

# MiTo Alarm Update

There is a generally accepted yet not fully understood urban legend that it is possible to disable the alarm beeps when locking and unlocking your MiTo, but there has long been confusion about precisely how to do it, what the impact is and whether it is safe or even legal to do so.

Rumours that the disabling process turns your MiTo menus into a foreign language are widespread, and opinions vary about whether the modification is illegal, whether it affects your insurance or somehow disables the actual function of the alarm thus making the MiTo vulnerable to theft. And of course, some people love the recognisable beeps which, if you've been to one of our Alfa Romeo events, you will know is standard on all Alfas and many Italian cars.

It is less well known that from the middle of 2017 virtually all new Alfa Romeos were built with a security gateway (SGW) module which blocks *any* diagnostic tool from executing commands on the vehicle (e.g. resetting service indicators, clearing errors) unless done so through an official FCA group dealership tool which communicates with the SGW. This update was applied to the MiTo, Giulia, Stelvio and most new Fiats including the 500X, 500L as well as the Jeep Rene-



gade.

So it is a bit of a minefield which I aim to clarify.

Let's start with the legalities and safety aspects. My wife's Audi has a fully functioning remote locking and alarm system, but doesn't beep when the car is locked and unlocked. It is completely legal to disable the initiation beeps on any vehicle in the UK. Indeed, there are no laws in this country regarding the presence of an alarm, let alone how it is set.

In most of central Europe, noise restrictions prevent the use of beeps for setting/unsetting alarm functions in motor vehicles. The majority of vehicles sold in these markets either have

no setting beeps or have user-configurable settings within the car menu itself (something that Alfa really should have implemented with the MiTo).

I have also spoken with three reputable insurance providers who, it has to be said, had no clue what I was talking about but did confirm they do not capture information about whether a car audibly beeps when locked and unlocked, only whether the vehicle has an approved alarm fitted.

Of course, officially your insurer should be notified of *any* modification to your vehicle, though I suspect many of us do not follow this process with every small change, but the decision is yours.

## The 'Holland' Myth

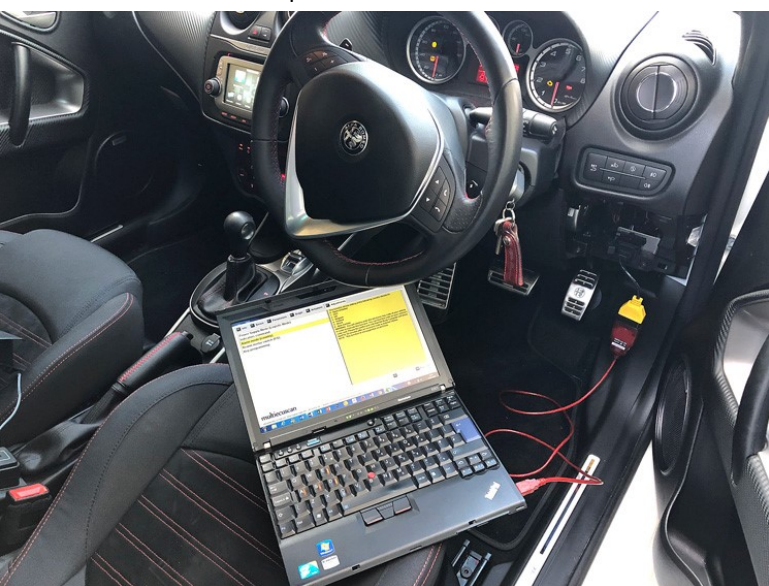
The urban legend is that you can somehow change your alarm setting to operate using the standard functionality that the Dutch market experiences, which has no beeps when you set or unset the alarm due to noise restrictions.

And there is some truth to this. Setting the alarm country code to Holland is the solution, but like everything on the MiTo it depends on *how* you do it. And it would also depend *when* you did it.

I have been using the diagnostic software MultiECUScan for well over a decade on my Alfa Romeos. From memory, I think the first version I used was 1.3 or perhaps 1.4.

MultiECUScan is an independently produced diagnostic tool specifically designed, updated and supported for Fiat, Alfa Romeo and Lancia cars and vans, along with a small number of vehicles with shared platforms and electronics (e.g. the Jeep Renegade). But not being affiliated with FCA means that developments come some time after the release of new functions and security measures in each vehicle model.

