

*Chapter 8.64*  
**ALARM SYSTEMS**

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**8.64.010 Definitions.**

- A. "Alarm Administrator" means a Person or Persons designated by the Sheriff to administer, control and review false alarm reduction efforts and will be administering the provisions of this ordinance.
- B. "Alarm Business" means Persons, partnerships, corporations, or associations who conduct the business of monitoring any Alarm System within unincorporated Pierce County.
- C. "Alarm Dispatch Request" means a notification to the Sheriff's Department that an alarm, either manual or automatic, has been activated at a particular Alarm Site.
- D. "Alarm Site" means a single fixed premise or location served by an Alarm System or Systems. Each unit, if served by a separate Alarm System in a multi-unit building or complex, shall be considered a separate Alarm Site.
- E. "Alarm System" or "Intrusion Detection System" means a device, or series of devices, including, but not limited to, hardwired systems and systems interconnected with a radio frequency method such as cellular or private radio signals, which emit or transmit a remote or local audible, visual or electronic signal indicating an alarm condition and intended to summon a third party response, including Local Alarm Systems. The following devices shall not constitute alarm systems within the meaning of this subsection:
  - 1. Devices or mechanisms primarily protecting a motor vehicle;
  - 2. Devices that are not installed, operated or used for the purpose of reporting an emergency to the Sheriff's Department;
  - 3. Devices installed on a temporary basis by the Sheriff's Department.



- 1 F. "Alarm User" means any Person, who (which) has contracted for Monitoring, repair,  
2 installation or maintenance service from an Alarm Business for an Alarm System, or  
3 who (which) owns or operates an Alarm System which is not monitored, maintained or  
4 repaired under contract.
- 5 G. "Arming Station" means a device that allows control of an Alarm System.
- 6 H. "Automatic Voice Dialer" means any electrical, electronic, mechanical, or other device  
7 capable of being programmed to send a prerecorded voice message, when activated,  
8 over a telephone line, radio, or other communication system, to a law enforcement,  
9 public safety or emergency services agency requesting dispatch.
- 10 I. "Cancellation" means the process where Department response is terminated when an  
11 Alarm User or Alarm Business (designated by the Alarm User) for the Alarm Site  
12 notifies the Department that there is not an existing situation at the Alarm Site requiring  
13 law enforcement agency response after an Alarm Dispatch Request.
- 14 J. "Conversion" means the transaction or process by which one Alarm Business begins the  
15 servicing and/or Monitoring of a previously unmonitored Alarm System or an Alarm  
16 System previously serviced and/or monitored by another alarm company.
- 17 K. "Department" means Pierce County or the Pierce County Sheriff's Department.
- 18 L. "Duress Alarm" means a silent Alarm System signal generated by the entry of a  
19 designated code into an Arming Station in order to signal that the Alarm User is being  
20 forced to turn off the system and requests a law enforcement response.
- 21 M. "False Alarm" means an Alarm Dispatch Request to the Department where the  
22 responding law enforcement officer finds no evidence of a criminal offense or attempted  
23 criminal offense.
- 24 1. An alarm signal caused by extraordinary violent conditions of nature such as severe  
25 winds, floods, and earthquakes of an intense magnitude (as opposed to the normal  
26 minor tremors experienced frequently) would not be deemed a False Alarm.
- 27 2. Equipment malfunctions, user errors, Alarm Business errors, conditions of nature,  
28 that are normal for that area which cause an alarm signal are deemed False Alarms.
- 29 N. "Holdup Alarm" means a silent alarm signal generated by the manual activation of a  
30 device intended to signal a robbery in progress.
- 31 O. "Law Enforcement Authority" means the Sheriff and those law enforcement officers  
32 commissioned by the Sheriff.
- 33 P. "Local Alarm System" means any Alarm System, which is not monitored by an Alarm  
34 Business, that produces an alarm signal only at the Alarm Site.
- 35 Q. "Monitoring" means the process by which a Alarm Business receives signals from an  
36 Alarm System and relays an Alarm Dispatch Request to the Department or Third Party  
37 for the purpose of summoning a response to the Alarm Site.
- 38 R. "One Plus Duress Alarm" means the manual activation of a silent alarm signal at an  
39 Arming Station by entering a code that adds one to the last digit of the normal  
40 arm/disarm code (e.g., normal code = 1234, One Plus Duress Code = 1235).
- 41 S. "Panic Alarm" means an audible Alarm System signal generated by the manual  
42 activation of a device intended to signal a life threatening or emergency situation  
43 requiring law enforcement response.
- 44 T. "Person" means an individual, corporation, partnership, association, organization or  
45 similar entity.
- 46 U. "Responder Call Out", means an individual capable of reaching the Alarm Site within  
47 minutes and having access to the Alarm Site, the code to the Alarm System and the  
48 authority to approve repairs to the Alarm System.



