the Sheriff's Department dispatcher. Subscribers will be advised on proper test procedure.

(2) No alarm system relayed through intermediate services to the Sheriff's Department will be tested to determine Sheriff's Department response without first notifying the Sheriff's Department dispatcher.

18.08 NOTIFICATION. When the service provided by an alarm business to its subscribers is disrupted for any reason by the alarm business, or the alarm business becomes aware of such disruption, it shall promptly notify its subscribers by telephone that protection is no longer being provided. If, however, the alarm business has written instructions from its subscriber not to make such notification by telephone during certain hours, the alarm business may comply with such instructions.

18.09 FEE FOR ANSWERING ALARMS. There is hereby imposed a fee for law enforcement response to any alarm resulting from the activation of an alarm system, except when law enforcement finds that an unauthorized person is on the premises, was seen on the premises immediately before the alarm was activated, or that there is fresh evidence of forcible entry or attempted forcible entry. There shall be no fee for the first two responses in any 12-month period. Thereafter, the alarm owner/lessee shall pay a fee of \$25 for the third response in said 12-month period; \$50 for the fourth response in said 12-month period; and \$100 for the fifth and each successive response in the 12-month period. The fee is inapplicable when the alarm is caused by a tornado, other violent climatic conditions, or intermediate disruption of telephone circuits beyond the control of the alarm company and/or alarm user. This fee is imposed whether the Sheriff's Department receives the alarm by direct connection or through an intermediary such as an answering service or central station. If the Sheriff is notified of the date of the installation of a new alarm system, the fee imposed by this section is waived for a 90-day period from the date of installation. Failure to pay the fee within 30 days of receipt of the bill shall be grounds for immediate disconnect from the system. [am. 12-08-98, Ord. 98-44]

18.10 TERMINATION OF DIRECT CONNECTION. The Sheriff, with the approval of the Law Enforcement Committee, is authorized to require that the owner or lessee of any alarm system directly connected to the Department, shall disconnect such device until it is working in such a manner as will not produce a high frequency of false alarms. The Sheriff and the Law Enforcement Committee shall not require such disconnection unless at least four false alarms are received in a 12-month period.

18.11 PENALTIES. Any person who violates any provision of this ordinance shall upon conviction thereof pay a forfeiture to the County of Jefferson of not less than \$10 nor more than \$300, along with statutory assessments and costs. The Sheriff's Department is authorized to issue citations for violations of this ordinance. [am. 12-08-98, Ord. 98-44]

18.12 PRIVATE REVIEW REQUIRED. The owner or operator of any premises for which the Sheriff's Department has received seven false alarms within any six-month period shall be required to have further alarms answered by private security forces at the expense of the alarm owner/lessee to determine whether or not any subsequent alarms are false alarms before the alarm is transmitted to the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department for response.

18.13 ALARM PANEL. The Sheriff may select an alarm business to provide a master alarm panel, at no cost to Jefferson County, to be located in the Dispatch Center. The Sheriff shall review any annual fee assessed to subscribers by the alarm business providing the panel for reasonableness. No alarm business shall remove a master alarm panel without six months prior notice to its subscribers and Jefferson County, and the cost of removal shall be borne solely by the alarm business. The alarm business chosen shall permit, through intercompany agreements, other alarm companies to terminate alarms to the master alarm panel.

18.14 COUNTY LIABILITY. The County of Jefferson shall be under no duty or obligation to a subscriber or to any other person concerning any provision of this ordinance, including but not limited to, any defects in an alarm system or any delays in transmission or response to any alarm; however, this in no way shall be construed that it is not the proper function

of law enforcement to respond to alarms.

18.15 SEVERABILITY. The provisions of this ordinance are to be severable and the unconstitutionality or illegality of any section shall not affect the remainder of this ordinance.

18.16 EFFECTIVE DATE. This ordinance shall take effect upon passage and publication as required by law.

Adopted 04/21/81, Ord. #18

Amended 1998-44, adopted 12/08/98