And that is where the Holland myth comes from. The first version of the software (just called 'ECUScan') to support the MiTo with the CAN setup was at the end of 2010 (version 2.6). Functions such as proxy alignment (to solve the infamous 'flashing mileage' issue) came several months later in version 2.8, along with support for the Delphi Body Computer on the MiTo. So suddenly MiTo owners were playing with the settings in the MiTo body ECU, including alarm settings. But version 2.8 of ECUScan was only the *first* compatible version, and it had a lot of issues like any early software development, the



# MiTo Alarm Update



results of which have been found by MiTo owners over the years using Google and old Alfa Romeo forums boards (often not to be trusted if the information is several years old).

It wasn't until 2012 and version 3.4.2 of ECUScan that the MiTo and Punto body computer and Proxy Alignment started to function as you would expect, followed by the launch of the new 'MultiECUScan' version 1.0. So four years after the MiTo launch, the diagnostics software was just catching up.

However, during the period 2012 through 2014, Alfa Romeo made several changes to the programming of the main ECU and the body computer on the MiTo, and the model refresh for model year 2014 (the switch from the original Blue&Me radio to the new UConnect systems) changed many things resulting in MultiECUScan being relatively ineffective for the MiTo from 2014 onwards.

It was not until August 2016 and MultiECUScan version 3.2 that the updated Delphi body computer and the updated Siemens instrument panel on the MiTo were supported, and not until the middle of 2017 until the new Uconnect radio/nav was supported in version 3.7.

The latest version of MultiECUScan (4.3) has been available since the end of 2018 and provides support for the new Giulia and Stelvio, though of course their developments naturally follow many months or years behind the actual launch of the cars.

Of course, you can avoid all this complication by just visiting an Alfa Romeo dealer or specialist who have the official diagnostic capability.

## What You Need

There are two options to change your MiTo alarm settings: either get your dealer or specialist to do it, or do it yourself. Either way, there are two key things you need, nei-

ther of which are particularly simple.

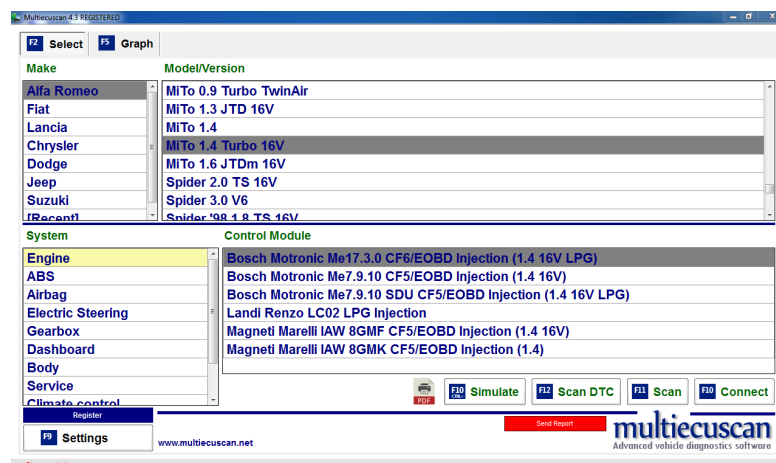
Your MiTo has a unique five-digit alarm code which must be entered when making changes in the body computer, whether you do it yourself or have it done for you. This is not to be confused with, for example, your International Security Register (ISR) number that you may have in your ownership documents.

Years ago, you could contact Alfa Romeo with your vehicle details and they would send you your unique alarm code for around £20. But that is no longer possible. Some years later, Alfa Romeo dealers could request an alarm code through their internal system (providing you showed your vehicle ownership documents) and a few days later they would receive a printed data sheet for your car including your alarm code, which they would typically share with you for around £30.

However, today it is *slightly* improved but still a little complicated, depending on your dealer. The alarm code can still be obtained from an Alfa Romeo dealer, though their internal system has changed meaning most recent joiners to the service and parts department at dealers simply do not know how to retrieve it. And in the modern world of multi-franchise dealerships it is becoming harder to find a genuine Alfa Romeo person who isn't in the workshop in overalls.

