



## **Fire Rescue Department**

### **Response to False Fire Alarms**

October 2011

*Fire Protection and Life Safety Regulation Bylaw 2011 No. 7108*

#### 10. Fees

A person must pay a fee as prescribed in Schedule "A" attached to and forming part of this Bylaw for the following:

- (f) the Fire Rescue Department response to a False Alarm where it is the third or greater number of False Alarms originating from one Fire Alarm system in any twelve (12) month period and the fee is payable by the owner or occupier of the property in which a Fire Alarm system is installed;

Nanaimo Fire Rescue Department responds to hundreds of false automatic fire alarms every year. In nearly all of these cases, firefighters find it was burnt food, dust, steam cleaning, or a simple malfunction that falsely activated the alarm.

Responding to these alarms is costly, in many ways. Aside from the smaller costs related to fuel, vehicle maintenance, etc., the reliability of having crews available to respond to emergencies such as fires or medical incidents is reduced, impacting life safety and property loss. As the department's incident volume increases, there becomes a need to add more firefighters, apparatus and fire stations to provide adequate response times and service. Reducing false alarms can help offset the need for resources for the growing number of incidents of another nature. However, this requires building managers to be more proactive with their fire alarm systems.

More important is the behaviour of occupants where the building has frequent false alarms. The purpose of the alarm is to notify occupants for their swift egress, however, frequent false alarms cause most people not to react and this could be devastating should a fire exist.

In support of this, City Council recently adopted Fire Prevention and Life Safety Bylaw 7108 placing a number of responsibilities on owners/occupants of public buildings. Your commitment to managing your building's fire alarm system to prevent false alarms is essential. We encourage you to review this change and others in the new bylaw as there are monetary implications should your business fail to comply.

Experience has shown that when building managers take a proactive approach to managing their fire alarm systems, false alarms decrease dramatically. Working with the fire department to rectify issues is also essential. This approach avoids the likelihood of a fee being assessed.

10(1)(f)	False Alarm Fee	\$300.00
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