- 1 V. "Response Eligibility", means an alarm site that is in compliance with this ordinance,  
2 there are no outstanding fees owed by the Alarm User or Alarm Business, and the  
3 Sheriff has not revoked response to this location for cause.
- 4 W. "Third Party" means a Person designated by the Alarm User or Alarm Business to  
5 respond to the Alarm Site to verify that a criminal act has occurred or is occurring  
6 requiring law enforcement to respond.
- 7 X. "Vision Obscuring Device" means an alarm system or device that emits or produces real  
8 or simulated smoke, fog, vapor, or any like substance that obscures vision. These  
9 devices are not authorized for use at any alarm site where the potential for an Alarm  
10 Dispatch exists.

11  
12 **8.64.020 Duties of the Alarm User.**

- 13 A. An Alarm User shall:
- 14 1. Display the street address of the Alarm Site at or near the front of the premises and  
15 at other places where access is available, such as from an alley or parking lot. The  
16 street address shall be clearly visible and readable from the exterior of the premise.
  - 17 2. Maintain the Alarm Site and utilize the Alarm System in a manner that will  
18 minimize or eliminate False Alarms;
  - 19 3. Make every reasonable effort to have a Responder to the Alarm System's location  
20 within 45 minutes, when requested by the law enforcement agency, in order to:  
21 a. Deactivate an Alarm System; or  
22 b. Provide access to the Alarm Site; or  
23 c. Provide alternative security for the Alarm Site.
  - 24 4. Not activate an Alarm System for any reason other than an occurrence of an event  
25 that the Alarm System is intended to report.
- 26 B. Businesses with Alarm Systems that contain property at the Alarm Site such as,  
27 weapons, ammunition, explosives, or hazardous materials where the Alarm User cannot  
28 be immediately contacted, shall ensure they have pre-arranged with a Third Party to  
29 secure the site immediately upon notification by the Sheriff's Department. This  
30 information shall be part of the Alarm Business Record. Either the Alarm Business or  
31 the Sheriff's Department shall be authorized to request the Third Party respond to secure  
32 the site on behalf of the Alarm User. Failure to arrange a Third Party Responder or the  
33 Third Party failing to respond in a timely manner will result in a minimum security  
34 charge of \$100.00 per hour, or the actual costs, whichever is higher, to secure the  
35 material or location.
- 36 C. Any Person who owns, operates, or possesses any Alarm System within unincorporated  
37 Pierce County which does not conform to the requirements of this Chapter shall  
38 disconnect that alarm and render it inoperable or alter it in accordance with this Chapter  
39 no later than ~~April~~ January 1, 2006, or be subject to no response for intrusion alarm  
40 activations requests for dispatch.

41  
42 **8.64.025 Registration Requirements of Alarm Businesses.**

- 43 A. **Registration Required.** From and after ~~April~~ January 1, 2006, all Person(s) who  
44 conduct the business of monitoring Alarm Systems in any building, structure, site or  
45 other property within unincorporated Pierce County are required to register with the  
46 Sheriff's Department Alarm Administrator.



1 B. **Registration Application.** All Alarm Businesses are required to complete a registration  
2 application form. Information required to be provided on the registration application  
3 form includes, but is not limited to:

- 4 1. Alarm Business name, physical address, mailing address, business telephone  
5 number.
- 6 2. Contractor and/or state business license number.
- 7 3. Principals of the Alarm Business.
- 8 4. A 24-hour telephone number to the monitoring center.
- 9 5. The number of alarm systems being monitored within unincorporated Pierce County  
10 broken down by residential and business.