But if you go to your Alfa dealer service desk presenting your ownership documents and politely request your five-digit alarm code, they will eventually work out how to do it on their system (and I strongly recommend you stay there while they work out how to submit the request, otherwise it will go to the bottom of their to-do list once you've left).

It does typically take a couple of days before the dealer receives the code, and they can tell you the code over the telephone



as long as you attended in person with your documents. There is no longer an official charge as such, but the dealer has the option to charge for their time (mine didn't). But this is where the dealer's lack of knowledge can help: simply tell them you've done it before, it takes a few days and is a free service - they probably won't know any different.

But please don't all go straight to your dealers demanding alarm codes. You should only do this if and when you are seriously going to use it, otherwise it is quite likely that dealers will become unhelpful or definitely start charging if you're the fourth person that week to request your alarm code.

The second thing you will need, quite obviously, is either a dealer or specialist to do the update for you, or MultiECUScan and the appropriate connection leads.

## MultiECUScan

Having been a long-time user of MultiECUScan, I would recommend it for any owner of an Alfa Romeo, Fiat or Lancia.

Unlike many cheaper alternatives, it has been designed and built from the ground up to support our cars and, more importantly, the support is second to none as I will show you soon.

If you are serious about a long-term affair with Alfa Romeo, MultiECUScan needs to be something you invest in.

But I strongly recommend that if you are not particularly mechanically minded or happy to use your local Alfa Specialist or dealer on occasion, then do not invest in MultiECUScan purely to change your alarm. It will be cheaper to simply have your local Specialist do it for you.



For those of us more likely to get value from MultiECUScan, there are several options. I use the full version on a Windows laptop, though there are versions for use on mobile devices via a Bluetooth OBD connection. I have not tried the mobile version as their website states that it has a "limited set" of reset/programming functions. My inclination is that the mobile version may not support the critical functions I would typically need, but I will do a comparison test at some point in future. Knowing the development process, my suspicion is that the mobile version will be a few years behind the desktop version.

A full licence for the software is €50 and includes twelve months of updates. Once the twelve months is up, the software still works but only at the version you currently have. This should not be a problem as there



# MiTo Alarm Update

may be no further updates for the MiTo, but please read *all* of this article if you have a 2017-onwards MiTo before downloading the software for your newer MiTo.

But the software alone is no use without some means of connecting to your car via the OBD socket behind your tiny glovebox to the right of your (right-hand drive) MiTo.

There are many differing leads to connect the multitude of FCA vehicles to a laptop using MultiECUScan, and I purchased the full diagnostic package with all leads many years ago (they don't change) and this package is still available at £120. But the MiTo only needs a CAN-compatible connection known as an ELM327, though care should be taken buying these leads from auction sites as MultiECUScan warn about issues with cheap or imported ELM leads not working without modification.

MultiECUScan's UK distributor, Gendan Automotive, offer a MultiECUScan package for CAN cars for £97.94 which includes the twelve month licence, the software on a disc along with the leads you will need for the MiTo, including the yellow body computer lead. Gendan's MultiECUScan products can be found at [this link](#).

You will need at least version 3.7 of MultiECUScan, though I tested the alarm upgrade on the latest version 4.3 for the pre-2018 MiTo.

## 2018 Model Year MiTos

I said that the support offered by MultiECUScan is second to none, and I want to expand on that a little.

With the introduction of the security gateway module in new Alfa Romeos, it has become impossible to make changes to parameters or reset functions on newer MiTos. I proved the alarm upgrade on my 2008 model and wanted to test it on my 2018 model, but

the SGW prevented any modification. Most annoying.

So I contacted MultiECUScan and asked if they were willing to do some tests with me, and they agreed. The outcome of this is that they have developed an updated version of MultiECUScan which can specifically modify the alarm setting on 2018 model year MiTos and Giuliettas. This version is a bit of a workaround (you need to use the Giulietta body computer connection for the time being) and is not yet available to the general public, but I can provide it to MultiECUScan 4.3 registered users who have a 2018 MiTo as a beta upgrade. The full production version should be released in the coming months to the general public, and this only applies if you have a MiTo registered from late 2017 onwards.

