

**TOWN BOARD  
TOWN OF GERMANTOWN  
COLUMBIA COUNTY, NEW YORK**

**Local Law A of 2025**

**A LOCAL LAW TO PREVENT FALSE ALARMS IN THE TOWN OF  
GERMANTOWN**

**BE IT ENACTED** by the Town Board of the Town of Germantown as follows:

**SECTION 1. TITLE.**

This Local Law shall be entitled "A Local Law To Prevent False Alarms."

**SECTION 2. PURPOSE AND INTENT.**

The Town of Germantown recognizes that alarm systems provide security and safety for buildings, structures, and persons within the Town. Increased incidence of false alarms, requiring emergency response from the fire or police departments can cause unnecessary danger and detriment to emergency responders and the general public. The purpose of this local law is to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the residents of the Town of Germantown by reducing the number of avoidable false alarms and encouraging the use and proper maintenance of reliable emergency alarm systems.

**SECTION 3. AUTHORITY.**

This Local Law is adopted under Articles 2 and 3 of the Municipal Home Rule Law.

**SECTION 4. DEFINITIONS.**

*Alarm System:* a device or series of devices, that when actuated by a fire, smoke, intrusion or other emergency, transmits a signal designed to summon law enforcement or fire department services. Specifically excluded are standard household smoke alarms, which primarily serve to warn occupants of the building of smoke or fire.

*Alarm User:* any person, business, or entity owning, leasing, or otherwise having control over the premises where an alarm system is used or installed.

*False Alarm:* any signal actuated by an alarm system requiring police or fire department response when the responding agency finds no evidence of fire, smoke, dangerous condition, criminal offense or attempted criminal offense after having completed a timely investigation..

*Licensed Installer:* a person who holds oneself out directly or indirectly, as being able, or who offers or undertakes, by any means or method, to install, service or maintain an alarm system and

who is duly licensed to install alarm systems pursuant to the General Business Law. This does not include installations of alarm systems by an owner on their own property.

## **SECTION 5. REGISTRATION AND PERMITS.**

- A. *Columbia County Registration.* Alarm Users must register with the Columbia County Sheriff or their designee in accordance with Columbia County registration procedures.
- B. *Town of Germantown Alarm Permit Required.* No alarm system shall be operated, installed, or modified in the Town of Germantown without an alarm permit from the Town of Germantown Code Enforcement Officer. Permits are valid for two years and must be renewed. Alarm users of existing alarm systems must apply for an alarm system permit within 60 days of the effective date of this local law.

## **SECTION 6. ALARM SYSTEM PERMIT APPLICATION.**

- A. All applications for an alarm system permit shall be submitted to the Town Code Enforcement Officer and the Germantown Fire Chief together with the application fee. Said application shall set forth the following:
  - i. Name, address, and telephone number of the alarm user, licensed installer, property owner, and current occupant, as applicable.
  - ii. The location (physical address and 911 address), directions from main road and where on the premises the alarm system is installed or proposed to be installed.
  - iii. The name, address, and telephone number of at least one (1) person (and preferably a total of three (3) persons) other than the owner/occupant who is authorized to open the location where the alarm system is installed to reset the alarm, and will be available in a timely manner (i.e., less than 30 minutes) to assist.
  - iv. The applicant shall agree that if the owner or designated contact person to be notified is unavailable or refuses to come to the premises upon request of the local fire department or police, or if the owner or designated contact person cannot be reached within a reasonable time by telephone or other means, the local fire department or police may contact the installer to disconnect the system, without any liability for any charges as a result of disconnection, or any liability as a result of responding to alarms. The Town Code Enforcement Officer shall notify the alarm user of the disconnection by registered or certified mail to the address on the alarm system permit application.
  - v. When there is a change to any information provided in the permit application, the alarm user shall notify the Code Enforcement Officer within 10 business days of the change.
- B. All fees for alarm system permits shall be set by resolution of the Town Board and shall be nonrefundable.
- C. Permits are not transferable from one premises to another or from one owner to another.

- D. The applicant shall agree to ensure that all persons residing or working on the premises are educated and trained on proper operation of the alarm systems. These individuals should also have the name and phone number of the person designated to contact in the event an alarm system is unintentionally activated, and any necessary input codes or passwords required to disable an unintentional alarm activation and inform the fire alarm business that no emergency exists requiring the summoning of fire and/or police assistance.
- E. The applicant shall also agree that it is his/her responsibility to instruct any contractor, maintenance person, or any other non-resident that will be performing work at the premises that they must take all necessary precautions while performing their work to properly protect the functional integrity of the existing alarm systems in order to prevent false alarms.

