

**City of Gem Lake, Ramsey County, Minnesota**  
**Alarm Systems**  
**Ordinance No. 48**

**AN ORDINANCE REGULATING THE USE OF ALARM SYSTEMS, ESTABLISHING USER FEES, ESTABLISHING A SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION OF SUCH ALARMS, AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR FALSE ALARMS.**

**Section 1. Title.** This ordinance shall be known, cited, and referred to as “the Alarm Ordinance,” except as herein referred to as “this ordinance.”

**Section 2. Scope and purpose.**

1. **Scope.** This ordinance provides regulations for the use of fire, burglary, and safety alarms, establishes users’ fees and establishes a system of administration.
2. **Purpose.** The purpose of this ordinance is to protect public safety services of the city from misuse of public safety alarms and to provide for the maximum possible service to public safety alarm users.

**Section 3. Definitions.**

1. **Alarm System.** An alarm installation designed to be used for the prevention or detection of burglary, robbery, or fire and located in a building, structure, or facility.
2. **Alarm User.** The person, firm, partnership, association, corporation, company, or organization of any kind in control of any building, structure, or facility wherein an alarm system is maintained.
3. **Excessive False Alarms.** More than three (3) false alarms generated or reported by an alarm user during a calendar year (January 1 – December 31)
4. **False Alarm.** An alarm signal eliciting a response by personnel of the Public Safety Department when a situation requiring a response does not, in fact, exist and which is caused by the activation of the alarm system through mechanical failure, pet movement, alarm malfunction, improper installation, or the inadvertence of the owner or lessee of an alarm system or of his/her employees or agents. False alarms do not include alarms caused by climatic conditions such as tornadoes, thunderstorms, utility line mishaps, violent conditions of nature, or any other conditions which are clearly beyond the control of the alarm manufacturer, installer, or owner.
5. **Public Safety Department.** The agency or staff designated to respond to an alarm system designed to be used for prevention or detection of burglary or robbery; the agency or staff designated to respond with respect to an alarm system designed to be used for the prevention or detection of fire.

**Section 4. Reports of False Alarms; Notice to Alarm User.** The Public Safety Department shall file, a written report of each false alarm with the Gem Lake City Clerk. Upon receipt of the first false alarm report at an address, the Clerk shall, by certified mail, notify the alarm user of the provisions of this ordinance.

**Section 5. User Fees; Notice.** An alarm user owning an alarm system which precipitates or reports excessive false alarms shall be subject to a penalty fee as determined by the City’s fee schedule as adopted by ordinance. Upon receipt of a fourth (4th) and all subsequent false alarms reports as to an alarm system, the Clerk shall notify the alarm user by certified mail that the threshold number of false alarms has occurred, and that the applicable user fee, specified in the City of Gem Lake Fee Schedule as adopted by ordinance, is owed.

**Section 6. Appeals Process.** Any alarm user who is required by the City to pay a user fee as the result of a false alarm may make a written appeal of the false alarm charge to the City Council within ten (10) days of the City's mailing of the notice of false alarm. The City Council will have authority to make a final determination as to whether the appellant is to be charged with a false alarm fee.

**Section 7. Payment of Fees.**

1. **When and Where Due.** Payment of user fees provided for under Section 5 must be made to the City within thirty (30) days of the date of notice by the City to the alarm user. Failure to pay the fee within said thirty (30) day period will cause the alarm user to be considered delinquent and subject to a penalty of a full ten percent (10%) of the fee due.
2. **Delinquencies.** All delinquent charges for user fee shall be certified by the Administrator to the Ramsey County Department of Property Taxation for collection with taxes due against the property on which the alarm system is installed. This certification process shall take place on a yearly basis by October 10 of each year or by such earlier date as is necessary to have the delinquent charges collectible with taxes due and payable against the property in the next calendar year.

**Section 8. Exceptions.** The provisions of this ordinance are not applicable to alarm systems affixed to automobiles, boat trailers, house trailers, and recreational motor vehicles.

**Section 9. Enforcement and Penalties.** In addition to any fines, costs, or assessments provided for by this Ordinance or other City Ordinances, the City may prosecute a violation of any provision of this Ordinance as a misdemeanor, and a person, if convicted, may be punished by the maximum fine and term of imprisonment provided by Minnesota Statutes § 609.02, subd. 3, as that statute may be amended from time to time.

**Section 10. Liability of City.** The regulation of alarm response shall not constitute acceptance by the City of liability to maintain equipment, to answer alarms, or to respond to alarms in any particular manner.

**Section 11. Effective Date.** This Ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and publication.

Dated: September 17, 2024

Gretchen Artig-Swomley  
Gretchen Artig-Swomley, Mayor

Melissa Lawrence  
Melissa Lawrence, Acting City Clerk

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The Ordinance regulating the use of alarm systems, establishing user fees, establishing a system of administration of such alarms, and providing penalties for false alarms, was originally enacted by the City Council as Ordinance No. 48 on August 17th, 1987. Since that time, the City Council has made amendments to the Ordinance in keeping with changes in State law and the wishes of the community. The following table indicates the original Ordinance and the said amendments.

Ordinance	Description	Enactment
48	Regulating the use of alarm systems, establishing user fees, establishing a system of administration of such alarms, and providing penalties for false alarms	17 August 1987
48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fees begin after 3 false alarms.</li> <li>- Fees are located in the City Fee Schedule adopted by Ordinance.</li> <li>- Repeal of sections regarding alarm reports, confidentiality, and administrative rules.</li> <li>- Including sections regarding exceptions, liability, and definition of ‘excessive false alarms’.</li> </ul>	17 September 2024