## Updating Your Alarm

Assuming you have your five-digit alarm code, you can arrange with your Alfa Romeo dealer or Specialist to change your Alarm Mode (Country) to Holland. Typically they will charge between £40 and £60 for this.

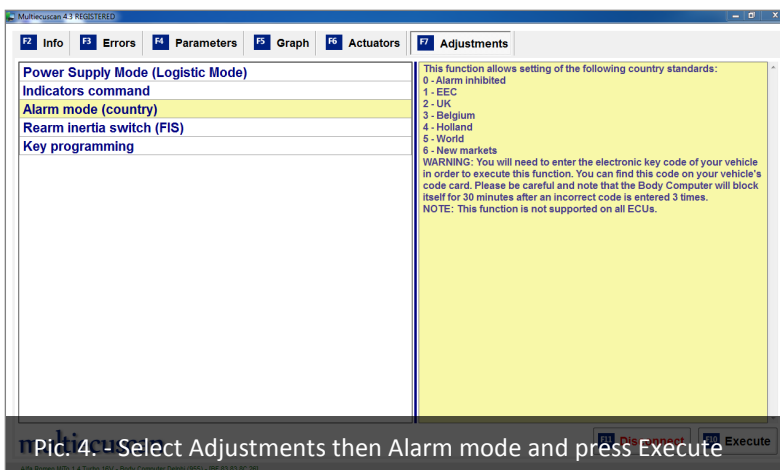
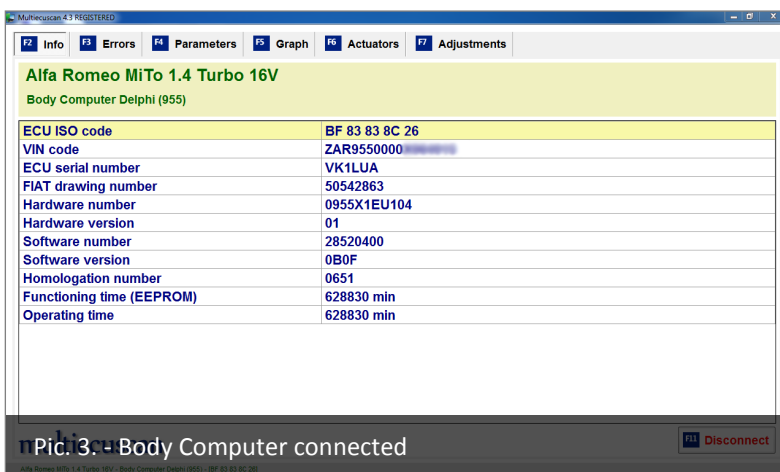
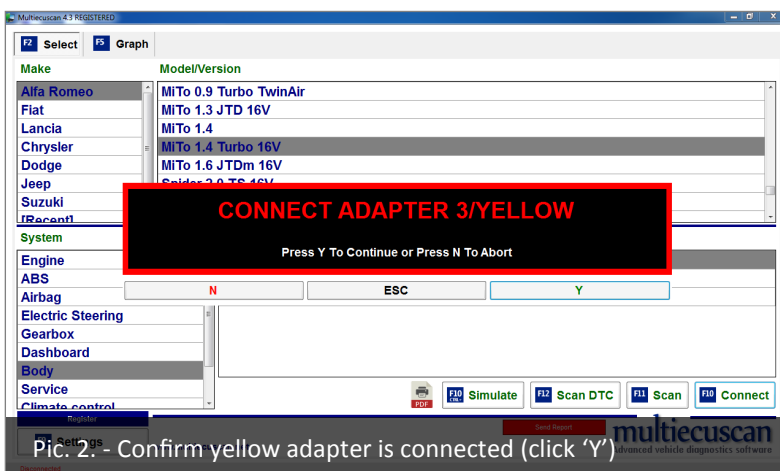
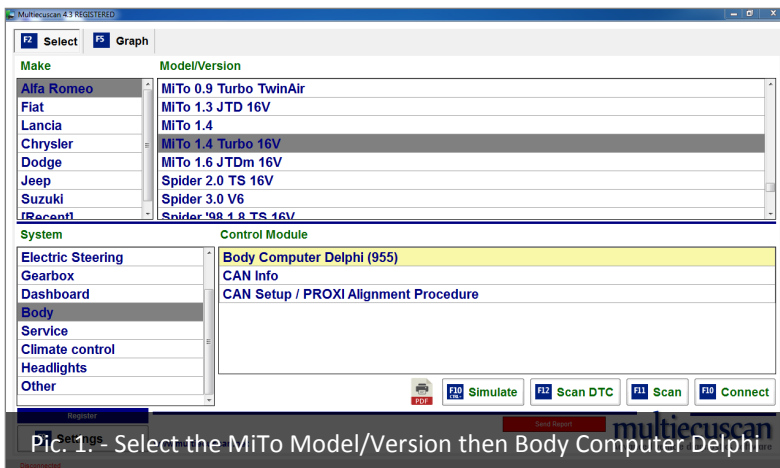
But if you have MultiECUScan, you can do the change yourself using the red ELM lead and the Yellow adapter. The process for pre-2018 MiTos is as follows:

