
ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1688

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By House Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Parshley, Duerr, Reed, Ormsby, Hill, and Timmons)

READ FIRST TIME 02/18/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to electric security alarm systems; adding a new
2 section to chapter 35.21 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 35A.21
3 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 36.01 RCW; and creating a new
4 section.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that recent changes
7 in alarm system technology can be beneficial for protecting property
8 owners from ongoing theft, and may help to minimize the demand on
9 local government policing and judicial resources. The legislature
10 further finds that state and local codes may not currently regulate
11 electric security alarm systems, and that, in such cases, the
12 application of a statewide standard for installation of such systems
13 would be beneficial to industrial and commercial property owners
14 statewide. It is, therefore, the intent of the legislature to
15 establish a statewide standard for the installation and operation of
16 electric security alarm systems in circumstances in which local
17 governments have not provided alternative regulations.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 35.21
19 RCW to read as follows:

1 (1) Cities and towns that have not adopted an ordinance, land use
2 regulation, or local code related to the regulation of electric
3 security alarm systems shall allow electric security alarm systems
4 consistent with the following:

5 (a) Electric security alarm systems may not be considered a fence
6 and may not be regulated by fence codes which do not reference and
7 regulate electric security alarm systems.

8 (b) Electric security alarm systems must be allowed on any
9 allowed or legally nonconforming outdoor storage property. This
10 subsection (1)(b) does not apply to properties zoned for mixed use
11 that are not an outdoor storage property as defined in this section.

12 (c) The installation of electric security alarm systems must meet
13 the following requirements:

14 (i) The electric security alarm is powered by an energizer that
15 is driven by a battery of no more than 12 volts of direct current and
16 that does not produce an electric charge on contact that exceeds
17 energizer characteristics set forth in IEC 60335-2-76, as of January
18 1, 2025;

19 (ii) The electric security alarm is marked with conspicuous
20 warning signs that are located on the system at not more than 30-foot
21 intervals that read "Warning: Electric Fence.";

22 (iii) The electric security alarm is 10 feet in height, or two
23 feet higher than the perimeter barrier, fence, or wall, whichever is
24 greater; and

25 (iv) The electric security alarm includes a device that enables
26 first responders to deactivate the electric security alarm system in
27 response to an emergency, if utilized by a city and town.

28 (d) A minimum five foot tall perimeter barrier, fence, or wall,
29 is located around the exterior of the electric security alarm system.
30 If the perimeter barrier is an existing fence or wall, the fence or
31 wall must have been installed in compliance with the fence code at
32 the time of installation. The city may require a permit for the
33 installation of a new perimeter fence or wall and may require the new
34 perimeter fence or wall be consistent with the local fence code. The
35 city may not require any additional conditions or improvements
36 appurtenant to the installation of an electric security alarm system.

37 (e) The city or town may require an alarm system operator license
38 or permit in the same manner as is required for any other security
39 alarm.

1 (f) Nothing in this section limits the ability of a city to
2 otherwise regulate outdoor storage properties.

3 (2)(a) A city or town that has, whether before or after the
4 effective date of this section, adopted an ordinance, land use
5 regulation, or local code that regulates or prohibits electric
6 security alarm systems is not subject to subsection (1) of this
7 section.

8 (b) If a city or town adopts an ordinance, land use regulation,
9 or local code that regulates or prohibits electric security alarm
10 systems after the effective date of this section, the city or town
11 shall include "electric security alarm" in the title of the ordinance
12 and shall hold two public hearings on the regulation prior to final
13 adoption.

14 (c) Any system installed prior to the effective date of an
15 ordinance adopted in (a) of this subsection may continue to operate
16 if it complies with the requirements in subsection (1) of this
17 section.

18 (3) For the purposes of this section:

19 (a) "Electric security alarm system" means an outdoor alarm
20 system that connects a wire structure to an alarm system and
21 transmits a signal intended to detect and alert the property owner of
22 an intrusion by utilizing an electric charge.

