



Recommendation for Action

File #: 23-1391, **Agenda Item #:** 2.

4/13/2023

Posting Language

Approve an ordinance amending City Code Section 4-2-21 to exclude false alarm notifications resulting from power outages from the false alarm notification fee; and applying the exclusion to the 2023 Winter Weather Event.

Lead Department

Development Services Department.

Fiscal Note

A fiscal note is attached.

Prior Council Action:

January 11, 2007 - Council approved Ordinance 20070111-012 amending Sections 4-2-1 and 4-2-21 of the City Code relating to alarm systems to set penalties for false burglar alarms and false personal emergency response system (panic button) alarms. The ordinance was approved on consent on Council Member Martinez's motion, Council Member McCracken's second on a 7-0 vote.

April 22, 2021 - Council approved Ordinance 20210422-053 amending City Code chapter 4-2 (Alarm Permits) to transfer the authority for regulating alarm permits and alarm systems from the Austin Police Department to the Development Services Department. The ordinance was approved on consent on Council Member Alter's motion, Council Member Renteria's second on an 11-0 vote.

For More Information:

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Additional Backup Information:

If approved, this amendment to City Code would exclude false alarm notifications caused by power outages not caused by the permittee's conduct, including in emergency events such as the recent winter storm, from the false alarm notification fees. A false alarm occurs when an alarm notification is sent to Austin Police Department and an officer is dispatched to investigate, but finds the notification was not needed. Security alarms can be activated inadvertently by power outages causing false alarm notifications.

Under current City Code, if an alarm system transmits more than three false burglar alarm notifications within a 12-month period, the alarm permit holder must pay a service fee for the fourth and each subsequent false burglar alarm notification. Alarm users who do not have a permit are charged a fee for each Austin Police Department response to the activation of an unpermitted alarm system.

Current City Code allows the department director to waive false alarms fees for permitted alarms, but not for unpermitted alarms. For this reason, staff recommends excluding all false alarms associated with power outages which are beyond the customer's control. Alarm users without permits would be required to obtain permits for their alarm systems.

Strategic Outcome(s):

Government that Works for All.