

Ordinance # 2012-19

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD TO AMEND PART II, CHAPTER 11 - EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCY SERVICES – ARTICLE II – ALARM SYSTEMS, TO PROVIDE FOR PENALTIES; TO PROVIDE FOR CODIFICATION; TO PROVIDE FOR SEVERABILITY; TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; TO PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED** by the governing authority of the City of Springfield Council in a meeting assembled and pursuant to lawful authority thereof,

The text of PART II, CHAPTER 11, ARTICLE II of the City of Springfield Georgia Municipal Code is deleted in its entirety and replaced as follows:

CHAPTER 11 – EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

ARTICLE II. ALARM SYSTEMS

Sec. 11-19. Purpose.

Established to discourage excessive false alarms at any single residence or commercial location, enhance the safety of officers of the city police and fire departments, protect the lives and property of the citizens of the city, reduce unnecessary use of police and fire department resources, and produce revenues to defray the costs of police and fire department responses to false alarms, a false alarm service fee is hereby established.

Sec. 11-20. Definitions.

The following terms, when used in this section, shall have the meanings ascribed below:

Alarm System – means an assembly of equipment and devices arranged to signal the presence of a hazard requiring urgent attention by the city police and/or fire department.

False alarm – means an alarm and alarm signal eliciting notification to and response by the police or fire department when there is no evidence of a crime, fire, or other activity that warrants a call for immediate police or fire department assistance and no person who was on or near the property or has viewed a video communication from the property called for the police or fire dispatch or confirmed the need for police or fire department assistance. “False alarm” does not include an alarm signal caused by violent conditions of nature or other extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of the alarm user (i.e., acts of God).

Sec. 11-21. Fees for false alarms.

The owner or lessee of any residential or commercial property with an alarm system shall pay to the City of Springfield a fee for each false alarm responded to by the police or fire departments within a calendar year. For the first three alarms there shall be no fee, but a warning shall be given. For the fourth and all further responses in any calendar year, the following fees shall apply:

Number of false alarms	Response fee per call
4-6	\$150.00
7-9	\$300.00
10-15	\$400.00
In excess of 15	\$500.00

Payment of fees for false alarms shall be due and payable within thirty (30) days of the date of the notice. When payment of fees for false alarm has not been paid within thirty (30) days of the date of the notice 10% interest shall be applied, with an additional 10% interest every thirty (30) days that the balance is unpaid.

Sec. 11-22. Exceptions.

Each of the following circumstances shall not constitute a false alarm and no fee shall be assessed:

- (a) Alarm conditions activated by a person working on the alarm system with prior notification to the city police and/or fire department.
- (b) Alarms which can be substantiated as being activated by electrical interruptions, floods, storm conditions, or other natural disasters.
- (c) Alarms related to any "Life Alert" type device designed to notify emergency services of individuals with special needs.

Sec. 11.23. Appeal.

Any owner or lessee of an alarmed premise may appeal the assessment of a false alarm service fee. Such appeal shall be in writing and filed with the city manager within ten days of the notification of the assessment. Upon appeal, the city manager may consider the facts and circumstances of the false alarm (i.e., whether the false alarm was caused by violent conditions of nature or other extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of the alarm user), and other relevant information.

Sec. 11.24. Maintenance to minimize false alarms; response by owner of commercial property.

The owner or lessee of any residential or commercial property with an alarm system shall maintain the premises and alarm system in a manner that will minimize or eliminate false alarms. The owner or lessee of any commercial property with an alarm system shall respond or cause their representatives to appear at the system location within a reasonable period of time when notified by the city police or fire department or monitoring company to provide access to the premises, deactivate the alarm system, or provide security at the alarm location.

Sec. 11.25. Failure to pay.

The payment of false alarm service fees billed to a business is a condition of that business operating within the city. The city manager is authorized to withhold issuing or renewing a business license or business tax certificate to a business which has failed to pay a false alarm service fee. Any business which operates or continues to operate within the city when its business certificate or license has been withheld for nonpayment of the false alarm service fee will be deemed to be operating without a certificate or license, and will be subject to the penalties resulting therefrom.

Sec. 11.26. Effective date.

This ordinance shall become effective on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of February 2013.

Sec. 11.27. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed.

**APPROVED** this 14<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2012.

**CITY OF SPRINGFIELD**

  
Barton A. Alderman, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

  
Linda T. Rineair, City Clerk