INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALARM USERS

The Houston, Texas City Council passed Ordinance #08-118 on December 3, 2008. This ordinance concerns the regulation of alarm systems within the city. On December 14, 2011, Ordinance # 11-1168 increased the fees to the amounts below:

PERMITS

1 The Alarm System Permit fee imposed shall be stated in the schedule of fees that shall be adopted by the City Council. The current fee is.

Residential alarm site:

- $36.16 for a burglar alarm permit without a panic alarm permit
- $36.16 for a panic alarm permit without a burglar alarm permit
- $50.00 for a burglar alarm permit with a panic alarm permit

Non-residential alarm site:

- $103.23 for a burglar alarm permit
- $103.23 for a holdup or panic alarm permit
- $206.46 for a burglar alarm permit and a holdup or panic alarm permit.

2 Alarm System Permits are issued for the period of one year (12 months), after which the permit expires.

3 Renewals are valid for a period of 12 months.

4 Each alarm permit shall be valid only for the permit holder, alarm site and alarm system; as they existed when the alarm permit was originally issued. The alarm permit shall terminate immediately upon any such change. Alarm permits are not transferable to any person, premises and alarm system or alarm subscriber.

RESPONSIBILTIES OF ALARM USERS

The permit holder, to whom permit is issued, is responsible for compliance with the regulations of the alarm ordinance. The permit holder must ensure that:

1 The alarm mechanism is adjusted to suppress false indications of force so that the alarm system is not activated due to:

a. Temporary pressure changes in water pipes

b. Flashes of light.

c. Noise of rattling and vibrating windows or doors caused by wind.

d. Vehicular noise.

e. Electrical power fluctuations.

f. Any other forces unrelated to an actual emergency.

2 The permit holder is responsible for all false activations caused due to faulty equipment.

3 An authorized person responds to the alarm site within 30 minutes, if requested to do so by the Police Department.

4 The alarm system is adjusted such that it rings no longer than 15 minutes after activation.

5 The alarm must not be manually activated for any reason, other than the occurrence of the event that the system was intended to report (for example, activating a robbery and holdup/duress alarm for any reason less than life threatening situation.)

6 The property is properly secured to prevent birds, animals, rats, rodents, and other animals from entering the premises and accidentally activating the alarm system.

VIOLATIONS

1 A person who operates an alarm system with a permit (permit holder) may be cited to Municipal Court for violation of the following:

a. Allowing an audible alarm to sound for more than 15 minutes.

b. Failing to have a manual reset system.

c. Operating an alarm system while permit is under suspension.

A permit may be suspended for:

1. Stating false information in the application.
2. Violation of any of the sections dealing with the responsibilities of the alarm user.
3. Failing to mention the current information while submitting the alarm permit application

SERVICE FEES

1 The free alarms ordinance within the 12 month permit period allows a permit holder of a residential site,

a. Three (3) free false alarms for the burglar alarm system

b. 1 free false alarm for the panic or holdup alarm system

2 The permit holder of a non-residential site is allowed,

- One (1) free false alarm for the panic or holdup alarm system, within the 12 month period
- Three (3) free false alarms for the burglar alarm system, within the 12 month period

a The chief, or designated representative, shall assess the permit holder fee for each false burglar alarm (provided a response is made by the police department to the alarm site within 30 minutes of the alarm notification) from the alarm site.

The fees are

4th false alarm	$ 50.00
5th false alarm	$ 50.00
6th false alarm	$ 75.00
7th false alarm	$ 75.00
8th false alarm	$ 100.00
Each additional	$ 100.00

b The chief, or designated representative, shall assess the residential alarm site permit holder fee for each false panic or holdup alarm notification from the alarm site.

The fees are

2nd false alarm	$ 123.87
3rd false alarm	$ 247.75
4th false alarm	$ 371.62
5th false alarm	$ 495.50
Each additional	$ 495.50

c The chief, or designated representative, shall assess the non-residential alarm site permit holder fee for each false panic or holdup alarm notification from the alarm site.

The fees are

2nd false alarm	$ 247.75
3rd false alarm	$ 495.50
4th false alarm	$ 619.38
Each additional	$ 619.38

d If HEC or the police department receives an alarm notification, (regardless of whether the alarm is false), from an alarm system that does not have a valid alarm permit, the alarm subscriber and the persons-in-control of any portion of the alarm site shall be charged a penalty for each such alarm notification and shall be jointly and severally liable to the city for payment thereof

The penalty amount will be determined based on the type of alarm notification received:

- Residential burglar alarm system: $103.23 for each alarm notification.
- Non-residential burglar alarm system: $206.46 for each alarm notification.
- Residential panic or holdup alarm system: $272.52 for each alarm notification.
- Non-residential panic or holdup alarm system: $433.56 for each alarm notification.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING ALARM PERMIT APPLICATIONS

1 Application for an alarm permit shall be made to the department in a format designated by the director for that purpose. Each application shall be set forth:

2 Applicant: The name, address, telephone number(s), email address, social security number, federal employee identification number, state sales tax number, corporate charter number and state driver's license number of the

applicant. An applicant who is an individual who does not have a valid Texas driver's license must provide his social security number.

3 "Permit Holder" should be the person charged with the responsibility of maintaining the premises and the operation of the alarm system. This person will also be held *financially responsible* should service fees or fines be assessed.

For a residential alarm, The "Permit Holder" could be the head of the household or any responsible adult. For a business alarm, the "Permit Holder" could be the owner, manager, security director, building manager, or anyone else designated by the owner.

4 "*Contact Person*" - The first person in this category should be the person most readily available to answer the alarm, should the police department require someone. This person must have access to the building and the alarm, be prepared to inactivate or repair any malfunctioning alarm, or provide security to the building. For the homeowner, this should be a close neighbor, friend, or relative - or the alarm company representative if the alarm company is willing to send someone with those qualifications. The person designated must be able to reach the location within one (1) hour if required by the Police Department.

5 The second person on "Contact Persons" should meet the same requirements as the first. He/She will be contacted should #1 not be available.
There must be a **MINIMUM OF TWO** persons listed on the permit application.

6 The alarm permit CANNOT be transferred to another person or business.

7 If not using the website account process, a permit holder must inform the Police Department of any changes on the application within Fifteen (15) working days. No fee is charged for updates.

8 The person responsible for the maintenance of the alarm must be the permit holder. A 24-hour number must be included.

9 Make all checks for permits payable to "City of Houston".
ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE CITY OF HOUSTON ON ALARM PERMIT APPLICATIONS IS CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION AND IS NOT AVAILABLE TO ANY OTHER AGENCY OR INDIVIDUAL.

Note: Permit is not approved until Payment received.

Compliance Statement: A statement that within the 12 months preceding the date the alarm permit will be issued, there has been no denied application for an alarm permit, denied renewal or revocation of any alarm permit, or penalty imposed for operation of an alarm system without an alarm permit that is connected to the alarm site, the alarm system, the alarm subscriber, the applicant, any person-in-control of the alarm site, or a person described in item (5) of this subsection.