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## City of Wichita's False Alarm Penalties and Procedures

### **CHAPTER 3.40 ALARM SYSTEMS SUMMARY FOR ALARM USERS**

The objective of this ordinance is to reduce the number of false alarms, which are generated each day within the City of Wichita so that emergency personnel are free to respond to real emergencies. As a general rule, 99% of the alarm dispatches called into the Emergency Communications Center on a daily basis, are false alarms. Many of these alarms are due to accidental tripping of the alarm, a pet tripping the alarm, initial testing of the equipment, improperly installed or adjusted equipment, or faulty equipment. Whatever the reason, Wichita emergency personnel resources are dispatched for each alarm called into the Emergency Communications Center by an alarm business. **The False Alarm Response fee is based on the alarm business dispatch calls to the Emergency Communications Center reporting the alarm; the fees are not based on emergency response.**

The following information is a summary of the City of Wichita Chapter 3.40 Alarm Systems Ordinance and is not intended to cover everything included within the ordinance. Whenever summarization creates a conflict, the official ordinance governs. **A copy of the entire ordinance is available for your review at the City Clerk's office or directly from the Internet at [www.wichita.gov](http://www.wichita.gov).**

#### **In summary, Chapter 3.40 Alarm Systems states the following:**

1. **Require Operational Practices.** When an alarm business leases or installs an alarm system:
  - a. Installation must comply with the City's Alarm Systems Ordinance.
  - b. The alarm business shall offer service for that alarm system on a twenty-four hour, seven-day-a-week basis and have a person located within Sedgwick County responsible for repair and maintenance of the alarm system. This information shall be provided in writing at the time of the lease or installation.
  - c. The alarm user shall be provided written instructions on how to operate the system and any user maintenance, which may be required. The written instruction will be in clear, concise language the alarm user can read and understand.
  - d. When an alarm user elects to have city emergency personnel as the first response after an alarm activation, it shall be the responsibility of the alarm business to:
    - 1) Provide the alarm user, at the time of the lease or installation of the alarm system, a written copy of the City of Wichita's false alarm penalties and procedures.
    - 2) Forward to the city treasurer a copy of these procedures signed by the alarm user acknowledging that such user understands how to operate the alarm system and also understands the billing system for false alarms.
    - 3) Register, with the city treasurer, each alarm system monitored by the business, prior to commencement of monitoring. Registration fee is ten dollars (\$10.00) per alarm user.
    - 4) Notify the city treasurer of termination of monitoring and changes in ownership of property.
    - 5) Re-register alarm users every time they change monitoring companies. Alarm user registrations are not transferable.
    - 6) Attempt to contact alarm user by telephone, prior to contacting the communication center, to verify that the alarm is valid.
    - 7) Provide the alarm user's permit number, name, and address when contacting the communications center.

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**NOTE:** Only those alarm users that request city emergency personnel as the first response after an alarm activation are required to be registered. If an alarm user elects private security personnel as the first response, pre-registration is not necessary. If private security personnel respond to an alarm and determine the alarm is a valid alarm that requires city emergency personnel to respond, the private security personnel may contact the communications center to request assistance at no charge to the alarm user.

2. **Response Fee Assessed to Alarm Users for False Alarms.** The user of an alarm system to which city emergency personnel are requested as a first response shall be charged a response fee of forty dollars (\$40.00) for each false alarm. If the false alarm is a duress or holdup alarm, the fee shall be fifty dollars (\$50.00) for each residential false alarm and seventy dollars (\$70.00) for each business false alarm. Payment of fees is due thirty (30) days from original invoice date. In the event the response fee is not paid within sixty (60) days of notification, a late fee in the amount of ten dollars (\$10.00) per false alarm call shall be added to the amount. At 90 days an additional ten dollars (\$10.00) will be added. If not paid within 30 days, the account may be turned over for collection.
3. **No Response Fee Shall be Charged to Alarm Users for the Following Reasons:**
  - a. For the first alarm each calendar year
  - b. When it is reasonable to assume that the alarm was due to violent conditions of nature including an electrical storm which have been verified by the National Weather Service to have been in the area where the alarm system is located at the time of the activation
  - c. Cable, line or power failure which has been specifically verified by the appropriate utility company serving the alarm location
  - d. For those alarms where the communications center is notified within four (4) minutes of receipt of notification of the alarm that city emergency personnel are not required. The Emergency Communications Center requires that the monitoring company cancel the dispatch.
  - e. For those alarms resulting from valid situations requiring an urgent response by city emergency personnel as verified by a report filed by such personnel.
  - f. For those alarms received by a medical alarm system.
4. **Appeals Process for Alarm Users.** Should a disagreement arise over whether any particular response fee should be assessed, the facts surrounding the circumstances of the alarm activation shall within thirty (30) days of the date of the first invoice for the alarm, be presented in writing by the alarm user along with a ten dollar (\$10.00) administrative fee to the alarm administrator. When determining whether or not to appeal, the alarm user should review the items listed in number (3a) through (3f) above and the City Ordinance definition of a False Alarm listed below. When an appeal is received, the appeal reasons are compared to those items to determine whether or not the response fee should be charged. In the event of determination that no response fee should be assessed, the ten dollar (\$10.00) administrative fee shall be refunded. Appeals should be sent to the Alarm Administrator, City of Wichita Police Department, 455 N. Main - 4th Floor, Wichita KS 67202-1600. Please see the complete false alarm ordinance for procedures and consideration given to appeals.

**“False Alarm” means** the activation of an alarm system in the city resulting in an urgent response by law enforcement, fire or emergency medical personnel when a situation requiring an urgent response does not in fact exist. A false alarm may be the result of, but not limited to, mechanical or electronic failure, malfunction, improper installation, improper adjustment, accidental tripping, misoperation, misuse, defect or negligence of a person.