11 C. **Alarm Business Registration Restrictions.**

- 12 1. Any false statement of material fact made by an applicant for the purpose of  
13 obtaining an Alarm Business registration to monitor Alarm Systems shall be  
14 sufficient cause for refusal to issue, or revocation of a registration;
- 15 2. Any incomplete Alarm Business registration application will result in automatic  
16 denial of the registration request;
- 17 3. An Alarm Business registration cannot be transferred to another Person or business;
- 18 4. An Alarm Business shall inform the Alarm Administrator of any change that alters  
19 any of the information in subsections 8.64.025 B. 1. thru B. 4. within five business  
20 days of such change;
- 21 5. All fees owed by the Alarm Business applicant must be paid before an Alarm  
22 Business registration may be issued or renewed.

23  
24 **8.64.026 Registration Duration and Renewal.**

25 An Alarm Business's registration shall expire one year from the date of registration and must  
26 be renewed annually by submitting an updated application ~~and a registration renewal fee~~ to the  
27 Alarm Administrator. The Alarm Administrator may notify each Alarm Business of the need to  
28 renew thirty days prior to the expiration of the registration. It is the responsibility of the Alarm  
29 Business to submit an application prior to the registration expiration date. Failure to renew will  
30 result in Alarm Dispatch Requests from the Alarm Business not being accepted for Dispatch and  
31 other penalties listed in 8.64.050.

32  
33 **8.64.027 Registration Fees.**

- 34 A. Effective January 1, 2006, Alarm Businesses shall pay a registration fee for each newly  
35 activated Alarm Systems monitored within unincorporated Pierce County. This per  
36 alarm fee shall be a one-time fee of \$20.00 per alarm system monitored. This fee shall  
37 be paid within 5 working days of an Alarm Business activating a new customer. This  
38 registration fee is nontransferable.
- 39 B. Renewal registrations will not be completed for any business which has delinquent  
40 penalties and fees.
- 41 C. Reinstatement Alarm Registration application fees shall be \$250 plus \$1.00 per alarm  
42 system monitored in addition to all other fees and penalties which are due.

43  
44 **8.64.028 Duties of the Alarm Businesses.**

- 45 A. Shall cooperatively work with the Sheriff's Department to reduce false dispatches to  
46 false alarms.
- 47 B. Alarm Businesses shall:



1. Provide the Alarm Administrator with information regarding Alarm Systems installed, operated and monitored within unincorporated Pierce County in the format (paper or electronic) requested by the Alarm Administrator;
2. Maintain in the Alarm Business database information provided by the Alarm Administrator of any Alarm Site that is ineligible for an Alarm Dispatch Request by law enforcement.
3. Maintain information in the Alarm Business data base on Alarm Systems for Alarm Sites that protect weapons, ammunition, explosives, or certain types of hazardous materials which require a third party capable of responding to secure the Alarm Site.
4. Maintain information in the Alarm Business data base of Alarm Cancellations that will explain why the Alarm was cancelled.
5. Make all requests for Alarm Dispatches to a telephone number and in the form designated by the Alarm Administrator;
6. Not make requests for Alarm Dispatches for Alarm Systems that are under Response Eligibility Revocation from the Department;
7. Not program duress keypad codes with "One Plus Duress Alarm" codes, and within 180 days of the effective date of this Ordinance re-program all existing duress alarms which utilize a "One Plus Duress Alarm" codes with an alternative;
8. Not install single action, or non-recessed button robbery, duress or panic devices, and within 180 days of the effective date of this Ordinance replace existing single-action devices with devices with a minimum of two actions;
9. Program Arming Station control panels to send cancel codes to abort dispatches;
10. Upon takeover of any Alarm System, upgrade, or modify the Alarm System to bring the system into compliance with this ordinance;
11. Alarm Businesses must maintain for a period of at least one year, records relating to Alarm Dispatch Requests. Records must include the name, address, and phone number of the Alarm User, the Alarm System Zone(s) and sensors activated, use of Third Party responders, the time of Alarm Dispatch Request and, if applicable reasons which lead to Alarm Cancellations. The Alarm Administrator may request copies of such records for individually named Alarm Users.
12. Alarm Businesses that perform monitoring services for a fee whose Registration is suspended or revoked are required to notify all Alarm User customers within 5 days of the suspension of such suspension or revocation. The Alarm User shall be notified that the Department shall not accept Alarm Dispatch Requests from the suspended or revoked business, and will not respond to their alarm during the Alarm Business's suspension or revocation.