### 1. Select your MiTo

MultiECUScan covers many vehicles from Fiat, Alfa Romeo, Lancia and several Chrysler and Jeep. Firstly, select the Make of 'Alfa Romeo' and the MiTo model you have (Pic. 1). Note, there are only five options: 0.9 TwinAir, 1.3 JTD, 1.4, 1.4 Turbo and 1.6 JTDm. If you have a non-turbo, you must choose 1.4. If you have any variation of 1.4 turbo (including T-Jet and MultiAir) then choose 1.4 Turbo.

At the bottom-left of the screen, you must then choose the 'Body' system, and click on 'Body Computer Delphi (955)' control module on the right.

Turn your ignition key ON but



# MiTo Alarm Update

do not start the engine, then press the 'Connect' button at the bottom-right of the screen. If your ignition is not on, it will not connect and give you an error message.

## 2. Confirm Connection



You will be prompted to confirm that you have connected the red ELM lead with the yellow Adapter 3 (see Pic. 2). Connect the yellow adapter to the ELM lead and plug into your OBD socket, connecting the USB end to your laptop. Once this is connected, press 'Y'.

## 3. Select Alarm Mode

Once connected to the body computer (see Pic. 3.) you can then click on 'Adjustments' at the top-right of the screen to show the available adjustments (see Pic. 4).

On the left side of the screen, click 'Alarm mode (country)' and you will see the screen in Pic. 4. Press 'Execute' at the bottom-right of the screen.

## 4. Enter Five-Digit Alarm Code

You will be prompted for your five-digit 'Security Code' for your alarm (see Pic. 5). It is important you do not enter this wrong or (after three unsuccessful attempts) the body computer will lock you out for thirty minutes for security. Enter your code and press 'OK'.

## 5. Enter Alarm Mode Country

You will be prompted to choose the alarm mode country

from the drop-down list (see Pic. 6). Select 'Holland' and press 'OK'. Note, you can repeat this process and return the setting to 'United Kingdom' if you want your beeps back in future.

## 6. Confirm Change

You will be prompted to confirm your change of country (see Pic. 7). Press 'Y' to confirm.

You will then see two messages displayed; the first tells you the change has been executed, and the second tells you to switch off your ignition key. Switch off your ignition then click 'Y' and the process is complete.

## Changing 2018 MiTo Alarm

The process described is the same for newer 2018 models, but it must be followed on the 4.3R5 beta version of the software (likely to be included in MultiECUScan version 4.4, not released at time of writing).

However, there is one significant and material difference.

When selecting your vehicle model, do not select any MiTo model. Instead, select 'Giulietta 1.4 Turbo 16V' as shown in Pic. 8.

