

PART 6
Licensing and Regulation

CHAPTER 1
Businesses and Occupations

ARTICLE GG
Private Detectives, Security Services, and Alarm System Businesses

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Section 6-2601. Definitions.

For the purposes of this article, the terms herein shall be defined as follows:

(a) *Private detective business* shall mean the business of obtaining or furnishing, or accepting employment to obtain or to furnish, information with reference to:

- (1) Crimes or wrongs done or threatened against the United States of America or any state or territory thereof;
- (2) The background, identity, habits, conduct, business, employment, occupation, assets, honesty, integrity, credibility, knowledge, trustworthiness, efficiency, loyalty, activity, movement, whereabouts, affiliations, associations, transactions, acts, reputation, or character of any person;
- (3) The location, disposition, or recovery of lost or stolen property;
- (4) The cause or responsibility for fires, libels, accidents, damage, or injury to persons or property;
- (5) The securing of evidence in the course of the private detective business to be used before any court, board, officer, or investigating committee; or
- (6) The protection of individuals from serious bodily harm or death.

(b) *Private security business* shall mean engaging in the business of, or accepting employment to provide private patrol service, watchman service, or guard service for consideration on a private contractual basis and not as an employee.

(c) *Alarm system business* shall mean any person, partnership or corporation engaging in the business of planning, installing, servicing, maintaining, repairing, replacing, or monitoring alarm systems in the City of Savannah.

(d) *Alarm system* shall mean a device or series of devices which emit or transmit an audible or remote visual or electronic alarm signal which is intended to summon the Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department. The term includes hardwired systems and systems interconnected with a radio frequency as cellular or private radio signals, and includes local alarm systems, but does not include an alarm installed in a motor vehicle or on one's person.

(e) *Alarm system coordinator* refers to the person or entity designated to administer the provisions of this ordinance.

(f) *False alarm* means a bell, mechanical, electrical, or telephone apparatus, or combination thereof which is activated for the purpose of dispatching the Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department (SCMPD) to respond to a hold-up, break-in, burglary, unauthorized entry, destruction of property, or other event which results in the responding officer(s) finding no evidence of such hazards after completing an investigation of the alarm site.

(g) *Local alarm system* means an unmonitored alarm system that annunciates an alarm only at the alarm site.

(h) *Alarm user* means any person, business, or entity, including any governmental agency, who has contracted for monitoring, repair, installation or maintenance service for an alarm system from an alarm installation company or monitoring company, or who owns or operates an alarm system which is not monitored, maintained, or repaired under contract.

Section 6-2602. Permit Required.

(a) All persons engaged or seeking to engage in a private detective business, a private security business, or an alarm system business shall comply with the requirements of this Article. Permits issued pursuant to this article shall be valid from the date of issuance through December 31 of the year in which the license is issued. The permit shall be posted in a conspicuous place at the business location.

(b) The fees and charges for the permit required pursuant to this article shall be as specified in Article Y, Section 34 of the annual Revenue Ordinance.

(c) The City shall be authorized to make or cause to be made inspections to determine compliance with the provisions of the Article.

Section 6-2603. Application; registration of business; issuance of permit.

(a) The business owner, or in the event of a corporation an officer of the corporation, desiring to operate a business covered under this Article shall make a verified application in writing to the Police Chief on a form provided by the Savannah Police Department for the purposes of registering said business and obtaining a permit to operate said business in the City of Savannah.

(b) The Police Chief may grant or renew a permit to any business meeting the following qualifications:

(1) The applicant and all persons employed by the applicant must be at least 18 years of age.

(2) The applicant and all persons employed by the applicant must be a citizen of the United States or must have a U.S. Immigration Service work permit.

(3) Private detective business and private security business applicants must provide proof of a valid state license as required under O.C.G.A. §43-38-6, and alarm system business applicants must provide proof of a valid state license as required under O.C.G.A. §43-14-8.1. Alarm system installation businesses must provide proof that a minimum of one employee of the company has the required low voltage electrician license issued by the State of Georgia.

(4) The applicant must register and provide proof that the applicant and all persons employed by the applicant have not been convicted of a felony or any crime involving the illegal use, carrying, or possession of a dangerous weapon or any crime involving moral turpitude.