**8.64.030 Alarm Site Response Ineligibility.**

- A. **Grounds.** The Department may revoke the eligibility of an Alarm Site for response, when:
  1. The alarm system has resulted in more than four False Alarm responses by the Department within a one year period, or
  2. When fees or service charges as set forth in Section 8.64.050 of this Chapter, have not been paid within 90 days of billing.
  3. Hazards to responders exist at the Alarm Site.
- B. **Notice of Response Eligibility Revocation.** The Department shall send notice to the Alarm Business or for Unmonitored Alarm Systems, Alarm Site Property Owner listed



1 in the Assessor's records, in writing by first class mail of the Response Eligibility  
2 Revocation and the grounds thereof. The notice shall specify the specific date of  
3 revocation, which shall be no sooner than 15 days after the notice is deposited in the  
4 mail, and that the Department shall discontinue responding to alarms which occur at the  
5 premises described.

- 6 C. **Appeal.** The Alarm Business or Alarm Site Owner/User may appeal the intended or  
7 actual revocation pursuant to the provisions of the Hearing Examiner Code, Chapter  
8 1.22 PCC.  
9

10 **8.64.031 Alarm Site Response Eligibility Reinstatement.**

- 11 A. Reinstatement of Response Eligibility may be made upon receipt by the Department of:  
12 1. A letter from a licensed alarm company that the alarm system is operating properly  
13 or the Alarm Site Owner/User's agents are properly trained in the Alarm System  
14 operation; or  
15 2. Documentation from an owner/tenant who has personally installed the Alarm System  
16 that the alarm system is operating properly and/or the alarm users are properly  
17 trained in the Alarm System Operation; or,  
18 ~~3. The Alarm System has been brought into compliance with Verified Response; and,~~  
19 ~~4-3.~~ All outstanding fees and penalties have been paid.  
20 B. The Department shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by the Alarm  
21 Owner/User to qualify for reinstatement.  
22 C. Response Eligibility will not be reinstated if there are any outstanding fees or service  
23 charges due.  
24

25 **8.64.40 Alarm Business Registration Revocation.**

- 26 A. **Grounds.** The Department may revoke an Alarm Business Registration, for:  
27 1. Failure to comply with the provisions of 8.64.025.  
28 2. Failure to comply with the provisions of 8.64.026.  
29 3. Failure to pay all fees and penalties within 90 days of billing.  
30 4. Failure to comply with the provisions of 8.64.028.  
31 5. Failure to comply with requests for information from the Alarm Administrator as  
32 provided for within this Chapter.  
33 B. **Notice of Revocation.** The Department shall notify such registrant in writing by first  
34 class mail of the revocation of the Alarm Business Registration and the grounds thereof.  
35 The notice shall specify the specific date of revocation, which shall be no sooner than 15  
36 days after the notice is deposited in the mail, and that the Department shall discontinue  
37 responding to Alarm Dispatch Requests from the Alarm Business for their customers.  
38 The Alarm Business will be required to notify their Alarm System monitoring customers  
39 that the Department will not respond to alarms at their Alarm Site beginning fifteen days  
40 after the Department mails notice to the Alarm Business.  
41 C. **Appeal.** The registrant may appeal the intended or actual revocation pursuant to the  
42 provisions of the Hearing Examiner Code, Chapter 1.22 PCC.  
43

44 **8.64.045 Alarm Business Registration Reinstatement.**

- 45 A. Reinstatement of the registration may be made:  
46 1. Upon receipt and approval by the Department of a detailed, viable plan to rectify the  
47 conditions which resulted in the revocation.  
48 2. Upon payment of all fees and penalties due from the Alarm Business.