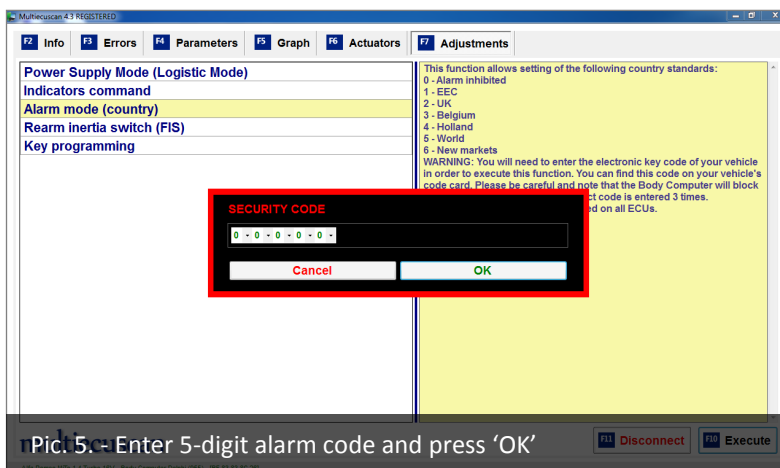
For no clear reason, Alfa Romeo did not build the security gateway module into the Giulietta range of Marelli body computers, enabling MultiECUScan to write some bypass code for the MiTo.

So for your 2018 MiTo, step 1 is replaced by selecting your vehicle as 'Giulietta 1.4 Turbo 16V'. At the bottom-left of the screen, you must then choose the 'Body' system, and click on 'Body Computer Marelli (940)' control module on the right (see Pic. 8).

Turn your ignition key ON but do not start the engine, then press the 'Connect' button at the bottom-right of the screen.

You will be prompted with an error which states 'Invalid ISO Code. Press N to cancel or Y to continue'.

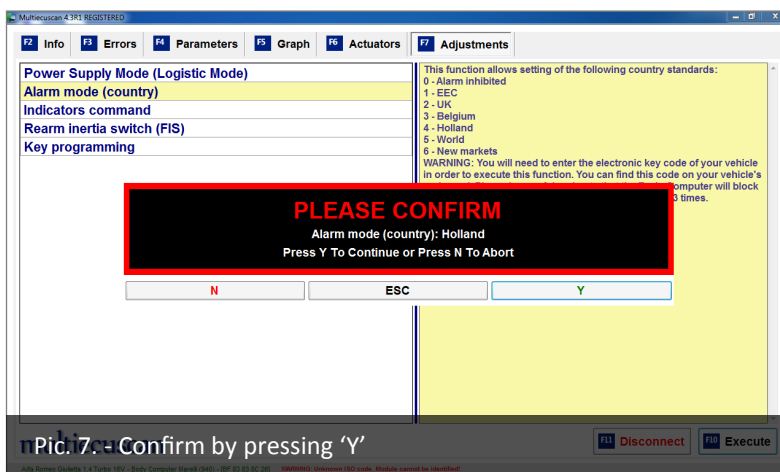
Press Y and you will be connected and can then follow the remaining steps from Step 3 as per the pre-2018 MiTo.



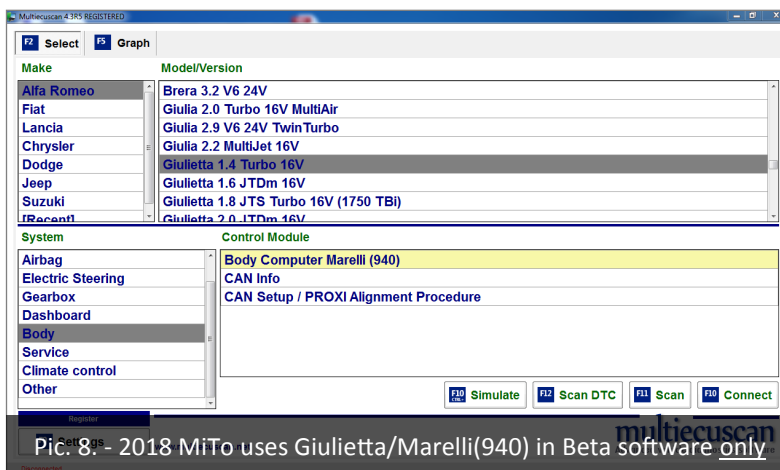
Pic. 5: Enter 5-digit alarm code and press 'OK'



Pic. 6: Select 'Holland' and press 'OK'



Pic. 7: Confirm by pressing 'Y'



Pic. 8: 2018 MiTo uses Giulietta/Marelli(940) in Beta software only