PURPOSE

The purpose of City of Huntsville Ordinance 21-984 is to encourage security camera system users, security alarm users, and alarm businesses to register alarm systems and security camera systems with the city, maintain operational reliability of alarms and security cameras, and limit unnecessary police emergency responses to false alarms. This Ordinance governs burglary, robbery, panic and holdup alarm systems, and security camera systems; requires permits, establishes fees, provides for penalties and violations, establishes a system of administration, and encourages their proper use.

DEFINITION

False alarm shall mean an alarm notification or dispatch request summoning the Police Department to the location of the alarm activation where the responding officer finds no evidence of any criminal offense, or attempted criminal offense, after having completed an inspection of the interior or exterior of the alarm site.

ALARM PERMIT

Alarm systems operated within the Huntsville city limits must be permitted through the Public Safety Alarms Office. Permits are non-refundable and not transferable in name, ownership, or location. Permits must be posted in a conspicuous place at the front entrance of the site and be visible from the exterior. Permit holders are responsible for advising the Public Safety Alarms Office of any changes on the registration form. Permits are valid for twelve calendar months and must be renewed annually within 30 days of the anniversary date. Security camera systems may voluntarily participate in the police security camera-share program by registering security camera systems with the Police Department and sharing public-facing video recordings or video recordings from cameras located on the outside of homes or businesses with law enforcement.

FINES AND PENALTIES

An alarm user or permit holder shall be subject to warnings, fines, and other penalties depending on the number of false alarm notifications (FAN) emitted from an alarm system within a 12-month period based upon the following schedule:

1. First and second FAN: Warning only
2. Third and fourth FAN: $50 Fine
3. Fifth FAN: $75 Fine
4. Sixth and subsequent FAN: $100 Fine per Occurrence, and the existing alarm permit shall be placed in Inactive Status

Non-permitted or unregistered alarm systems are subject to $100 fine in addition to the penalty for the designated FAN. A registered site placed in Inactive Status shall be subject to a $50 fine in addition to the penalty for the designated FAN. Failure to renew an alarm permit within 30 days of the anniversary date shall result in a fine in addition to the renewal fee.

EXAMPLES OF AN EXCUSED FALSE ALARM

- Alarm activation signal caused by extreme weather conditions which cause damage to the premises or alarm system. Such damage must be clearly established and must be verified by the Public Safety Alarms Office.
- Alarms caused by failure of the alarm equipment. Alarm user must provide written proof of repair of the alarm equipment to the Public Safety Alarms Office.
- Intermittent disruption of the telephone circuit which is beyond the control of the alarm company and/or the alarm user.
- Electrical power disruption or failure that exceeds two hours in duration.

HPD dispatch does not accept alarm cancellations from individuals. ALL alarm cancellations must be submitted by the alarm monitoring company prior to the dispatch of a police officer.