(5) The applicant must inform the Police Chief in writing upon hiring a new unregistered employee and must provide proof that the new employee has not been convicted of a felony or any crime involving the illegal use, carrying, or possession of a dangerous weapon or any crime involving moral turpitude. The new employee must be registered with the Police Chief prior to assuming any duties regulated by this Article.

(6) The applicant must inform the Police Chief in writing within 30 days if the applicant or an employee of the applicant is convicted of a felony or any crime involving the illegal use, carrying, or possession of a dangerous weapon or any crime involving moral turpitude.

(c) It shall be unlawful for any person to conduct any alarm system business without first paying the required fees and obtaining an alarm system business permit.

(d) No permit shall be issued to any private detective agency, security services business, or alarm system business until the applicant has filed with the Clerk of Council a surety bond in the amount of one thousand dollars (\$1000), with surety from a company licensed to do business in the State of Georgia. The bond shall be taken in the name of the City of Savannah and may be called by the City for purpose of enforcing this ordinance. Every business permitted by this ordinance shall maintain such surety bond in full force and effect. Upon failure to do so, its permit shall be suspended until such bond is renewed.

Section 6-2604. Uniforms; vehicles.

It shall be unlawful for any person having a permit under this article to wear uniforms or to use vehicular markings which are confusingly similar to the uniform and vehicular markings of the Savannah Police Department.

Section 6-2605. Alarm systems monitoring; registration of alarm users; police service response; fees for false alarms.

(a) Each alarm system business must provide to the Alarm Systems Coordinator a listing of locations that are using an alarm system as defined in Section 6-2601(d) of this article furnished by said business. This listing must be in a computerized format specified by the Alarm System Coordinator. All locations on the listing will be considered registered alarm users. Each alarm system business is responsible for supplying the Alarm System Coordinator with any changes to its list of registered alarm users within 72 hours. A registration fee as required by the annual

Revenue Ordinance, Article Y, Section 34, will be collected by the alarm system business and remitted to the Alarm System Coordinator for each registered user at the time of registration.

(b) Only those locations registered by a licensed alarm system business will be eligible to receive police services in response to an activated alarm. Unregistered alarm users may not receive a police response to an alarm. Audible alarms from unregistered locations are subject to violation of the City Noise Ordinance, Section 9-2034.

(c) Excessive false alarms for registered alarm users are considered to be any number in excess of three (3) false alarms during the 12-month billing cycle. All police responses to excessive false alarms will be billed to the alarm user and the alarm system business providing monitoring service to the registered alarm user. The fees for false alarms and the method of billing are as provided in the annual Revenue Ordinance.

(d) All police responses to false alarms at unregistered locations will be charged a fee and will be billed as provided in the annual Revenue Ordinance.

(e) The SCMPD is responsible for monitoring and documenting false alarm incidents. A listing of alarm companies with excessive false alarms, locations with excessive false alarms, and the number of excessive false alarms will be maintained by the Alarm Systems Coordinator.

(f) The Police Chief may at his discretion identify those critical or high risk locations that are not subject to automatic suspension for false alarms when such suspension would be detrimental to the safety of the public.

Section 6-2606. Audible alarm system cutoff required; self-dialing prohibited.

(a) Every alarm system which uses an audible alarm device to attract the attention of the public shall be equipped with an automatic five (5) minute or less cutoff device or shall be silenced manually within five (5) minutes after activation.

(b) Self-dialing devices that call police directly from the alarm location are prohibited. Alarms must ring into a monitored central station which can verify the alarm prior to calling the E-911 Communications Center. It is unlawful to maintain, operate, connect, or allow to be maintained, operated, or connected, any automatic dialing device which automatically dials the police department and then relays any prerecorded message to report any robbery, burglary or other emergency.

Section 6-2607. Provisions for compliance.

Those alarm systems businesses not in conformity with the provisions of this ordinance at the time of its adoption shall have a period of sixty (60) days from the effective date of the ordinance to conform to the requirements thereof.

Section 6-2608. Suspension or revocation.

The Police Chief may, after hearing, suspend or permanently revoke a permit or refuse to renew a permit issued under this Article if it is determined that the holder of such permit has committed an act which is a violation of this Article or the provisions of any federal or state law or other ordinances of the City of Savannah, including provisions relating to collection and remittance of permitting, registration and false alarm fees.