23 (b) "Outdoor storage property" means a manufacturing, commercial,
24 or industrial property that does not abut an existing K-12 school, in
25 which all or part of the lot is used for keeping vehicles, vessels,
26 aircraft, equipment, raw materials, freight, or utility
27 infrastructure in an outdoor yard or unenclosed building, provided
28 that the lot does not include any existing residential or hospitality
29 uses. "Outdoor storage property" does not include property with
30 outdoor displays of items or objects for immediate sale when such
31 displays are incidental or accessory to activity conducted in an
32 enclosed structure and that such displays do not exceed 10 percent of
33 the net lot area.

34 (4) Nothing in this section shall apply to a burglar alarm system
35 as defined in RCW 18.170.010(4) or a fire alarm as defined in RCW
36 48.19.540(3)(c).

37 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 35A.21
38 RCW to read as follows:

1 (1) Code cities that have not adopted an ordinance, land use
2 regulation, or local code related to the regulation of electric
3 security alarm systems shall allow electric security alarm systems
4 consistent with the following:

5 (a) Electric security alarm systems may not be considered a fence
6 and may not be regulated by fence codes which do not reference and
7 regulate electric security alarm systems.

8 (b) Electric security alarm systems must be allowed on any
9 allowed or legally nonconforming outdoor storage property. This
10 subsection (1)(b) does not apply to properties zoned for mixed use
11 that are not an outdoor storage property as defined in this section.

12 (c) The installation of electric security alarm systems must meet
13 the following requirements:

14 (i) The electric security alarm is powered by an energizer that
15 is driven by a battery of no more than 12 volts of direct current and
16 that does not produce an electric charge on contact that exceeds
17 energizer characteristics set forth in IEC 60335-2-76, as of January
18 1, 2025;

19 (ii) The electric security alarm is marked with conspicuous
20 warning signs that are located on the system at not more than 30-foot
21 intervals that read "Warning: Electric Fence.";

22 (iii) The electric security alarm is 10 feet in height, or two
23 feet higher than the perimeter barrier, fence, or wall, whichever is
24 greater; and

25 (iv) The electric security alarm includes a device that enables
26 first responders to deactivate the electric security alarm system in
27 response to an emergency, if utilized by a code city.

28 (d) A minimum five foot tall perimeter barrier, fence, or wall,
29 is located around the exterior of the electric security alarm system.
30 If the perimeter barrier is an existing fence or wall, the fence or
31 wall must have been installed in compliance with the fence code at
32 the time of installation. The code city may require a permit for the
33 installation of a new perimeter fence or wall and may require the new
34 perimeter fence or wall be consistent with the local fence code. The
35 code city may not require any additional conditions or improvements
36 appurtenant to the installation of an electric security alarm system.

37 (e) The code city may require an alarm system operator license or
38 permit in the same manner as is required for any other security
39 alarm.

1 (f) Nothing in this section limits the ability of a code city to
2 otherwise regulate outdoor storage properties.

3 (2)(a) A code city that has, whether before or after the
4 effective date of this section, adopted an ordinance, land use
5 regulation, or local code that regulates or prohibits electric
6 security alarm systems is not subject to subsection (1) of this
7 section.

8 (b) If a code city adopts an ordinance, land use regulation, or
9 local code that regulates or prohibits electric security alarm
10 systems after the effective date of this section, the code city shall
11 include "electric security alarm" in the title of the ordinance and
12 shall hold two public hearings on the regulation prior to final
13 adoption.

14 (c) Any system installed prior to the effective date of an
15 ordinance adopted in (a) of this subsection may continue to operate
16 if it complies with the requirements in subsection (1) of this
17 section.

18 (3) For the purposes of this section:

19 (a) "Electric security alarm system" means an outdoor alarm
20 system that connects a wire structure to an alarm system and
21 transmits a signal intended to detect and alert the property owner of
22 an intrusion by utilizing an electric charge.

23 (b) "Outdoor storage property" means a manufacturing, commercial,
24 or industrial property that does not abut an existing K-12 school, in
25 which all or part of the lot is used for keeping vehicles, vessels,
26 aircraft, equipment, raw materials, freight, or utility
27 infrastructure in an outdoor yard or unenclosed building, provided
28 that the lot does not include any existing residential or hospitality
29 uses. "Outdoor storage property" does not include property with
30 outdoor displays of items or objects for immediate sale when such
31 displays are incidental or accessory to activity conducted in an
32 enclosed structure and that such displays do not exceed 10 percent of
33 the net lot area.

