

# Intruder Alarms

## Premises Alarms

This Leaflet sets out general information and your responsibilities relating to the installation and operation of audible alarms, however it is not a full explanation of the law.

## Intruder Alarms

Noise made by the operation of audible burglar alarms is a common cause of complaint. Owners and occupiers who seek to protect their properties (whether domestic or commercial) by installing a system or taking over an existing system on acquiring premises have a responsibility to ensure the device fitted primarily for their own protection does not become a source of nuisance to their neighbours and the general public.

The alarm system should be properly designed, installed and maintained as far as is reasonably practicable to prevent false alarms. Guidance is given in British Standard BS 4737 of 1987, as amended by BS 7150 of 1989.

## Installation

To avoid disturbance to the public, all such alarm systems should be fitted with an automatic cut-out device, which will disconnect both the internal and external sounders, either bell or buzzer, after a period of not more than 20 minutes following activation. Such a cut-out device can be supplemented with a flashing light which will continue to operate after the sounder has ceased to alert the public and police to the alarmed state of the property.

All owners of newly adopted or installed alarm systems are advised to:

Notify South Gloucestershire Councils Environmental Protection Team of the address where the alarm is installed and the names and contact details of 2 keyholders (one of which may be the "owner" of the alarm). If we receive a complaint about an alarm sounding, we will try and contact registered keyholders before taking any enforcement action.

Keyholder information can be registered by calling **01454 868001**

## Vehicle Alarms

Similarly, noise caused by the operation of audible vehicle alarms may also give rise to complaints of a nuisance. Owners who seek to protect their vehicle (be it a car, van or motorbike etc.) by installing a system of this type or who purchase a vehicle with an existing system fitted must be aware of their legal responsibilities.

It is a requirement under the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 to fit a 5 minute cut-out device to all vehicle alarms. It is an actionable Statutory Nuisance under section 79 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 as amended by the Noise and Statutory Nuisances Act 1993 for the 'registered keeper' to allow an alarm to sound frequently, **or** for a prolonged period, so as to cause a nuisance to local residents and people working in the immediate vicinity.

## Council Action

Where an authorised Officer of the Council witnesses the prolonged or frequent ringing of an alarm, the Officer may serve a Notice, requiring the person responsible to de-activate the alarm and carry out works to prevent a recurrence of the nuisance. The Council may also employ a contractor to silence the alarm, and recover its costs.

Full costs of this action including legal and Officers time will be recovered from the 'person responsible' or the 'registered keeper' of the vehicle. This may be in excess of £200.

- Vehicle alarms must be fitted with a 5-minute cut-out device.
- Set your alarm to a reasonable level of sensitivity to minimise 'false alarms'.
- Maintain your alarm system in good working order.

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