#### **SECTION 7. INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE OF SYSTEM.**

- A. All alarm system work shall be performed by a licensed installer, with the exception of alarm systems self-installed by the owner of the property.
- B. Alarm systems must be maintained in proper working order at all times. It is recommended that a New York State-licensed fire alarm company service the alarm system annually. The alarm user must maintain maintenance records and provide them to the Town Code Enforcement Officer upon request. Failure to supply the maintenance records may result in a notice of violation and penalties provided herein.
- C. No alarm systems shall be installed by licensed installers unless the alarm system has been registered with Columbia County and a permit issued by the Town Code Enforcement Officer.
- D. Systems reporting to an alarm monitoring system shall differentiate between fire and any other alarm. A system trouble alert shall not be reported as a fire alarm.
- E. All detectors, except for single-station smoke detectors, shall have an obvious means to determine when the device has activated and will stay locked in until manually reset.
- F. Under no circumstances shall the cost of any alarm system and the maintenance, disconnection, reconnection, or relocation of same be charged to the Town of Germantown or the Germantown Fire Department or District. The owner shall be responsible for the service of their equipment and for correcting any malfunction of the same that may occur.

#### **SECTION 8. FALSE ALARMS.**

- A. All false alarms shall be deemed a violation of this local law, subject to the charges and penalties set forth herein. The Germantown Code Enforcement Officer shall provide the alarm user and/or property owner by certified mail sent to the property address or such

other address as indicated on the alarm permit application, written notice of any false alarm, stating the charges and potential demand for disconnection of the alarm system.

- B. Any alarm user shall pay to the Town of Germantown the following charges for each false alarm within a one year period:

First false alarm:	Warning
Second false alarm:	\$100.00
Third false alarm:	\$250.00
Fourth false alarm:	\$500.00
Any subsequent false alarm(s):	\$500.00

- C. False alarms attributed to faulty equipment or lack of maintenance must be repaired and/or serviced within 30 days of the false alarm, otherwise the alarm system, or faulty portion thereof, shall be removed from service until the fault is corrected. Documentation of the repair(s) shall be submitted to the Town Code Enforcement Officer and the Town of Germantown Fire Department.
- D. The Town Code Enforcement Officer may suspend or revoke an alarm system permit and order the alarm user to disconnect the alarm system where five false alarms have occurred within a one year period and/or where an alarm user does not reasonably comply with any provision of this local law. Any refusal by the alarm user to do same shall be deemed a violation of this local law, subject to the penalties provided herein. Reactivation of an alarm system permit requires a new alarm system permit and fee.

## **SECTION 9. GRANT OF AUTHORITY.**

The Town Code Enforcement Officer or their designee is hereby authorized to grant revocable alarm system permits pursuant to this local law and any rules and regulations adopted by resolution of the Town Board. The Town Code Enforcement Officer or their designee shall administer and enforce the provisions of this local law.

## **SECTION 10. PENALTIES FOR OFFENSES; ENFORCEMENT.**

- A. A violation of this local law shall be punishable by a fine not less than \$100 and not more than \$1,000 and/or imprisonment not exceeding 15 days, in addition to the actual costs incurred and owed to the Town as a result of the violation. For the purpose of conferring jurisdiction upon courts and judicial officers generally, violations of this local law shall be deemed misdemeanors and for such purpose only all provisions of law relating to misdemeanors shall apply to such violations.
- B. Each continuing day of violation of this local law shall constitute a separate violation.
- C. In addition to the above remedies, the Town Board may maintain an action or proceeding in the name of the Town in a court of competent jurisdiction to compel compliance with or restrain by injunction the violation of this local law.

## **SECTION 11. APPEALS.**

Any alarm user may appeal or contest an alarm system permit denial, revocation or suspension, or imposition of charges or fees under this local law in writing to the Town Board of the Town of Germantown within thirty (30) days after such denial, revocation, suspension or imposition of fees or charges. The Town Board shall hold a hearing on notice to the appellant, during which time the appellant may present their appeal and supporting evidence. The decision of the Town Board shall be final.

## **SECTION 12. OTHER JURISDICTIONS.**

Nothing contained in this local law shall relieve the alarm user or installer's obligation to obtain any permits, licenses, inspections or approvals as may be required by any federal, state, or County applicable local authority, rule, regulation or law.

## **SECTION 13. LIABILITY OF TOWN.**

The Town of Germantown shall not be liable for any defects in the operation of alarm systems, for any failure to respond to any alarm signal, or for the transmission of alarm signals or messages or the relaying of such signals or messages. In the event that the Town finds it necessary to order the disconnection or removal of a defective alarm system, the Town shall incur no liability therefrom.

## **SECTION 14. SEVERABILITY.**

If any section, provision or part thereof of this local law shall be adjudged invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such adjudication shall not affect the validity of this local law as a whole or any section, provision, or part thereof not so adjudged invalid or unconstitutional.

## **SECTION 15. WHEN EFFECTIVE.**

This local law shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State.