

FIRE PREVENTION / FIRE ALARM ORDINANCE
for the
Town of Amherst, New Hampshire

Section 1 - Adoption of State Fire Prevention Code

(A) All persons constructing, reconstructing, modifying, maintaining or operating any building or structure and all owners or occupants of existing structures or premises shall comply with the requirements set forth by the state fire code "PART Saf-C 6008 through 6015" as adopted and amended by the State of New Hampshire except as amended in sections 2 and 4

Section 2 – Amendment of the State Fire Code

(A) In addition to the requirements set forth in the state fire code, the Town of Amherst hereby adopts a permit and fee schedule as outlined in Appendix "A".

Section 3 – Variance of the State Fire Code

(A) All section of the state fire code shall be followed as adopted and amended, by the state and town. In accordance with RSA 153:5 "Rules", the Town of Amherst does not have the authority to issue a variance to the state fire code as adopted by the State of New Hampshire. A variance or exception can be requested through the State Fire Marshal pursuant of Saf-C 6005.04 "Consideration of Variances or Exceptions" for any code or rule provision. Any request for an exception or variance shall contain an alternative method of achieving the same level of code compliance as outlined in the code section, or rule provision item.

Section 4 – Appeals Process

(A) Appeals of any decision of the fire prevention officer shall be made in writing within 10 calendar days of the date of the decision to the fire chief, or his designee, who after a review of all facts, shall issue a written decision within 10 days of completing the review. The written request for an appeal shall contain all facts about the building, structure, condition, use, process, or code item the appellant is seeking relief from. The final decision of the fire chief may be appealed to the state fire marshal.

Section 5 – General requirements for fire alarm installations except one and two family dwellings.

(A) Prior to the installation of any interior fire alarm system or component the company or individual responsible for the proposed system installation shall submit two detailed sets of plans, blueprints, specifications, etc., outlining the system and its components to the fire department for review and approval.

(B) Installation of a Knox Box shall be required at all locations where a fire alarm system is being installed or is currently in use that automatically signals any emergency forces response and / or notification. Applications for review and approval shall be available at the fire department.

(C) All fire alarm equipment shall be “new equipment” any person installing, repairing or conducting maintenance on any fire alarm system or component shall be “qualified” for such work in accordance with NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm Code. All fire alarm system installation(s), repair, maintenance or testing shall be coordinated with the fire department.

(D) Any or all parts of existing fire alarm systems in a building undergoing renovation shall conform to the requirements for “new” installations.

(E) All installations shall conform to the requirements of NFPA and IMSA, or any applicable code in effect.

(F) A supervisory control panel shall be installed with the fire alarm system for the purpose of identifying location, resetting and/or disabling alarms. Panel locks shall be keyed for "CAT-60" or "Simplex B" key.

(G) The supervisory control panel shall feature the following:

- (1) Zone indication / device indication.
- (2) Alarm silence switch.
- (3) System reset switch.
- (4) Trouble buzzer and light.
- (5) Trouble silence switch.

(H) All controls shall be secured from use by occupants of the protected property.

(I) In an installation where the fire alarm system is installed in (i) more than one building or (ii) more than one floor, an annunciator panel shall identify the location of all originating signals. Normally, one zone per floor is adequate. The fire department may require more zones depending on building size, occupancy or hazard protected. An annunciator shall be required in a multizoned property near the main fire department access to the property. This may either be the alarm control panel or a remote annunciator panel with no control functions. In an installation where an additional fire alarm system is installed in new building additions and connected to the existing approved system in the original building, an annunciator panel shall be installed on the inside of the new building addition or at a location designated by the fire department. Adjacent to each annunciator panel there shall be a detailed floor plan identifying zone locations.

(J) The supervisory control panel shall conform to the requirements of NFPA 72-A and the following fire department requirements:

- (1) Access to the control functions of any alarm system shall be by the fire department and or qualified alarm service personnel, only after coordinating their work with the fire department.
- (2) When the panel is indicating zone trouble, activation of a pull station shall initiate the alarm.
- (3) Upon activation of a detector or pull station, the panel shall lock on the initiating circuit with audible and visual indication. Silencing the audible shall not cause the panel or the visual indication to reset.
- (4) Anyone found silencing or resetting any fire alarm system prior to the arrival of the fire department may be fined \$100.00 in accordance to the fee schedule, by the Fire Chief, his designee, or any police officer. All fines shall be paid to the Town of Amherst within 30 days.

Section 6 - General requirements for fire alarm installations for one and two family dwellings.

- (A) Installation of a Knox Box shall be required at all locations where a fire alarm system is being installed or is currently in use that automatically signals any emergency forces response and / or notification. Applications for review and approval shall be available at the fire department.

Section 7 - Fines for false fire alarms

(A) *Definitions.* The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this section, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this subsection, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

(1) “*Accidental alarm*” means any activation of an alarm system to which the fire department responds which is the result of an unintentional occurrence or mishap. This includes burned food, steam from showers, and good-faith assumptions of a fire condition.

(2) “*False alarm*” means any activation of an alarm system to which the fire department responds which is not the result of a fire, emergency call for assistance or accidental alarm. This includes alarms improperly or maliciously sounded or alarms that following an investigation are found to be groundless, or system malfunctions.

(B) *Prevention, payment of costs.* Any owner or lessee or person in control of property having an alarm system on the premises, and any user of alarm services or equipment designed and installed with the intent of eliciting an emergency response, shall pay to the Town of Amherst a service charge for each false alarm to which the fire department responds after the initial response within a 365 day

period as outlined in the fee schedule. It shall be the responsibility of the property owner to correct any and all problems resulting in the activation of false alarms. If the fire department finds it necessary to disconnect an alarm device or system due to repeated activations, a fire watch may be ordered and posted on the premises until such time that the protection provided by the system or device can be restored.

(C) *Fine Appeals (not part of Section 4)*. Any alarm user, owner, or lessee may appeal false alarm service charges in writing to the fire chief within 10 calendar days after receipt of the notice of the service charge. The fire chief may waive assessment of the service charge when, in his judgment, reasonable attempts are being taken to discover and eliminate the cause of the false alarms.

(D) *Liability*. The fire department shall take every reasonable precaution to ensure that alarms received are given appropriate attention and are acted upon. Nevertheless, the fire department shall not be liable for any defects in the operation of any alarm devices, for any failure or neglect to respond appropriately upon receipt of an alarm from such a source, nor for the failure or neglect of any person in connection with the installation and operation of alarms and systems.

Adopted by vote of the Board of Selectmen:

Bruce Bowler, Chairman

Dwight Brew, Vice-Chair

George Infanti, Selectman

Thomas Grella, Selectman

Brad Galinson, Selectman

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Nancy A. Demers, Town Clerk _____