

	SYLVANIA FIRE-EMS POLICIES			
	POLICY NO. 2023-001	SECTION: FIRE PREVENTION		NUMBER OF PAGES: 4
	SUBJECT:	FALSE ALARM POLICY		
	ISSUE DATE: 3/21/2023	REVIEW DATE: 3/21/2024	TRUSTEE APPROVAL: RESOLUTION 23-045	REVISION DATE:

I. PURPOSE:

- To reduce or eliminate recurring false alarms in fire alarm and fire sprinkler monitoring systems.
- To encourage on-going maintenance and employee training relating to fire alarm and fire sprinkler monitoring systems.
- To ensure proper performance of monitoring services by holding alarm system owners and monitoring companies accountable for incorrectly reported alarms.

II. BACKGROUND:

- Sylvania Fire-EMS has experienced an increasing number of recurring false alarms in fire alarm and fire sprinkler monitoring systems.
- To reduce potential harm to the citizens and Sylvania Fire-EMS personnel with lights and siren responses to recurring false alarms and fire sprinkler monitoring systems.

III. OBJECTIVE:

Authority to charge for false alarm from an automatic fire alarm system at a commercial establishment:

ORC 505.391

(A) If, after the fire department of a township, township fire district, or joint fire district, or a private fire company with which the fire department of a township, township fire district, or joint fire district contracts for fire protection, responds to a false alarm from an automatic fire alarm system at a commercial establishment or residential building, the board of township trustees gives written notice by certified mail that it may assess a charge of up to three hundred dollars for each subsequent false alarm occurring after three false alarms by that system within the same calendar year, the board of township trustees may assess that charge. This notice shall be mailed to the owner and the lessee, if any, of the building in which the system is installed. After the board gives this notice, the board need not give any additional written notices before assessing a charge for a false alarm as provided by this section.

(B) If payment of the bill assessing a charge for a false alarm is not received within thirty days, the township fiscal officer shall send a notice by certified mail to the manager and to the owner, if different, of the real estate of which the commercial establishment is a part, or to the occupant, lessee, agent, or tenant and to the owner, if different, of the real estate of which the residential building is a part, indicating that failure to pay the bill within thirty days, or to show just cause why the bill should not be paid within thirty days, will result in the assessment of a lien upon the real estate in the amount of the

bill. If payment is not received or just cause for nonpayment is not shown within those thirty days, the amount of the bill shall be entered upon the tax duplicate, shall be a lien upon the real estate from the date of the entry, and shall be collected as other taxes and returned to the township treasury to be earmarked for use for fire services.

(C) As used in this section, "commercial establishment" means a building or buildings in an area used primarily for nonresidential, commercial purposes.

IV. Definitions:

Fire Alarm System: A system or portion of a combination system consisting of components and circuits arranged to monitor and annunciate the status of fire alarm or supervisory signal-initiating devices and to initiate the appropriate response to those signals. OFC 2017

False Alarm: The willful and knowing initiation or transmission of a signal, message or other notification of an event of fire when no such danger exists. OFC 2017

V. Clarification:

1. **Alarm system** means a detection device, or an assembly of equipment and devices arranged to signal the presence of a hazard requiring urgent attention or to which the fire department is expected or requested to respond. The term includes any system that can electronically cause an expected response by the fire department to a premises by means of the activation of an audible signal, visible signal, electronic notification, or video signal, or any combination of these signals. The term "alarm system" includes, but is not limited to, the following types of devices: "medical alarm," "local alarm," "personal emergency response alarm," "temperature fire alarm," "manual fire alarm," "fire alarm," "automatic sprinkler," "water flow alarm," "carbon monoxide alarm," "carbon dioxide alarm," "supervisory alarm", "tamper alarm," or other alarm indicating a service or hazardous condition. Alarm systems designed solely to alert or signal persons within the premises in which the alarm system is located shall not be regulated by this policy, unless such alarm systems employ an audible signal emitting sound, or flashing lights or beacons, or "silent" signals to emergency officials or monitoring agencies, designed to signal persons outside the premises.
2. **False alarm** means the activation of an alarm system through mechanical failure, faulty equipment, malfunction, improper installation, lack of prudent maintenance, triggering by an animal, testing without prior notice to the fire department, or the negligence of the alarm user (or of his, her, or its employees, agents, guests, residents, or invitees). The activation of an alarm system is a false alarm when a fire department investigation reveals no fire or potential fire, or need for medical attention when the alarm system was activated. False alarms that are intentionally activated shall not constitute a false alarm for purposes of this policy but may be prosecuted as criminal offenses. The activation of an alarm system is **not** a false alarm when it is caused by any of the following:
 - Weather events or other conditions beyond the control of the alarm user.
 - Disruption or disturbance of telephone or public utility company facilities.
 - Utility pole accidents.

- Testing of the alarm system after prior notification has been received by the fire department.
- Intentional and non-malicious activation of an alarm system due to a reasonable belief that fire department response was needed but was actually not necessary.

VI. Policy:

- False alarm incidents will be monitored by the Community Risk Reduction Bureau.
- Four or more false alarms in a calendar year will result in the owner/occupant being monetarily charged as outlined in this policy.
- The Fire Marshal shall supervise the application of this policy and approve any modifications where special circumstances may exist.

VII. Procedures:

First False Alarm:

Sylvania Fire-EMS Community Risk Reduction Bureau will internally document the false alarm.

Second False Alarm:

A certified letter is sent by Sylvania Township to the owner/manager reminding them of our policy regarding false alarms in a calendar year and notifying them of an impending monetary charge.

Third False Alarm:

The Fire Marshal will make an on-site visit to discuss the problem with the owner/manager notifying them that all future false alarms will be accompanied by a monetary charge as outlined in this policy.

Four or More False Alarms

4th False Alarm —————(In a calendar year) \$100.00

5th False Alarm —————(In a calendar year) \$200.00

6th False Alarm —————(In a calendar year) \$300.00

Each Subsequent False Alarm —(In a calendar year) \$300.00 and Lucas County Prosecutor's Office will be notified.

Normal Status:

Starting January 1 of each year, the facility is placed back on normal status and the above procedure is repeated for future false alarms.

VIII. COST RECOVERY:

All invoices for cost recovery shall be generated by Sylvania Township. Included with each billing invoice will be a copy of the appropriate incident report along with a copy of Sylvania Township's False Alarm Appeal Form.

IX. False Alarm Appeal Process:

If, after receiving official notice via certified mail from Sylvania Township, the owner and/or lessee feels that the fee being charged is unwarranted they may appeal said charges by following the process noted below.

- Sylvania Township's false alarm appeal form must be filled out in its entirety and submitted back to Sylvania Township within 30 days of receiving the invoice.
- False alarm appeal forms will be reviewed by Sylvania Township and Sylvania Fire-EMS.
- Sylvania Township will respond to all appeals within 30 days.
- All decisions made by Sylvania Township with regard to the appeal are final.

X. Modification and Interpretation of This Policy:

When, in the opinion of the investigating fire safety inspector, special circumstances exist that are beyond the control of the building owner, this policy may be modified to meet the intent of this policy.

XI. Records:

A file shall be kept in the Community Risk Reduction Bureau's Office for each address having multiple false alarms. Files shall be continually updated and shall contain all written correspondence with the building owner.