34 (4) Nothing in this section shall apply to a burglar alarm system
35 as defined in RCW 18.170.010(4) or a fire alarm as defined in RCW
36 48.19.540(3)(c).

37 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 36.01
38 RCW to read as follows:

1 (1) Counties that have not adopted an ordinance, land use
2 regulation, or local code related to the regulation of electric
3 security alarm systems shall allow electric security alarm systems
4 consistent with the following:

5 (a) Electric security alarm systems may not be considered a fence
6 and may not be regulated by fence codes which do not reference and
7 regulate electric security alarm systems.

8 (b) Electric security alarm systems must be allowed on any
9 allowed or legally nonconforming outdoor storage property. This
10 subsection (1)(b) does not apply to properties zoned for mixed use
11 that are not an outdoor storage property as defined in this section.

12 (c) The installation of electric security alarm systems must meet
13 the following requirements:

14 (i) The electric security alarm is powered by an energizer that
15 is driven by a battery of no more than 12 volts of direct current and
16 that does not produce an electric charge on contact that exceeds
17 energizer characteristics set forth in IEC 60335-2-76, as of January
18 1, 2025;

19 (ii) The electric security alarm is marked with conspicuous
20 warning signs that are located on the system at not more than 30-foot
21 intervals that read "Warning: Electric Fence.";

22 (iii) The electric security alarm is 10 feet in height, or two
23 feet higher than the perimeter barrier, fence, or wall, whichever is
24 greater; and

25 (iv) The electric security alarm includes a device that enables
26 first responders to deactivate the electric security alarm system in
27 response to an emergency, if utilized by a county.

28 (d) A minimum five foot tall perimeter barrier, fence, or wall,
29 is located around the exterior of the electric security alarm system.
30 If the perimeter barrier is an existing fence or wall, the fence or
31 wall must have been installed in compliance with the fence code at
32 the time of installation. The county may require a permit for the
33 installation of a new perimeter fence or wall and may require a new
34 perimeter fence or wall be consistent with the local fence code. The
35 county may not require any additional conditions or improvements
36 appurtenant to the installation of an electric security alarm system.

37 (e) The county may require an alarm system operator license or
38 permit in the same manner as is required for any other security
39 alarm.

1 (f) Nothing in this section limits the ability of a county to
2 otherwise regulate outdoor storage properties.

3 (2)(a) A county that has, whether before or after the effective
4 date of this section, adopted an ordinance, land use regulation, or
5 local code that regulates or prohibits electric security alarm
6 systems is not subject to subsection (1) of this section.

7 (b) If a county adopts an ordinance, land use regulation, or
8 local code that regulates or prohibits electric security alarm
9 systems after the effective date of this section, the county shall
10 include "electric security alarm" in the title of the ordinance and
11 shall hold two public hearings on the regulation prior to final
12 adoption.

13 (c) Any system installed prior to the effective date of an
14 ordinance adopted in (a) of this subsection may continue to operate
15 if it complies with the requirements in subsection (1) of this
16 section.

17 (3) For the purposes of this section:

18 (a) "Electric security alarm system" means an outdoor alarm
19 system that connects a wire structure to an alarm system and
20 transmits a signal intended to detect and alert the property owner of
21 an intrusion by utilizing an electric charge.

22 (b) "Outdoor storage property" means a manufacturing, commercial,
23 or industrial property that does not abut an existing K-12 school, in
24 which all or part of the lot is used for keeping vehicles, vessels,
25 aircraft, equipment, raw materials, freight, or utility
26 infrastructure in an outdoor yard or unenclosed building, provided
27 that the lot does not include any existing residential or hospitality
28 uses. "Outdoor storage property" does not include property with
29 outdoor displays of items or objects for immediate sale when such
30 displays are incidental or accessory to activity conducted in an
31 enclosed structure and that such displays do not exceed 10 percent of
32 the net lot area.

33 (4) Nothing in this section shall apply to a burglar alarm system
34 as defined in RCW 18.170.010(4) or a fire alarm as defined in RCW
35 48.19.540(3)(c).

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