B. The Department shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by the registrant to qualify for reinstatement.

**8.64.050 Service Charges.**

A. Service charges for all monitored alarm systems will be assessed to the Alarm Business. Service charges for unmonitored Alarm Sites will be assessed to the Alarm Owner/User. These service fees will be assessed for and in the amount of:

False Alarm Response	\$250.00	
False Robbery/ Duress/Panic Alarm Response	\$125.00	
Alarm Response Cancellation Fee	\$50.00	
Reinstatement Fee for Unmonitored Alarm	\$50.00	
Security Charge	\$100.00	Per hour minimum or the actual cost which is ever higher.
Business Registration Annual for new Alarm Systems Fee	<del>\$1.00</del> \$20.00	Per new alarm (which meets Verified Response) system, per month, or a minimum fee of \$100.00.
Alarm Business Ineligible Dispatch Request	\$200.00	
False Statement by Alarm Business Employee	\$200.00	
Reinstatement Fee for Alarm Business.	\$250.00 plus \$1.00 per monitored alarm system.	

B. Each ~~Owner of a Residential Alarm~~ is eligible for one False Alarm Response at no charge, ~~as long as the alarm system Panic and Duress devices are brought into compliance with this ordinance or are within compliance.~~

C. Service charges shall be deposited into the Alarm Systems Permits Account in the General Fund, to be used for the administration and enforcement activities associated with this Chapter.

**8.64.060 Unlawful System and Uses.**

- A. No person shall operate or use an Alarm System which emits an audible sound where such emission does not automatically cease within 10 minutes, or for two repetitions of the 10-minute cycle without resetting the Alarm System.
- B. No person shall cause or permit to be caused an Alarm Dispatch Request for any Alarm System for which the Response Eligibility has been revoked by the Department.
- C. No person shall operate or use any Alarm System that automatically dials the Department directly and delivers a prerecorded message.
- D. No person shall install, operate or use any Alarm System which incorporates a vision obscuring device which emits or produces real or simulated smoke, fog, vapor or a like substance that obscures vision. Use of such device shall result in no police response.



1 E. No person shall cause or permit to be caused an Alarm System to sound except for the  
2 purpose it was intended.  
3

4 **8.64.070 Confidentiality.**

5 In the interest of public safety, all information contained in and gathered through the Alarm  
6 Registration applications shall be held in confidence by all employees or representatives of the  
7 Department and Alarm Businesses to the extent permitted by Washington law.  
8

9 **8.64.075 Government Immunity.**

- 10 A. Alarm Registration is not intended to, nor will it, create a contract, duty or obligation,  
11 either expressed or implied, of response. Any and all liability and consequential damage  
12 resulting from the failure to respond to a notification is hereby disclaimed and  
13 governmental immunity as provided by law is retained. By applying for an Alarm  
14 Permit, the Alarm Business, for itself and as the agent of the Alarm User, acknowledges  
15 that law enforcement response may be influenced by factors such as: the availability of  
16 police units, priority of calls, weather conditions, traffic conditions, emergency  
17 conditions, staffing levels and prior response history.
- 18 B. The Department recognizes that some Alarm Sites may pose a greater public safety risk  
19 due to their business and/or contents of the alarmed site. In the event that a potential  
20 risk to the public is perceived due to an unsecure Alarm Site, the Department may elect  
21 to provide security measures to secure the site until the responsible parties can arrive.  
22 However, the Department shall not be responsible for securing any Alarm Site or for the  
23 loss or damage to any property.
- 24 C. The Department shall not be responsible for any acts or failure to act by an Alarm  
25 Business. In certain situations, the Department may not respond to requests for Alarm  
26 Responses due to revocation of the Alarm Business Registrations.
- 27 D. The Department shall not be responsible for investigating Alarm Sites that are  
28 inaccessible due to fences, terrain obstructions, other physical obstructions, or  
29 potentially dangerous animals.  
30

31 **8.64.080 Violation - Penalty.**

32 In addition to the penalties and regulations provided herein, any person who violates any  
33 provisions of this Chapter shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.  
34

35 **8.64.090 Severability.**

36 If any provision of this Chapter or its application to any person or circumstance is held  
37 invalid, the remainder of the Chapter or the application of the provision to other persons or  
38 circumstances is not affected.  
39

