

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 21-0050  
(First Reader)**

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Introduced by: The Council President and Councilmembers Bullock, Middleton

At the request of: The Administration (Executive Office of the Mayor)

Introduced and read first time: March 22, 2021

Assigned to: Public Safety and Government Operations Committee

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REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Police Department, Executive Office of the Mayor, Department of Finance, Fire Department, Department of Housing and Community Development

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A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 **Burglar Alarms Registration and Regulation – False Alarms**

3 FOR the purpose of revising the fees assessed to alarm system users for repeated false alarms;  
4 altering the number of false alarms within year that will result in the placement of the  
5 premises into a no-response status; requiring that alarm system monitors make certain  
6 additional attempts to verify the need for a police response; making certain stylistic changes;  
7 and providing for a special effective date.

8 BY repealing and re-ordaining, with amendments,

9 Article 19 - Police Ordinances

10 Sections 8-8, 8-9, 8-11

11 Baltimore City Code

12 (Edition 2000)

13 **SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
14 Laws of Baltimore City read as follows:

15 **Baltimore City Code**

16 **Article 19. Police Ordinances**

17 **Subtitle 8. Burglar Alarms - Registration and Regulation**

18 **§ 8-8. False alarm fees.**

19 (a) *User responsible.*

20 (1) The user of an alarm system is responsible for payment to the City of the false alarm  
21 fees imposed under this section. Failure to pay a false alarm fee or ANY attendant late  
22 fee within 60 days of imposition is a violation of this subtitle.

23 (2) For purposes of this section, 2 or more false alarms that occur within the same  
24 calendar day as a result of a single event are considered a single false alarm.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.  
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

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1 (b) *RESIDENTIAL USER FEE [Fee] schedule.*

2 After 1 false alarm in any 12-month period, a false alarm fee is imposed ON ANY  
3 RESIDENTIAL USER for each false alarm, based on the following schedule:

4	<b>False alarms within</b>	
5	<b>12-month period</b>	<b>Fee</b>
6	2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup>	[\$ 50] \$75
7	4 <sup>th</sup>	[ 100] \$150
8	5 <sup>th</sup>	[ 150] \$250
9	[6 <sup>th</sup>	200
10	7 <sup>th</sup>	250
11	8 <sup>th</sup>	300
12	9 <sup>th</sup>	350
13	10 <sup>th</sup>	400
14	11 <sup>th</sup>	450
15	12 <sup>th</sup> and above, for residential users	500
16	12 <sup>th</sup> , 13 <sup>th</sup> , or 14 <sup>th</sup> , for non-residential users	1,000
17	15 <sup>th</sup> and above, for non-residential users	2,000]

18 (C) *NON-RESIDENTIAL USER FEE SCHEDULE.*

19 AFTER 1 FALSE ALARM IN ANY 12-MONTH PERIOD, A FALSE ALARM FEE IS IMPOSED ON ANY  
20 NON-RESIDENTIAL USER FOR EACH FALSE ALARM, BASED ON THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE:

21	<b>FALSE ALARMS WITHIN</b>	
22	<b>12-MONTH PERIOD</b>	<b>FEE</b>
23	2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup>	\$150
24	4 <sup>th</sup>	\$300
25	5 <sup>th</sup>	\$500

26 (D) [(c)] *Waiver.*

27 (1) The Commissioner must waive 1 false alarm fee if the alarm system user:

28 (i) has the alarm system inspected by a registered contractor or monitor;  
29 and

30 (ii) obtains from the contractor or monitor a certification that the alarm system has  
31 been inspected and is functioning properly.

32 (2) If a false alarm fee is waived under this subsection and the user is subject to a  
33 subsequent false alarm fee, that subsequent fee will be assessed as if the previous fee  
34 had not been waived.

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1 (E) [(d)] *Late fee.*

2 (1) The Commissioner may assess a late fee of \$25 for any false alarm fee that is not  
3 paid:

4 (i) within 30 days of the Commissioner's notice that the false alarm fee has been  
5 imposed; or

6 (ii) if a timely appeal has been made, within 30 days of the final decision in that  
7 appeal.

8 (2) If the false alarm or late fee is not paid within 10 business days of the  
9 Commissioner's notice that the late fee has been imposed, the Commissioner may  
10 place the user's alarm system on no-response status, as provided in § 8-9 {"NO-  
11 RESPONSE STATUS"} of this subtitle.

12 (F) [(e)] *Warning of no-response status.*

13 (1) After a [10<sup>th</sup>] SECOND false alarm within any 12-month period, the Commissioner  
14 must send a warning notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the user,  
15 with a copy by regular mail to the monitor.

16 (2) The notice must state that:

17 (i) a [10<sup>th</sup>] SECOND false alarm has occurred;

18 (ii) if A TOTAL OF 5 [more] false alarms occur within the same 12-month period,  
19 the user's alarm system will be placed on no-response status, as provided in  
20 § 8-9 {"NO-RESPONSE STATUS"} of this subtitle; and

21 (iii) reinstatement may only be obtained on written application to the  
22 Commissioner.

23 **§ 8-9. No-response status.**

24 (a) *"No-response status" defined.*

25 In this section, "no-response status" means that, except for a hold-up alarm or a panic  
26 alarm, police will not be dispatched to investigate an alarm signal

27 (b) *When required.*

28 (1) An alarm system will be placed on no-response status if, after a warning notice has  
29 been sent [in accord with § 8-8(e)] PURSUANT TO § 8-8(F) of this subtitle, the alarm  
30 system has had [15] 5 or more false alarms in any 12-month period.

31 (2) The Commissioner may reinstate the alarm system only if:

32 (i) the user applies in writing for reinstatement; and

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(ii) the Commissioner finds that the alarm system has been repaired, upgraded, or replaced and the cause of the false alarms corrected.

(c) *When authorized.*

The Commissioner may place an alarm system on no-response status if:

(1) the alarm system user has made any false statement of material fact in the user’s registration application;

(2) the user’s registration is revoked; or

(3) the user fails to pay timely any fee imposed under § 8-8 {“FALSE ALARM FEES”} of this subtitle.

**§ 8-11. Verification of alarm signal.**

(a) *Scope.*

This section does not apply to a hold-up alarm or panic alarm.

(b) *Monitor to attempt to verify.*

(1) *IN GENERAL.*

Before requesting a police response to an alarm signal, a monitor must attempt to contact the alarm system site OR USER, by telephone, electronically, or visually, to verify the need for a police response.

(2) *SECOND ATTEMPT REQUIRED.*

FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION, VERIFICATION SHALL REQUIRE, AT A MINIMUM, THAT A SECOND ATTEMPT BE MADE TO A DIFFERENT NUMBER IF THE FIRST ATTEMPT FAILS TO REACH AN ALARM USER OR AN INDIVIDUAL AT THE ALARM SYSTEM SITE WHO CAN PROPERLY IDENTIFY THEMSELVES TO DETERMINE WHETHER AN ALARM SIGNAL IS VALID BEFORE REQUESTING A POLICE RESPONSE.

**SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That the catchlines contained in this Ordinance are not law and may not be considered to have been enacted as a part of this or any prior Ordinance.

**SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That this Ordinance takes effect on the 120<sup>th</sup> day after the date it is enacted.