
Wisconsin Legislative Council

ACT MEMO



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2021 Wisconsin Act 197
[2021 Senate Bill 812]

**Regulation of Battery-Powered
Alarmed Electric Security Fences**

BACKGROUND

State law provides, in statute, certain minimum requirements for a fence to constitute a “standard electric fence” and allows such fences to be deemed a legal fence when agreed to in writing by adjoining property owners. Beyond such minimum requirements, prior law did not expressly address the regulation of electric fences, other than certain administrative rules providing specific safety standards. Generally, local units of government may further regulate electric fences by ordinance.

2021 WISCONSIN ACT 197

2021 Wisconsin Act 197 creates a statutory definition for a “battery-powered, alarmed electric security fence,” as well as specific prohibitions regarding the regulation and use of such fences.

Specifically, the act defines a “battery-powered, alarmed electric security fence” as an electric fence that satisfies all of the following requirements:

- Is equipped with an energizer that produces direct current and is powered by a commercial storage battery with a voltage of not greater than 12 volts.
- Produces an electric charge on contact that satisfies standards provided by the International Electrotechnical Commission.
- Is connected to a system that is capable of signaling law enforcement.
- Includes warning signage that a battery-powered, alarmed electric security fence is in operation.
- Is surrounded by a perimeter fence or wall that is at least five feet in height.
- Is no more than 10 feet in height, or two feet higher than the perimeter fence or wall, whichever is higher.

With respect to such fences, the act prohibits political subdivisions from doing any of the following acts: (1) prohibiting the installation or use of such fences, except on property designated exclusively for residential use; (2) requiring a permit, other than an alarm system permit, for the installation or use of such fences; or (3) imposing installation or operation requirements that are inconsistent with certain professional standards specified in the act.

The act also prohibits any person from locating a battery-powered, alarmed electric security fence on property designated exclusively for residential use.

Effective date: March 20, 2022

AO:jal