

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

FIRE COMMITTEE

**Wednesday, January 15, 2020
7:05 PM (Approximately)**

Chairperson: Daniel S. Bernheim
Vice Chairperson: Sean P. Whalen, V. Scott Zelov

AGENDA

1. **AUTHORIZATION TO ADVERTISE PROPOSED ORDINANCE - CHAPTER 51,
ALARMS - ALARM VERIFICATION FEATURES AND INSPECTIONS**



AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

ITEM: AUTHORIZATION TO ADVERTISE PROPOSED ORDINANCE - CHAPTER 51, ALARMS - ALARM VERIFICATION FEATURES AND INSPECTIONS

Consider for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners authorizing the Township Secretary to advertise notice of intent to adopt an Ordinance to amend the Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 51, Alarms, to provide a definition for Alarm Verification Feature and to require that as of July 1, 2020 all residential alarm systems must be equipped with such feature; to require that all commercial alarm systems be UL certified and installed by a certified alarm company; to require that all alarm systems be annually inspected; and to require that the annual inspection report for commercial systems be provided to the Lower Merion Fire Department within 30 days following the inspection.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Type
<input type="checkbox"/> Issue Briefing	Issue Briefing
<input type="checkbox"/> Alarm Ordinance	Ordinance

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Fire Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Amendment to Township Code Chapter 51, Alarms

Prepared By: Charles J. McGarvey, Sr., Chief Fire Officer / Fire Marshal

Date: January 15, 2020

I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:

Approval to authorize the Township Secretary to advertise notice of intent to adopt an Ordinance to amend the Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 51, Alarms, to provide a definition for Alarm Verification Feature and to require that as of July 1, 2020 all residential alarm systems must be equipped with such feature; to require that all commercial alarm systems be UL certified and installed by a certified alarm company; to require that all alarm systems be annually inspected; and to require that the annual inspection report for commercial systems be provided to the Lower Merion Fire Department within 30 days following the inspection.

II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:

False and needless fire alarms continue to have a detrimental impact on our fire service. This code chapter is proposed to be amended in order to include a definition of and requirement for alarm verification features in residential alarms, to require that all commercial alarms be UL Certified and installed by a certified alarm company, and to require the annual inspection of all commercial fire alarm systems, with inspection reports to be provided to the Fire Department Office within 30 days of completion.

III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):

The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 51 Alarms, is in place currently, however it is believed that the more stringent requirements provided within this ordinance will further curtail false fire alarm activations.

IV. Other Relevant Background Information:

Chapter 51 Alarms was replaced in its entirety in 2016. While the 2016 alterations prevented an increase in false alarm statistics, while the number of active monitored fire alarm systems multiplied significantly, further modifications to this Chapter of the Code seek to actively reduce the number of false fire alarms to achieve the intended outcome of the 2016 revision.

V. Impact On Township Finances:
No impact on Township finances is expected.

VI. Staff Recommendation:
It is recommended the Board of Commissioners authorize advertisement of this ordinance.

AN ORDINANCE

NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE To Amend The Code Of The Township Of Lower Merion, Chapter 51, Alarms, To Provide A Definition For Alarm Verification Feature And To Require That As Of July 1, 2020 All Residential Alarm Systems Must Be Equipped With Such Feature; To Require That All Commercial Alarm Systems Be UL Certified And Installed By A Certified Alarm Company; To Require That All Alarm Systems Be Annually Inspected; And To Require That The Annual Inspection Report For Commercial Systems Be Provided To The Lower Merion Fire Department Within 30 Days Following The Inspection.

The Board of Commissioners of the Township of Lower Merion hereby ordains:

Section 1. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 51, Alarms, § 51-1, Definitions, is hereby amended by the addition in alphabetical order of a definition for Alarm Verification Feature, to provide as follows:

§ 51-1. Definitions.

The following definitions shall apply in the interpretation and enforcement of this chapter:

* * * * *

ALARM VERIFICATION FEATURE.

A feature of automatic fire detection and alarm systems to reduce unwanted alarms wherein smoke detectors report alarm conditions for a minimum period of time, or confirm alarm conditions within a given time period after being reset, in order to be accepted as a valid alarm initiation signal.

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Section 2. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 51, Alarms, § 51-3, Permit requirements, is hereby amended by the addition of a new subsection (C), to provide as follows:

§ 51-3. Permit requirements.

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- C. All commercial alarm systems shall be UL Certified. Permits for commercial alarm systems will only be issued to an alarm company certified to install such systems.

Section 3. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 51, Alarms, § 51-4, Operational requirements, is hereby amended by the addition of a new subsection (C), to provide as follows:

§ 51-4. Operational requirements.

- C. On or before July 1, 2020, all residential alarm systems must be equipped with a functioning “Alarm Verification Feature”

Section 4 The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 51, Alarms, § 51-8, Inspections, is hereby amended to provide as follows:

§ 51-8. Inspections.

- A. For the purpose of enforcing this chapter and as a condition to installing and maintaining an Alarm System, an Alarm User shall execute a consent, in such form as may be prescribed by the Secretary, which will authorize the Township to enter upon the Alarm User’s premises within the Township, at reasonable times and upon reasonable notice, to inspect the installation and operation of an Alarm System.
- B. All residential and commercial alarm systems must be inspected annually by a certified technician. Owners of commercial properties must forward a copy of the annual inspection report to the Lower Merion Fire Department within 30 days following the inspection.

Section 5. Nothing in this Ordinance or in Chapter 51 of the Code of the Township of Lower Merion, as hereby amended, shall be construed to affect any suit or proceedings in any Court, any rights acquired or liability incurred, any Permit issued, or any cause or causes of action existing under the said Chapter 51 prior to the adoption of this amendment.

Section 6. The provisions of this Ordinance are severable, and if any section, sentence, clause, part, or provision thereof shall be held illegal, invalid, or unconstitutional by any Court of competent jurisdiction, such decision of this court shall not affect or impair the remaining sections, sentences, clauses, parts or provisions of this ordinance. It is hereby declared to be the intent of the Board that this ordinance would have been adopted if such illegal, invalid, or unconstitutional section, sentence, clause, part, or provision had not been included herein.

Section 7 This Ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its approval as required by law.

Approved by the Board this day of , 2020.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Daniel S. Bernheim, President

ATTEST:

Jody L. Kelley, Secretary

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